

CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

Can't a capital campaign do the same as one of these big gifts to outside ministries?

That's a fair question, and for the right project, they may well provide the same excitement and energy. That said, capital campaigns work best when the project is necessary to support growth and excitement already in place. Churches that build buildings in hopes of attracting more people are usually disappointed, even if the capital campaign provides a source of temporary excitement. The disappointment is exacerbated if the church incurs debt on top of a significant push for building money.

The capital campaigns that I've seen succeed capitalize (no pun intended) on a congregation's excitement around ministries that need more building space or renovations in order to continue and thrive. Congregations simply feel a greater sense of alignment with God's work when they give money to ministries outside themselves. In order for that feeling to develop in capital campaigns, the congregation needs a sense of God's work that preexists the campaign itself. They need to believe in what God might be doing. Congregations feel more alignment with what God might be doing when they turn out to others. Giving to ministries within the congregation may well build excitement, but ordinarily, the excitement must already be growing around a particular ministry.