

The Bible is filled with several stories of people who bemoaned having to go through times of change – even when the change was for their benefit. Lot’s wife didn’t want to leave Sodom behind (Genesis 19). The nation of Israel yearned for the food of Egypt (Exodus 16). The rich young ruler did not want to give up his wealth (Mark 10). Navigating through change is never easy, but it becomes nearly impossible if we aren’t fully committed. This is why James 1:8 says, “A double-minded person is unstable in all their ways.” We cannot grumble and pout and let our negative emotions run wild when we encounter the difficulties brought by change; rather we must have single-minded commitment to overcoming the obstacles

that hinder our mission.

Conclusion

Going through an era of change is daunting. We can easily mismanage our resources if we aren’t careful and suddenly find ourselves in the disheartening position

of being unable to accomplish our goals – particularly our God-given mission to spread the Good News. Yet, we can find comfort knowing that by practicing good stewardship in these areas and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we won’t be overwhelmed by any new challenges or obstacles. In fact, we will be able to navigate periods of change well and come out stronger on the other side.



Going through an era of change is daunting.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tyler Kraft is the current pastor of the Tracy Seventh-day Adventist Church, where he began serving in 2014. During his career, Tyler has served as a youth pastor, college chaplain, and lead pastor. He has bachelor degrees in theology and communication from Pacific Union College, a Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University, and is currently working on a Doctor of Ministry degree.

Distributed by:
Southern Union Conference
Stewardship Ministries
Director: David A. Long Sr

Produced by:
Pacific Union Conference
Stewardship Department
Design: Stephanie Leal
Editorial: Bernard Castillo

The STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS to help you become a better steward

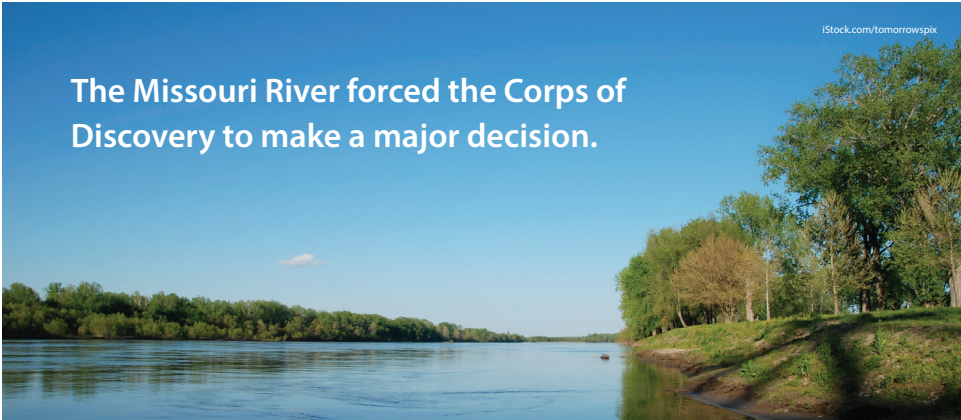
SEPTEMBER 2021 • VOLUME 26, ISSUE 9

NAVIGATING THROUGH TIMES OF CHANGE

BY TYLER KRAFT

When the Corps of Discovery, the expedition led by Lewis and Clark, reached the source of the Missouri River they were forced to make a major decision. For fifteen months they had labored to canoe upstream on their voyage to find a water route across North America. While they knew they would come to the end of the Missouri River eventually, they believed that the Columbia River would be nearby, and it would swiftly take them to the Pacific Ocean. But, they could not have been more disappointed. Instead of a gentle slope leading to a navigable river, they saw the imposing Rocky Mountains. In that moment, the question they had to answer was this: Would they turn around and go home, or would they keep going to the Pacific?

They decided to continue their expedition, but they realized that nearly everything had changed. What was in front of them was nothing like what was



The Missouri River forced the Corps of Discovery to make a major decision.

STEWARDSHIP is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality, and finances.

behind them. This was no longer a journey that could be taken by boat. In fact, all their assumptions, plans, and expectations had to be discarded, because they were headed off the map into literal uncharted territory. If they were going to fulfill the mission given to them by President Jefferson, they knew they had to adapt.

In 2021, it feels like nearly everything in our world has changed. The journey ahead of us looks increasingly unlike what is behind us, and we don't have the option of simply turning around and going back as the Corps of Discovery did. As Seventh-day Adventists we have been tasked not with finding the Northwest Passage, but with spreading the gospel in light of the three angels' messages. The question for us then is: How can we best navigate these times of change and remain faithful to our God-given mission?

God has blessed us all with resources that he wants us to use in our mission, but we are going to find ourselves in trouble if we fail to adapt how we spend them. Had the Corps of Discovery put their canoes at the base of the Rockies and tried to paddle up the mountainside, they would have used up all their energy while making zero progress. If we want to avoid such foolish expenditures of our resources during periods of change, we must be good stewards of our tangible resources, our mental resources, and our emotional resources.

Determine What is Essential

a couple of years ago commuting to work for face-to-face meetings seemed essential, but technology like Zoom has made many people rethink that stance recently.

Things that were once essential often become non-essential, and that transition usually takes place much quicker than most of us anticipate. As the Corps of Discovery found out, a canoe is more necessary for a trip up the Missouri River than it is to cross the Rocky Mountains. Similarly, a couple of years ago commuting to work for face-to-face meetings seemed essential, but technology like

Zoom has made many people rethink that stance recently. Going forward, many businesses are going to have to determine if maintaining an office building is necessary.

Likewise, we must determine if the way we are using our resources is necessary or not. Are we spending our time doing things that actually make

a difference or are we spinning our wheels just to look busy? Are we financially supporting endeavors that help fulfill our mission or are we spending money in ways that stopped being useful a decade or two ago? Unless we have unlimited time, money, or other tangible resources, our expenditures can be detrimental to our goals. As Proverbs 21:20 reminds us, "Be sensible and store up precious treasures—don't waste them like a fool." We won't be able to navigate the challenges of change if we gulp down all of our resources foolishly.

Never Stop Learning

Meriwether Lewis was placed in charge of the Corps of Discovery because he was a skilled river explorer. Unfortunately, that expertise was not going to be very helpful as the expedition crossed the Rockies; he had to be open to learning new ideas and skills. We can only imagine the disaster that would have occurred if he had pretended that the mountain range was a river just so he could rely on his expertise.

Peter Drucker, a great writer and thinker on business management, once said: "We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change." When confronted with new challenges brought about by times of change, far too many people stubbornly rely on outdated knowledge or irrelevant expertise. They feel they have already learned all they need to know.

God, on the other hand, encourages us to be on a lifelong pursuit of knowledge. "An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge" (Proverbs 18:15). A failure to continue pursuing and obtaining knowledge will both waste our God-given mental resources and precipitate failure.

Possess Unyielding Commitment

It is very difficult for anyone to achieve anything of note without being fully committed, and so it was with the Corps of Discovery. Once the decision was made to cross the Rocky Mountains there was no turning back. Even though they were disappointed to realize that the hardest part of the journey was still ahead of them, they steeled their emotions in order to achieve their goal. Their mission would have likely failed had they continually whined and complained as they ascended the mountains.



That expertise was not going to be very helpful as the expedition crossed the Rockies; he had to be open to learning new ideas and skills.

