

Economic Crisis! Recession? Technology to the Rescue



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I recently read a study that reported giving to non-profits has started to decline due to the economy. Last year's corn reserve is gone and this year the crop will be much less, driving up the cost of food and gas. With rising gas prices, everything is higher and ALL plastic products will cost more. And our largest churches have become dependent on a membership that drives 10-30 miles to

attend services. The good news is that churches now have access to IT tools and technology that can meet the growing problems our nation is facing!

I hope you will take the time to read the special feature in this month's issue about being prepared for higher gas prices. I am old enough to remember the gas lines in the late 70's, and I started Christian Computing Magazine during the recession in the early 90's. Back then, there seemed little that churches could do to help, at least in the area of technology. However, now that we have the Internet, we can reach out to people to help them stay connected (see the review of Groups Interactive for Small Group management and connection tools), and service such as ChurchRides (a neat tool to help your members connect for carpooling) can be accessed from your church website for just a few dollars a month.

So many companies have created tools to help church memberships stay connected, that during a time when "driving down to the church" might now have to be weighed between the food budget, it is nice to know that so many tools are available to help churches minister and keep their members connected.

It is also interesting to note that while there seems to be great concern about the rising costs of about everything, in the area of technology, one segment doubled in sales last month, smart phones. I believe this is an obvious sign that over the next couple of years, mobile computing with broadband connection by handheld devices is going to become very impor-

tant. We will be watching this trend in technology and will keep you informed on how applications will develop that will help churches enhance and expand their ministry using these new devices and tools! I know that churches are already voicing their need to send text messages to their members and that IM is quickly replacing email as the new tool to communicate with teens and those in their early 20's. Let me know how you are using mobile computing and smart phones for ministry. I would love to hear from you!

Together We Serve Him

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Steve Hewitt', written in a cursive style.