

The Generosity Revolution, Part 2: Change the View

How can you lead a generosity revolution in your church?

Earlier this month we celebrated Independence Day in the U. S. – observing the birth of our nation with the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

In reality, America wasn't "born" that day – real independence wasn't settled for another seven years. And in one sense of the word, we as a nation struggle for independence every day in myriad ways.

The same could be said for generosity in your life and in your church. By whatever definition you attach to generosity, you may feel as if you've "arrived" and you lead a generous life. Your church may also be a shining example of generosity in your community.

But the far more common state of both individuals and churches is not living generous life. You may be following some practices of generosity, but you can't seem to get over the hump. You lead a church in the same situation.

Maybe it's time for a generosity revolution in both your life and your church.

SOLUTION: Integrate your perspective of generosity

THE QUICK SUMMARY - Peter Harris & Rod Wilson, [*Keeping Faith in Fundraising*](#)

Fundraising has always been an essential element of the Christian life: churches, schools, and many other organizations rely on it to function. But it is a risky enterprise, fraught with questions and challenges. How can Christians raise funds with integrity?

In *Keeping Faith in Fundraising*, Peter Harris and Rod Wilson, experienced fundraisers themselves, bring fundraising within the scope of normal Christian life and work. They consider fundraising in light of the relationships that lie at its heart—with God, with creation, and with ourselves.

After first laying a biblical foundation by discussing 2 Corinthians 8–9, Harris and Wilson develop seven themes central to the giving and receiving of money: integration, people, work, success, need, method, and money. In a final section, the authors offer their own personal experiences, questions, suggestions, and valuable insights that they have gained from their many years of fundraising as Christians.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Success in generosity is 100% impossible without embracing the principle that God owns everything. We are stewards of a small few things that God owns.

The realization that all that we are comes from God and belongs to God leads us to the practice of generosity. This issue of ownership undergirds our theology of giving. We either believe that our material resources belong to God, and we are to manage them, for God's purposes, or that they belong to us, and we can do with them as we please.

Generosity results from a reorientation in our thinking about how we find contentment in life. Contentment is determined by inner spiritual qualities, not by outward circumstances, visible achievements, or material comforts.

Fundraisers need to bring the entire integrated perspective of the triune God to bear on every area of life, including giving.

Christian life and all aspects of it need to be integrated around a fundamental commitment to who God is and how he functions in the world. In other words, we do not have one perspective for so-called spiritual factors, like church, prayer, or worship, and quite a different perspective for things like money, economics, and fundraising.

While the church is under the full Lordship of Christ, many leaders act as if the raising of money for the church is under some other canopy.

Christian organizations and churches that have departments or designated individuals who are supposed to raise funds "for the ministry" need to drop this language and recognize that the philanthropic enterprise should be seen as integrated into the ministry, having as much need to depend on God's empowerment as any other aspect of the work.

Through our wealth and investments we are constantly transforming a world that is God's handiwork and not just "our" society or "our" environment. We need to recognize that all of our requests for funds have an influence on the world, a world that does not belong to us. An excessive and sole focus on financial returns runs the risk of unsustainably pressing creation to produce even more money with no regard for the cost to creation.

In the end, a lack of integration creates fragmentation for fundraisers, and as it is communicated to donors, it can become seriously unhelpful to them, too. Separation between the secular and the sacred is intensified. Material matters are separated from the spiritual. Most importantly, the Lordship of Christ is eroded and his rightful place is compromised.

Peter Harris & Rod Wilson, [*Keeping Faith in Fundraising*](#)

A NEXT STEP

Evaluate your own personal habits related to money, stewardship, and generosity. What is your concept of "ownership" really like?

Does the idea that you are a temporary beneficiary motivate you to use all that God has entrusted to you to the highest purposes? Why or why not?

How can this perspective help you make better decisions and deepen your spiritual sense of community and responsibility?

Reflect on a time when operating from the perspective of a “steward” (as opposed to an “owner”) gave you a sense of satisfaction, fulfillment, or happiness. How can you reorient your life to make that a regular pattern of life instead of a random event?

What would it look like for you to honor God with all your “stuff,” not just financial resources?

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