

Generosity Starts at the Top

How do I keep our budget from turning inward?

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Matthew 6:21

Jesus directed these words to the crowds at the Sermon on the Mount, but their truth is just as appropriate for your church today.

If you are concerned that your church is beginning to become more inward-focused, take a look at the finances: If more of your church's funds are being used to keep the machinery of the church moving and to keep the members happy, rather than to fund the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, you have a big problem.

The inward focus of financial matters is symptomatic of a heart problem. When a church consistently directs resources and energy more toward its own needs than the need to reach their community and the world, decline toward death becomes a natural result.

If you are concerned that you are on the this path, start with YOU. Model generosity so it becomes a driving force in your church.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Leading a Generous Church](#), by Todd McMichen

What kind of help would people receive if the only training they were given on money came from the church? *Leading a Generous Church: Making Disciples without Chasing Money* takes your team through a step-by- step process to develop a generosity playbook that delivers unprecedented confidence and clarity.

Using the book of Proverbs as its foundation, the resulting playbook is an innovative tool that provides a fresh perspective on generosity - one that will truly grow passionately generous disciples.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Pastors always desire a generous culture, but very few know what it really is and are willing to do the work to experience it. They tend to default toward doing nothing (except complaining) or executing yet another quick fix, short-term remedy. While there are a few necessary ingredients for true generosity, the one absolute is that the senior pastor must model and lead the way.

If you want to lead a generous church, the senior leadership must become passionate about generosity.

Your heart must be overcome. Stewardship must be a driving force shaping your culture. Be mindful that a generous culture produces many results beyond a surplus of finances. It helps with volunteerism, impact in society, personal faith, and a more positive disposition. I have never met an unhappy, over-stressed, or weary obedient servant. Who doesn't want these positive characteristics to permeate church culture?

Often when churches pursue generosity, they pursue more money. The pursuit of money is not the same as producing a generous disciple. Money can be gained quickly, but the strategy can contain unintended negative results. If the ill-gotten gain is money, the proper gain must be a transformed disciple. And that transformed disciple may need to begin with you.

- Todd McMichen, [Leading a Generous Church](#)

A NEXT STEP

Anchor generosity within your existing set of core values by crafting 2-3 "demonstrated by" statements for each, showing how stewardship is lived out in the culture of the church. Then locate one to two verses for each value, to provide Biblical encouragement, discipleship, and direction toward generosity.

Value Illustration: **"Life-Giving Conversations"**

We are passionate about the power of uplifting conversation. Our words come from our heart and the generous heart of God will be loud.

- Demonstrated by telling stories at leadership meetings of how life change is occurring in ministry areas due to the positive generosity of our people.
- Demonstrated by expressing thankfulness in our worship services for the abundant generosity we have received both from God our provider and our people on a weekly basis.
- Demonstrated by personally thanking volunteers and investors one on one.

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

(Proverbs 18:21 NIV)

And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

(2 Corinthians 8:5 NIV)

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your

sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

(2 Corinthians 8:9 NIV)

Language is one of the most important tools you have as a leader. With language you direct, inspire, inform, and communicate. Clear communication and modeling are actually the two most basic activities in a leadership relationship. You show; you instruct.

Clearly demonstrating agreed upon values in your own words, grounded in scripture is empowering. When you are in a collaborative environment and your team understands how your values impact all ministries, it will provide both accountability and direction for your team.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders. SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

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