

feature article

April 8, 2008 | Issue #70



The Genesis of Generosity

Creating Cultures of Generosity in Churches

by Pat Springle

This article was excerpted from the concept paper [The Genesis of Generosity: First Steps Toward Creating Cultures of Generosity in Churches](#).

A growing number of church leaders today are taking bold steps to help their people become truly generous.

Gripped with a sense of accountability before God for the enormous wealth we enjoy in our culture, these leaders teach, preach . . .

[MORE](#)

Want more resources on money and giving? Check out the resources on [Leadership Network's website](#). Also be sure to add "News about Generous Churches" and "Salary Survey" to your list of profile interests.

[Update Your Profile](#)

leadership network news



Members of "Generous Church" Group Give More

While the average American allocates \$26.86 per week (3.1% of adjusted gross income) toward charitable giving according to the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, participants in Leadership Network's Generous Churches Leadership Community exceed that giving rate by 96%.

[MORE](#)

WANTED: SALARY SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



Want to participate in the 2008 Salary and Economic Outlook update? [Click here](#) to let us know to include you in the upcoming survey.

in brief

CONFERENCES WE RECOMMEND

WHITE BOARD

White Board Sessions

Thursday May 22, 2008
Hyatt Regency Hotel in Reston, VA

[Information or Registration](#)

One day, eight influential leaders including, Ed Stetzer, Mark Dever, Tim Stevens, John Burke, Vince Antonucci, Perry Noble, Mark Batterson, and Darrin Patrick.

In this month's episode of *Audio Advance*, Liz Swanson talks with Dave Travis about recovery ministry churches that are leading the way in effectively helping those struggling with various addictions.

These ministries are seeing the wounded find support in the body of Christ and changing entire church cultures.



[MORE](#)

leadership network blogs



Lead Your Own Capital Campaign

Attend Church Solutions' One Day Training at one of two locations:

Kansas City, MO - May 12, 2008

Hosted by Pleasant Valley Baptist Church - Liberty, MO

Dallas, TX - May 15, 2008

Hosted by Lake Pointe Church - Rockwall, TX

Raise More - Spend Less

Steve Stroope, Lead Pastor of Lake Pointe Church, Rockwall, Texas will equip you to lead your own capital campaign.

[▶ Information or Registration](#)

question OF THE WEEK

What is your financial cost per attender?

[▶ click here to reply](#)



Digital @ Leadership Network



[10 Easy Steps for Faithbooking Your Faith](#)



[Quick Workshop on Basic Internet Technologies](#)



Learnings @ Leadership Network



[THIS Is a Big Idea](#)



Books @ Leadership Network



[New Forms of Church?](#)

advance archives



Visit Leadership Network *Advance* Archives for valuable information on a variety of ministry topics, including the links to recent issues listed below. Select [VIEW ARCHIVES LIST](#) for the full list of Advance archives.

[▶ Generosity Needs More Than a Sermon](#)

[▶ Beyond "Making Budget" for Your Church](#)

[▶ Continual Capital Campaigns the "New Reality" for Larger Churches](#)

[VIEW ARCHIVES LIST ▶](#)

featured resources

Ministering to High Capacity Givers



PODCAST

How do churches connect with high capacity givers? How do you develop genuine relationships with them, challenging their spiritual growth toward increasing generosity while avoiding the dreaded sales pitch for a financial commitment?

Join Byron Van Kley, former director of generous churches leadership communities, as he moderates a panel discussion with four leaders experienced in ministering to high capacity givers.

[Download It](#)

© COPYRIGHT 2008 - LEADERSHIP NETWORK - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

[YOUR FEEDBACK](#) | [PRINTER FRIENDLY VERSION](#)

LEADERSHIP NETWORK **ADVANCE** CONNECT. INNOVATE. MULTIPLY.

[LEADERSHIP NETWORK HOME](#) | [LEADERSHIP COMMUNITIES](#) | [RESOURCES](#)

[SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE](#) | [FORWARD TO A FRIEND](#)

This article was excerpted from the concept paper [The Genesis of Generosity: First Steps Toward Creating Cultures of Generosity in Churches](#).

A growing number of church leaders today are taking bold steps to help their people become truly generous.

Gripped with a sense of accountability before God for the enormous wealth we enjoy in our culture, these leaders teach, preach, celebrate and model the perspective that giving is much more than financial stewardship and tithing.

Rather, they understand that God calls us to generous living in all aspects of life in response to his overwhelming generosity to us.

From his study of the motives and methods of some of these leaders, Leadership Network's Christopher Willard observes that these churches use different models, but they share some common convictions.

"Churches that are becoming known for their generosity are moving away from a campaign mentality that focuses on giving primarily in response to needs such as building programs," Christopher says. "Instead, these leaders are creating a pervasive culture of generosity that captures hearts, reinforces values, and connects a wide range of resources with needs in specific, tangible ways."

Senior pastor Brian Tome of [Crossroads Community Church](#) (Cincinnati, OH) is an example of one of those leaders. When Brian became the first pastor of the church, he learned some valuable lessons from other church planters.

"They regretted that they hadn't talked about money early enough," Brian remembers. "By not talking about God's perspective of money and possessions, they conditioned people to become consumers instead of givers."

Brian learned from their mistakes. From the beginning of Crossroads, he spoke often about money, sent out quarterly giving statements and motivated people by telling stories of changed lives through their generous giving.

About five years ago, Brian sat in the atrium of the church's new building. The church had doubled in three months, and that day God gave him an important insight. They would soon outgrow the building they'd just built, so they'd have to build a bigger facility . . . and then a larger one, and later a still larger one.

"It looked like an endless treadmill," he remembers. He and his leadership team developed a larger vision, one for the kingdom instead of for their church.

"We realized we're not here just to fund our local church ministry," Brian relates. "We're part of a revolution God initiated to change the world. The revolution starts with every person at our church being a blessing to people around them—and eventually, being a blessing to people around the world. That's what God promised Abraham in Genesis 12."

Brian believes that all people want to be about something bigger than themselves. Instead of talking about tithing as a moralistic obedience to give 10%, Crossroads regularly presents "bold asks" that challenge people to love God and their neighbor with greater devotion, energy, and generosity.

At its core, the culture of Crossroads gives every person who walks through the door an opportunity to fulfill his or her God-given desire to make a difference and change lives. Generosity isn't a program--being a blessing is a passion that permeates everything they are, everything they say, and everything they do.

Churches that are known for their generosity began this emphasis from a variety of first causes, and they use different models to teach and equip people to be more generous. However, they have several perspectives and practices in common:

- They look to God's generosity as the ultimate example. "We become what we behold, so we behold God to become like him," says Sam Crabtree, executive pastor at [Bethlehem Baptist Church](#) (Minneapolis, MN)
- They realize that stewardship is not just about money. As people know and love Christ, he changes them from the inside out and gives them a generous heart in every aspect of life.
- They recognize the corrosive effects of our consumer culture, and they speak about it often and well.



Want more resources on money and giving? Check out the resources on [Leadership Network's website](#). Also be sure to add "News about Generous Churches" and "Salary Survey" to your list of profile interests.

► Update Your Profile

- They use available resources from credible Christian organizations.
- They celebrate church-wide and individual steps forward as they see God change selfishness and complacency into true generosity.

Each of these church leaders has a myriad of stories to tell about men and women, young and old, whose lives God has transformed and who experience the joy of generosity. Beyond the concepts, theology, principles, and strategies, changed lives motivate these leaders to keep pursuing generosity in their own lives and throughout their congregations.

▶ Post Your Comments

▶ View Comments

◀ BACK

© COPYRIGHT 2008 - LEADERSHIP NETWORK - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

YOUR FEEDBACK | PRINTER FRIENDLY VERSION

LEADERSHIP NETWORK **ADVANCE** CONNECT. INNOVATE. MULTIPLY.

LEADERSHIP NETWORK HOME | LEADERSHIP COMMUNITIES | RESOURCES

SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE | FORWARD TO A FRIEND

leadership network news

While the average American allocates \$26.86 per week (3.1% of adjusted gross income) toward charitable giving according to the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, participants in Leadership Network's Generous Churches Leadership Community exceed that giving rate by 96%.

Members of churches in that network give an average of \$52.75 weekly (6.1% of adjusted gross income). Furthermore, giving rates among Generous Churches members continue to rise each year.

Churches that are committed to both increased giving and outreach can effect real change in their communities. [Click here](#) for more on Generous Churches and available resources.

Want to participate in the 2008 Salary and Economic Outlook update? [Click here](#) to let us know to include you in the upcoming survey.

In this month's episode of *Audio Advance*, Liz Swanson talks with Dave Travis about recovery ministry churches that are leading the way in effectively helping those struggling with various addictions. These ministries are seeing the wounded find support in the body of Christ and changing entire church cultures.



WANTED: SALARY
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



AUDIO
ADVANCE ▶



◀ BACK

© COPYRIGHT 2008 - LEADERSHIP NETWORK - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

YOUR FEEDBACK | PRINTER FRIENDLY VERSION

in brief

CONFERENCES WE RECOMMEND

White Board Sessions

Thursday May 22, 2008
Hyatt Regency Hotel in Reston, VA

One day, eight influential leaders including, Ed Stetzer, Mark Dever, Tim Stevens, John Burke, Vince Antonucci, Perry Noble, Mark Batterson, and Darrin Patrick.

[▶ Information or Registration](#)

The logo for "White Board Sessions" features the words "WHITE" and "BOARD" in a bold, sans-serif font. Between the two words is a stylized red icon of a whiteboard with a red border.

Lead Your Own Capital Campaign

Attend Church Solutions' One Day Training at one of two locations:

Kansas City, MO - May 12, 2008
Hosted by Pleasant Valley Baptist Church
Liberty, MO

Dallas, TX - May 15, 2008
Hosted by Lake Pointe Church
Rockwall, TX

Raise More - Spend Less

Steve Stroope, Lead Pastor of Lake Pointe Church, Rockwall, Texas will equip you to lead your own capital campaign.

[▶ Information or Registration](#)



[◀ BACK](#)