



Generous Life

Communicating Generosity (Made Easier)

Developed by

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INTRODUCTION:

There are a number of topics which seem to cause some degree of distress for some Corps Officers, Corps Leaders and those who attend our meetings. Some which come to mind and will feature in this booklet are:

- Tithes and Offerings.
- Preaching on Giving.
- Living Generously.
- Good Stewardship.

Vital ingredients in our worship, in our corps life, in our personal lives. Yet they are topics which are often avoided. Why? Well the reasons are varied and we will address some of them. In any case, these are important elements of our worship and no matter how much we might want to avoid them, we really can't.

So where does this come from?

HISTORY:

The reality that so many people feel uncomfortable talking about money and teaching about God's generosity to us and our giving to God. We have made it a sacred cow! It must not be new because giving and money is mentioned 3,500 times in the Bible. So obviously God thought it was something we needed to know about. This is mentioned more than love and peace, which some would find surprising.

So if it God teaches us repeatedly in the Bible about giving and being generous, why are we so reluctant to teach about it? I won't go into the whole church history, but will look a little closer to home.

Seeker Sensitive Services were all the rage in the late 1980's and into the 1990's and some of the teachings from that time are still promoted or at least experienced today. This was a part of the Church Growth movement within The Salvation Army. We are experiencing today that some of the teaching from that time has been extremely detrimental to how we worship today.

One of the elements of Seeker Sensitive Services was to not make people feel uncomfortable. They were to be happy, not challenged and not asked to give financially. This is where we still have officers who will announce prior to the tithes and offerings that 'If you are a visitor here, please don't feel obliged to

give. This is something for our congregation.’ What a wonderful way to make people feel included.

GENEROSITY CULTURE:

We are now endeavouring to build a culture of generosity within our corps. Moving away from the theology of ‘we don’t have to give’ or ‘we won’t mention giving or finances because that might upset someone’ or ‘we don’t want to talk about anything uncomfortable’.

We are standing against this thinking and saying that we need to be more generous. We have too many corps filled with selfish, inwardly thinking people. We need to open our eyes to the world around us and see what is going on. We need to see how we can be involved. We need to stop thinking about ourselves all the time and think about others. We need to stop being greedy and be generous.

Basically we need to acknowledge that God is our Provider, everything we have comes from Him. It is not ours. We are just stewards. We are all stewards. We are either good ones or bad ones.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

All aspects of our meeting is worship. We don’t move in and out of worship, as sometimes can be said or implied. The giving of our tithes and offerings is an extension of our worship. It is not a break in the meeting so we can catch up on what’s been happening.

Just as we would not expect people to carry on conversations during songs or announcements or the sermon, why is it that it is almost expected that people will break out into discussions while we give of our tithes and offerings?

The way we introduce this time of worship could have a lot to do with it. If we flippantly say “Your tithes and offerings will now be taken up” then can we be surprised that our people don’t see this as a time of worship?

INTRODUCING TITHES & OFFERINGS

Connect to Vision: Make sure to draw the lines between what you are talking about and the larger vision of the corps. Show people how the giving of our tithes and offerings connects with fulfilling the mission.

Be Joyful: When you introduce this time in worship, be joyful. The opportunity to give is a joyous experience when we can respond to God's generosity to us.

Don't Apologise: Bringing our worship to God through our time, talents and treasure is not a negative experience. Don't apologise for bringing people into this meaningful time of worship.

Here are some thoughts that may assist in bringing our people into a time of worship during this period in our services.

- We now come to a significant time in our worship to God when we are able to say thank you and give God our thanks for His provision. We are blessed every day and we now have opportunity to show our thankfulness by bringing our tithes and offerings to God.
- We are reminded in scripture that God is the provider of all things. Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." If we belong to Christ, it's logical that everything we have truly belongs to Him. When we give to God, we are just taking our hands off what already belongs to Him. God is our provider. As we bring our tithes and offerings to Him, we are reminded of that. We are reminded that it is in God we trust, not ourselves. We trust Him to be our provider.
- God is the provider of every good thing in your life. We reminded of that in James 1:17 "Every good and perfect give is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights". Sometimes we can find ourselves too reliant on our employers, or the government or even ourselves and think they are the providers. But when we acknowledge that God is our provider and that is who we place our trust in, we can be assured that He

will never let us down. We now have the opportunity to give thanks to God for His blessings. We now have an opportunity to show that we put God first in our finances and in our lives.

- We are each blessed by God with time, talents and treasures. We are called to be stewards of those blessings. At this time we are able to acknowledge the blessings from God of our treasures or finances. We "give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." (Psalm 107:1) God is good. God is love. We are blessed by Him in order to be a blessing to others. We pray that as we bring our tithes and offerings to God that we will see people blessed.
- Malachi 3:10 says "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this", says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be enough to store it." The only area that we are allowed to test God is in this area. God wants us to trust Him in all things. Often though our finances are the last things we allow God to have anything to do with, even though everything we have comes from Him. This test comes with a promise. The promise of so many blessings being poured out that we won't have room to store it. We want and need God's blessings to be poured out upon us, our congregation, our community and the ministries He has called us to do. It all starts with us saying Yes to God. Yes we trust You, we give You our all, we put our trust in You. May God bless us as we bring our tithes and offerings to Him.

Other ideas which can help create the right atmosphere:

- Show a clip (ideas are on our web site & kluth.org.int.htm)
- Show a PowerPoint scripture slide during the offering (kluth.org/intl.htm)
- Pray the scripture from the slide after the offering
- Have someone share their testimony about God's generosity before the offering

TRANSPERECY OF FINANCES

An area which is often overlooked is sharing the financial situation of the corps with corps leadership and with corps folk. This information needs to be informative and honest. It should also be linked to the mission and ministries of the corps. Particularly showing how finances coming in from the public are being used for ministries with people in the community.

The running of the corps should be financed through the internal giving of the people who attend the corps, not the people in the street. Sadly we often find that the people in the community support the corps better than those who attend, and sends the message that they believe in what the Army is doing more than it's members.

This is something the Corps Officers and Corps Leadership need to discuss and be of one mind about.

- So set a goal.
- Determine current income – internal through giving and external through hotels, street ministries, cake stalls and family stores.
- Now determine your expenses – and break down into some categories.
- Is there support funding from The Salvation Army? How much?
- What ministries are being funded and where are they funded from?
- What are the outcomes of those ministries? Share the great stories.
- With regard the giving through envelopes, EFT and open plate, what would a reasonable goal be? Is it may be the goal to get off support funding so that money can be released to other ministries or corps.
- Share that goal with your people.
- How has the corps been doing with other sacrificial giving such as Self Denial?
- What is the involvement with Red Shield?
- Are you in need of people to help lead or assist in some ministries currently happening? Share some stories from those ministries.

When you present to your corps, a PowerPoint will be helpful so people can see what you are referring to. Here is a suggestion. You could use this as a guide.

POWERPOINT available at: <http://salvos.org.au/generouslife/f-a-q-s/>

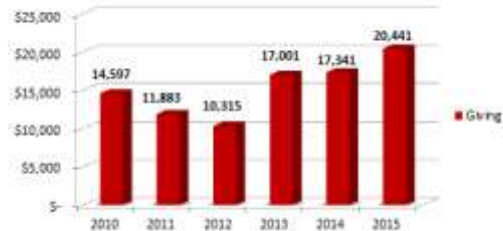


NAME OF CORPS
date

Our journey to generosity



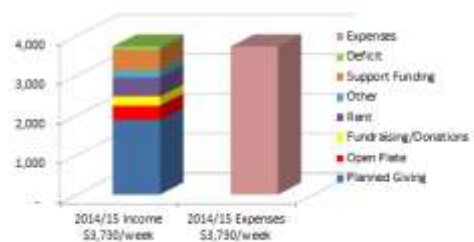
Self-Denial Giving at XXXXX



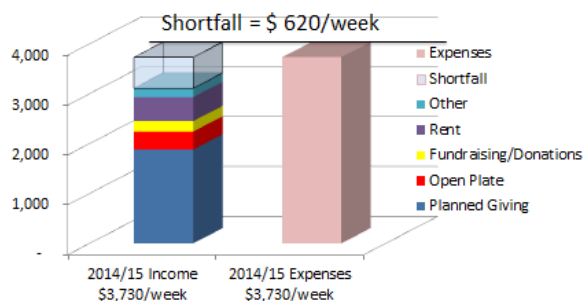
From January 2014 till February 2015,
our average weekly giving increased from
\$1, 620 per week to \$ 2, 240 per week...

...an increase of \$620 (or 38%)

Our circumstances at Mar 1st 2015



Our challenge



To complete our journey to OVERFLOW,
we needed to see giving rise
from \$2, 240/week to \$2, 860/week...

... a further increase of \$620 (or 28%)



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Continuing our journey...



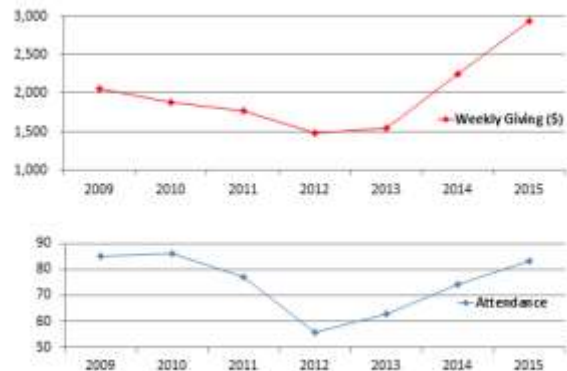
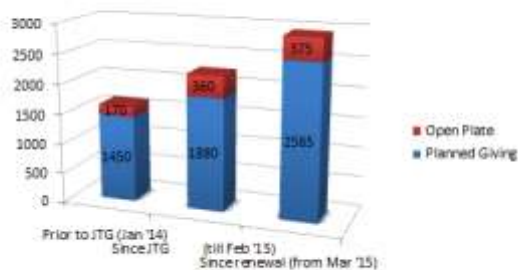
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A summary of our recent weekly giving

At Jan 2014	\$ 1,620
Feb 2014 – Feb 2015	\$ 2,240 (+38%)
March – April 2015	\$ 2,940 (+31%)

Since Jan '14, the average weekly giving in our church has increased by \$1,320 (+81%)

Our growing generosity



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**You must each decide in your heart how much to give.
And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure.
"For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."**

**And God will generously provide all you need.
Then you will always have everything you need and
plenty left over to share with others.**

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 (NLT)



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Our Generosity Vision

**"... you will always have everything you
need and plenty left over to share with
others..."**

Overflow



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**TO GOD BE THE
GLORY!**

As the journey continues...

OTHER IDEAS AND RESOURCES:

Here are some web sites that we recommend you check out these. More details about them can be found at:

<http://salvos.org.au/generouslife/resources/ministry-leaders/sermons-and-teaching-ideas/>

10 IDEAS TO IMPROVE GIVING IN YOUR CHURCH

<http://chucklawless.com/2014/04/10-ideas-improve-giving-church/>

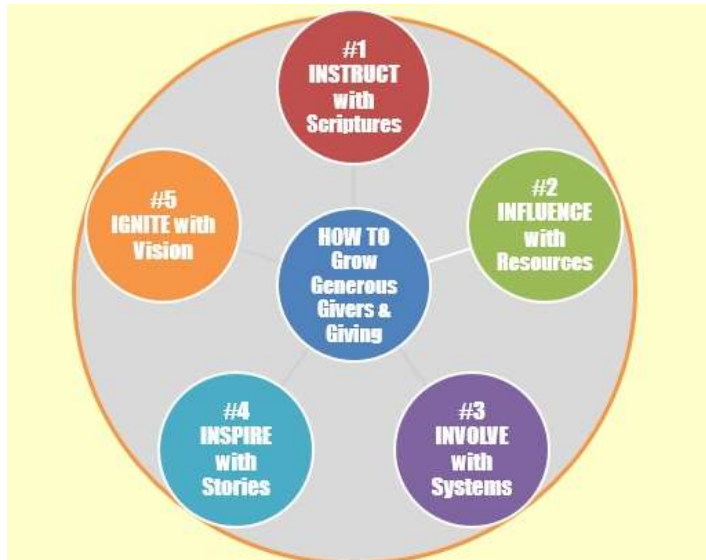
1. Teach what the Bible teaches
2. Model sacrificial giving
3. Passionately and clearly cast a God-sized vision for your congregation
4. Teach budgeting and spending – not just giving
5. Train children and students to give
6. Promote incremental increases
7. Tell the stories of changed lives
8. Lead your church to drip with financial integrity
9. Challenge the church with a “Day of Sacrificial Giving”
10. Guide your church to pray as Jesus taught us, “Give us this day our daily bread”

13 THINGS TO DO WHEN YOUR CHURCH IS HURTING FINANCIALLY

1. Don't panic
2. Give thanks
3. Pray
4. Investigate
5. Ask around
6. Pray more
7. Teach your people
8. Call the staff in
9. Should you enlarge the team?
10. Stand together
11. Stay focused
12. Set a good example
13. Wait on the Lord

More details about this are at:

5 WAYS TO GROW GENEROUS GIVERS AND GIVING:

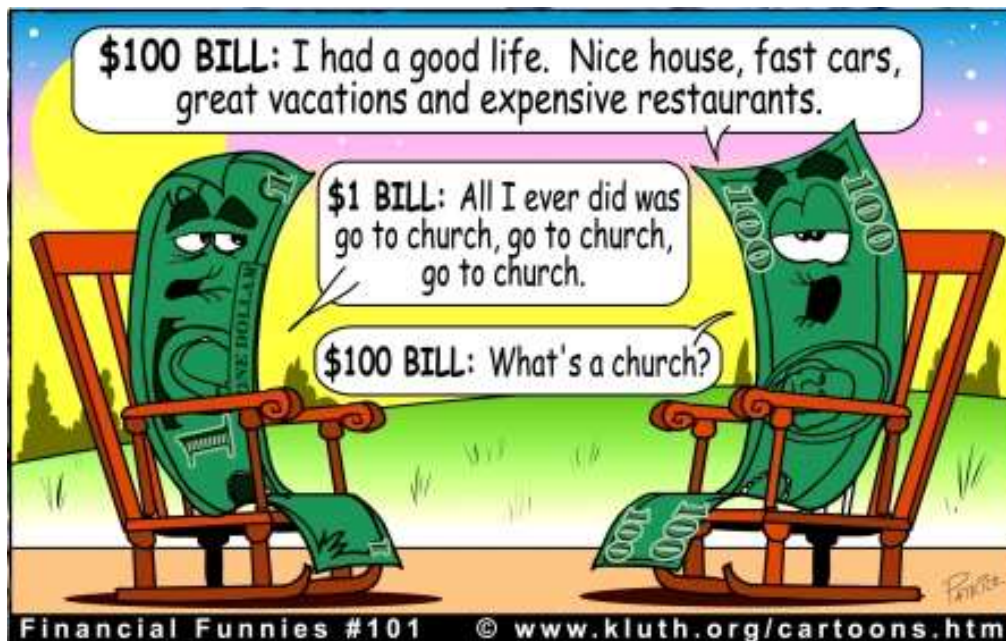


7 ATTRIBUTES OF A GENEROUS CHURCH:

1. A generous church has generous staff and lay leaders
2. A generous church has a strong vision of why it exists and communicates it effectively to its members.
3. A generous church has a strong external focus that is reflected in its budget.
4. A generous church teaches a holistic theology of stewardship, generosity and the Kingdom.
5. A generous church provides discipleship environments for people to work out the art and science of stewardship and generosity.
6. A generous church has an organizational culture that supports the priesthood of all believers.
7. A generous church stewards the church's finances effectively.

Also on this website page you will find:

- How to preach on generosity and giving
- Various sermon ideas



\$100 BILL: I had a good life. Nice house, fast cars, great vacations and expensive restaurants.

\$1 BILL: All I ever did was go to church, go to church, go to church.

\$100 BILL: What's a church?