

Church, in our latest issue of Advance there are three things to be aware of.

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Leadership  Network *Advance*



When I Ask Churches About Generosity and Stewardship

By Dave Travis

When I ask churches about generosity and stewardship I get answers that fall into one of several buckets.

Sample answer buckets include:

1. “Pray and hope it comes in because we don’t like to talk about money...we think it scares folks away.” For many churches this was the default answer a decade ago.
2. “We promote giving by giving people lots of ways to give and reminding them of those options.” These tend to come from teams wanting to add a variety of giving channels.
3. “When we are running a bit short of cash, we do a sermon series or one-time challenge to get people on track in this area.” This answer comes not only from lead preaching pastors but governing board members who feel that if the pastor will just preach more on the subject, change will happen.
4. “We do all our discipling through special small groups that focus on this area on a frequent basis.” The multiplicity of options has really grown in this area.
5. “Our people are not wealthy so we don’t emphasize stewardship, tithing or generosity at all.”
6. “We rely on a few large givers to carry our financial needs.” They don’t quite say it that way, but when you look at their reports, that is what they functionally do.
7. “We have a systematic plan to address money, finances and growing a disciple in generosity in multiple ways over time. We adjust that regularly based on our people’s needs, not our church’s desire for funds.” This is the least mentioned answer, but one that tends to come from churches that have been through one of our programs.

While the above statements are not verbatim quotes to protect the guilty, they represent

some of the phone calls I get on the subject.

After I get any of these statements I usually ask: "Why?"

I get thoughtful answers. Everyone easily justifies their view.

But when I ask them to estimate the number of people in their church that are growing in their own practice of stewardship and generosity, the conversation changes.

This is not about whether your church is small or large, or how much money is coming in. This is more about how we teach, train and encourage people to grow in this area.

In a culture where money is an idol and stumbling block, we need to have consistent, regular ways to break the hold of money in people's lives to grow them in the faith.

Breakdown of the Answers

My own view is that **answer 1 doesn't help anyone at all**. People want to know if God wants to address this area in their life.

Answer 2 is great but not sufficient. We now have many great ways people can give to the church, but we need to be discipling them on the why.

Number 3 basically believes that people listen to your message. While it's true they do and we should be regularly preaching and teaching on this, it is not sufficient to actually make a long-term difference in an individual's life.

The comment on **answer 4 is getting closer to actually helping an individual or family**. In a life-on-life group they can work out some of their own issues and wrestle between God's teaching and their situation. Hopefully a good leader can guide them. But if they never hear about it in any other way, how will that be reinforced?

When you look at answer 5, **I think that is just an excuse**. I agree that there are some impoverished churches in under resourced neighborhoods, but that is not a reason not to teach, preach and celebrate the generosity that is there.

Answer 6 is more common than you would think. As I mentioned, once we help churches analyze their giving patterns, we see emphasis on helping those with the gift of giving and generosity. That's great. But we need to disciple our whole body.

Answer 7 is what we want to see. In fact we help churches get there in our ACCELERATOR process.

As our information sheet states: **[GROW YOUR PEOPLE. FUND YOUR MISSION.](#)**

We believe that leaders have a responsibility to always grow individuals and families in all areas of their lives. And because money has such a hold on people, generosity must be one of the key areas for our culture.

We also know churches need funds for mission.

For that reason, we have partnered with our friends from **Generis** to help church teams think creatively about their plans to grow their people and their vision for generosity and stewardship.

We bring the latest thinking in the field to you.

Our process engages church teams through three live gatherings where we bring unique insights and learnings from other churches. In addition to those insights we help you sort through the myriad of alternatives for doing this to find those that fit your church. We help you avoid the potholes and landmines that we have seen others encounter while regularly advising and coaching you along the way.

In between each session there are monthly coaching phone sessions and group calls to keep you on track to revamp and build up your church's overall vision, plan and actions in this key area. And, we are very excited that **Generis**, the premier consulting team in generosity and stewardship in the church, is partnering with us in leading this Accelerator. They will be participating in each of our in-person gatherings and will provide coaching for each church in between meetings.

It's all focused on building your church's capacity to better serve your church's people in ways that will most grow THEM. In turn we have seen multiplied resources financially for churches that adopt these mental models and practices.

So which of the seven answers at the beginning are you close to and why? I would love to hear your answer and help you think it through.

Just email me at dave.travis@leadnet.org.



SURVEY LAUNCH: Are You Paying Your Staff Enough? (Or Too Much)?

By Warren Bird, Director of Research

OPENING TODAY: Leadership Network has launched our “2018 Large-Church Salary, Benefits, Staff and Budget Survey.”

We believe it's the gold standard in large-church benchmarks and trends, enabling us to create trusted reports for pastors, boards and church HR leaders since 2001.

Here's what you will learn from the materials you help us produce:

1. Is your top-tier staff paid the "market" rate for churches your size?
2. What retirement contributions, bonuses and other benefits do churches like yours offer?
3. What ratios and benchmarks are most helpful for churches in your size range?
4. What percent of budget goes to staffing costs in large churches like yours?
5. Which salary and staffing issues might change as your church increases (or decreases) in size?

Here are five compelling reasons to participate:

1. Immediately upon survey completion, you'll receive "50 Great Ways Large Churches Save Money" -- free PDF.
2. Immediately upon survey completion, you'll receive "Activate the Power of Big Data to Grow Your Church" -- free PDF.
3. In May, for our first release of the findings, you'll receive an invitation for anyone in your church to a video webcast (open only to churches that participated in the survey) including Q&A with me, the survey director -- free.
4. As soon as we create the illustrated executive summary, we will email it directly to you -- free PDF.
5. You will have the satisfaction of helping literally thousands of other churches who will learn from you, anonymously of course.

Please participate now. Just ask the person in your church privy to salaries, budgets, attendances to go to research.net/r/churchsalary.



Things You Want to Know About

Opportunities for you and your team

***Kingdom Collaborators*, the Latest by Reggie McNeal - March 13**

The latest book from Reggie McNeal (Leadership Network Senior Fellow), releasing March 13, is titled *Kingdom Collaborators: 8 Signature Themes of Leaders Who Turn the*

World Upside Down (InterVarsity Press). We caught up to Reggie to ask him a few questions about this new installment of his thinking.

Advance: Where did this book come from? What prompted you to write it?

In my work with leaders in lots of settings I have observed some common traits exhibited by those who have strong kingdom impact, meaning these leaders make significant contributions to the quality of life for people in their sphere of influence. They frequently address some challenging situation or problem in their community. While many leaders perform their tasks splendidly inside their particular industry, these kingdom leaders distinguish themselves through their cross-domain collaboration to move the needle on big societal issues. Some are church leaders, others are leaders in the private sector, as well as government and education. I wanted to catalogue the characteristics—themes—of this kind of leadership.

Advance: What are your hopes for this book?

I wrote with several goals in mind. First, I wanted to celebrate and to encourage kingdom leaders. In church life we don't sometimes value community impact of people as we should. We tend to focus on the gifts and talents required to manage church programming. This leaves out a significant portion of those in our faith community whose major contribution is in kingdom endeavors that show up away from the church. By "kingdom endeavors" I mean efforts that help people experience "life as God intends," which is what I understand the kingdom to involve. I want kingdom leaders to know that what they do is critical to God's mission on planet Earth. Second, I want to help kingdom leaders know who they are. As they read this book, realizing that they possess these competencies and traits, I want them to say, "Hey, that's me!" Third, I give advice for all current and all would-be kingdom leaders on how to build on these qualities and themes to increase their capacity and influence as leaders.

Advance: How does this fit into the message of your previous books?

I've been privileged to be part of the missional conversation of the church for the past two decades. My thinking has evolved significantly as I've paid attention to what the Spirit seems to be saying to the church, particularly in the North American context, though I've learned a lot from my work with church leaders in other parts of the world, including Africa, India, Europe, and Australia, where in many cases the church experienced the collapse of Christendom before we did, and are further along in moving from a church-centric to a kingdom-centric orientation.

That shift, from church-focused to kingdom-focused, constitutes the biggest challenge to church leaders in this country who are still experiencing growth and "success" with their church programming. I hope this book will give them some pathway that connects them to the larger movement of God that is underway right now in our North American context. Church-as-institution has to chart a course to church-as-movement, both in form and function, if we want to be players in the massive realignment of how people are pursuing their spiritual quests in our culture. This will require leaders who get it. I want to help them

do just that.

You can [pick up a copy of Reggie's book at Amazon](#).

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