

# 10 Ways Pastors and Leaders Can Inspire Generosity and Increase Church Giving in ANY Economy

by [Brian Kluth](#) 3/3/2010

A national church survey finds that giving increased in only 39% of churches last year. In this economic climate, here are 10 ways church pastors and leaders can inspire generosity and increase giving so their church can focus on thriving instead of just surviving.

## 1 - INTENTIONALLY focus on stewardship as a matter of Christian discipleship

If we do not teach our people that Christ is Lord of ALL, is He really someone's Lord at all? While a Christian cannot serve God *AND* money, that must be taught to serve God *WITH* their money. Don't preach and teach on finances and giving for institutional survival, aim for transformed lives. No one is born generous. Generosity is something that must be taught and caught. I don't believe the heresy that God wants everyone to be rich, but I do believe that God wants everyone to LEARN to become more generous with whatever God has given them.

## 2 - INSPIRE people's generosity through true stories

The Bible is filled with stories of people's generosity - - the little boy with the 5 loaves and 2 fish, the Macedonians who gave in the midst of their poverty, the former slaves who gave their riches to build the tabernacle, David who shared his wealth to build the temple, the widow that fed Elijah from the little she had, the widow's mite, and many more. But also share true generosity stories from your own life and the lives of those in your congregation.

## 3 - INCLUDE financial/generosity teaching opportunities in the church worship service and annual calendar

In the worship service share an offertory verse or video. In your church calendar, consider sending out a 40 day generosity devotional that couples and families can go through together. Offer financial classes, Sunday school, and/or seminars throughout the year. Put generosity and financial literature/pamphlets/articles in the lobby literature racks, bulletin, newsletters, and giving statement mailings.



#### **4 - IGNORE the doom and gloom the-sky-is-falling media headlines**

Yes, we live in the midst of some challenging times. But when the headlines say unemployment hits 10% that means that 90% of our people are working! When the headlines indicate the stock market stumbles, the reality is that many of our people aren't dependent on the stock market for their weekly or monthly income. We are not to operate in fear, but in faith in a God who is bigger than the latest media headlines of our day. The reality is that if someone makes more than a \$1000/year, they are richer than 80% of the world's population. We need to teach our people to be faithful stewards and generous givers with whatever they have.

#### **5 - INVESTIGATE best practices and materials that can be adopted or adapted for use in your church**

Don't try to reinvent the wheel. There are a lot of proven resources available for your church to use. Ask the United Methodist Foundation or Google

#### **6 - INCREASE the number of ways you allow people to give**

For a number of years the debate has been should a church pass the plate or have a box in the back for offerings. Today, the answer is both and more! Pass the plate, have a box in the back, offer online giving, electronic check processing, stock transfers through a brokerage account, gifts-in-kind, and estate gifts.

#### **7 - INSTRUCT people from the Scriptures about finances and generosity**

We need to teach people to be faithful givers, not because the budget says so, but because the Bible says so. Our focus needs to be to teach people to be faithful givers to God, not to the church budget. Our goal is that our people please God, not the church finance committee. Church budgets are spending plans, not the giving goal. It is the Scriptures (all 2350 verses on finances, generosity, and material possessions) that will help people become faithful stewards and givers.

#### **8- IGNITE people's faith in God as their Provider**

I like to ask people, "What would you rather have - - what your company can pay you or what God can provide for you?" God is bigger than a paycheck or a pension. We need to teach people that their company may be their employer, but God is their Provider. He is bigger than stock markets, housing markets, and job markets. Too many people have had a Tom Cruise theology of "show me the money" attitude.

## **9 - INVOLVE people in giving opportunities beyond the general operating budget**

In addition to people's regular giving, churches can mobilize resources for benevolence needs, building projects, mission projects, crisis/relief ministry, camp scholarships, and special designated needs. Different people are motivated by different things. Wise churches know how to invite people's "over and above" giving to tap into the God-given desires people have to feel they are meeting a specific need.

## **10 - INFORM people of how their gifts are being used and helpful financial websites**

When you send out giving statements, include some type of financial newsletters that highlights church giving, special projects, missionaries being supported, and financial websites that can be of help to them.

About the author: BRIAN KLUTH is a pastor, speaker, radio teacher, and bestselling author. His [www.GenerousLife.org](http://www.GenerousLife.org) 40 Day Bible devotional has been ordered by 1300 churches to give to every family in their congregation to inspire generosity and increase giving. Kluth's annual [www.STATEofthePLATE.info](http://www.STATEofthePLATE.info) research surveys monitors church giving, budget, and generosity trends.