

Top Ten Resources for Encouraging Christian Generosity – Gary Hoag, May 25, 2010

Recently a friend who provides leadership for a local ministry asked me to recommend the top 10 books aside from the Bible and *Revolution in Generosity* by Wesley K. Willmer, for encouraging Christian generosity. Check these out and share them with people you think would enjoy them. Here's my list:

(10) *Enough: Discovering Joy through Simplicity and Generosity* by Adam Hamilton

Published in 2009, this great book is a quick read with interesting illustrations. Hamilton inspires the average American to shift from fear to faith in times of financial crisis and chart a course for finding joy through a life of simplicity and Christian generosity. I would recommend this book for leaders and lay people, anyone seeking to understand the countercultural reality of Christian contentment.

(9) *The Treasure Principle: Unlocking the Secret of Joyful Giving* by Randy Alcorn

This classic captures the eternal reality that “you can't take it with you but you can send it on ahead.” The keys Alcorn outlines are life changing, motivating literally millions of people to live life focused not on the now but on eternity. It has been shared with congregations and constituencies, challenging people to live and give more generously. Get the edition with “31 questions about your giving” in the back.

(8) *40 Day Spiritual Journey to a more Generous Life* by Brian Kluth

This is an incredible tool. As a pastor, Kluth packaged literally hundreds of biblical principles into 40 readings with famous quotes and practical worksheets for strategically growing in the practice of stewardship and generosity. This is another resource that has been proven to encourage spiritual growth in the lives of constituents who read it.

(7) *Fields of Gold: A Place Beyond Your Deepest Fears. A Prize Beyond Your Wildest Imagination* by Andy Stanley

Awesome book. Stanley reminds the reader using the metaphor of the farmer that what each of us has been entrusted with is seed. He also gets at the core of the spiritual issue that causes us to hoard rather than scatter our seed. If you share this book with a giver or a friend, they will thank you for it, as it will launch them toward a more generous life.

(6) *The Sower: Redefining the Ministry of Raising Kingdom Resources* by R. Scott Rodin and Gary G. Hoag

Before you bash me for self-promotion, consider this. If Christian fundraising is not really about raising up gifts but rather raising up givers and encouraging stewards to be rich toward God, I don't think you can find a better resource in 100 pages, that summarizes the

Top Ten Resources for Encouraging Christian Generosity – Gary Hoag, May 25, 2010

theology and practical process of inviting people to be involved in God's work. This work for board members and leaders will be released by the ECFA in June 2010.

(5) *The Spirituality of Fundraising* by Henri J. M. Nouwen

This book is the most clear, concise resource on the spiritual theology of fundraising not as taking money from people, but inviting them to deploy God-given resources to accomplish His work. It's a booklet that every board and staff member of every Christian non-profit should read. Everyone responsible for raising resources for ministry must should this book to guide their efforts.

(4) *Generosity: Moving Toward Life That is Truly Life* by Gordon MacDonald with Patrick Johnson of National Christian Foundation

If 40 days is too long, try this four-week tool by MacDonald and Johnson. It's great for groups interested in sojourning on the stewardship journey. It reads well, and is packaged in a devotional format with thought provoking questions. I would highly recommend this as a tool for helping a congregation or constituency grow in Christian generosity.

(3) *The Kingdom Assignment* by Denny and Leesa Bellesi

This is a great little book for challenging churches and constituencies to think about what God wants them to accomplish for his Kingdom. It'd be a great tool to use with K-12 or College age students to help them find their purpose in a world without focus or direction. Their website shows other applications of the book too. You can't read it without asking yourself, "What's my kingdom assignment?"

(2) *Heart, Soul and Money: A Christian View of Possessions* by Craig Blomberg

This resource encourages Christian generosity because it captures stewardship in the Scriptures like few other Bible study resources in a clear, concise manner. Pastors should read his exhaustive resource, *Neither Poverty Nor Riches*, but for students, small groups, boards and others interested in growing their biblical understanding of stewardship and generosity, you'll be surprised at how much you learn in reading this little book!

(1) *NIV Stewardship Study Bible* by Zondervan

I like the *NIV Stewardship Study Bible* because of the tools in it. You can use it as a Bible. You can read the inspirational profiles of stewards in the Scriptures. You will be inspired by the illumination quotes from saints through the centuries. You can dig deeper with the Bible reading schedules and the stewardship challenges. There's a lot in there and it's worth the investment and a good tool to share with board members and generous givers.