

A Theology of Fundraising

Intro

Throughout Scripture, we find many instances in which people gave to meet Kingdom needs. And the people involved were as varied as the locations and causes – at times coming from the most unlikely of places and the most surprising of sources. But always the exchange took place at the divine orchestration of God – through His leading, direction and moving in the midst of people. Sometimes it was from a heart of worship, and at other times, it was to meet a practical need. But always the result was a raising of the spiritual consciousness of people – a sense of knowing that God was at work and that a spiritual community existed beyond themselves for Something Greater.

Many think and have been taught that spiritual giving is merely the tithe to the church, but with a portrait of worship painted in the background – depicting responses because of what the Lord has done, we'll look at the intricate brush strokes of this portrait that indicate more to develop a theology of fundraising and broaden our Kingdom view. God used many means to accomplish His purposes – including fundraising. At His directive, people honorably solicited funds to further God's Kingdom. In this endeavor of discovering a theology of fundraising, you are encouraged to concentrate as you read the Scriptures on the asking – who was involved in the story and why they were motivated to ask or give. Read each Scripture passage fully, first allowing the Holy Spirit to openly impress upon your heart, then examine and determine the specifics as outlined below. In doing so, you will be amazed at God's design and purpose, and even more amazed at God, the Creator and Giver of all things.

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	Scriptural Reference	Who Gave?	Gave Where/To Whom?	Why Gave?	Recipients/Emphasis?	How Gave/What?
Non-Israelites	Exodus 3:22, 11:2-3 12:35-36	Egyptian neighbors	Israelite captives	“each (Israelite) man/woman ask his/her neighbor” => plundered 11:2-3	People of Israel establish nation build Tabernacle	gave articles of gold/silver, clothing
	I Kings 10:23-25 3:12-13 4:29-34 10:1-13 II Chronicles 9	“all the earth” Worldly Leaders/Kings Merchants/Traders “they brought every man his gift”	“Solomon became greater than all earthly kings in riches/wisdom” 4:29-30, 9:22	sought Solomon’s presence & wisdom “I have given you what you have not asked, both riches/honor so that there will not be any among kings like you all your days” 3:13	Solomon’s Temple Palace Nation of Israel	spoils/royal gifts spices, garments, weapons, horses/mules, gold/silver, ivory, precious stones apes/peacocks, trees
	I Kings 17:1-24	Widow in Zarephath (which belongs to Sidon)	Elijah	“Arise, go...I have commanded a widow there to provide for you” v.9	Personal provision for Elijah & Widow/son; Display of God’s Power & Proclaiming of God’s Glory by a non-Jew Acknowledgement of God by a non-Jew: foreshadow of salvation to include all nations	water/flour & oil (bread) “The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty until the day the Lord sends rain” v.14
	Ezra 1:1-11 6:1-12 7:15-23 Haggai 1:3-11	Cyrus, King of Persia neighbors residing with Israelite survivors (‘aliens’) King Darius King Artaxerxes Province of Babylon Royal Treasury & Treasurers of Trans-Euphrates God’s blessings/bounty	Israelite Exiles	“the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus...appointed me to build Him a house” “every survivor (Israelite) wherever he may live, let the men of that place support him” 1:2-4 ***** “let the full cost be paid from the royal treasury out of the taxes” 6:4,8-9 “whatever is needed” ***** “go up to the mountains & bring wood to rebuild” v.8	Temple-Jerusalem Campaign to rebuild “everyone whose spirit God stirred to go up & rebuild the house of the Lord” (42,360 + servants & singing men/women) 1:5, 2:64	silver/gold, goods/cattle valuables wheat/oil/wine/salt freewill offering bulls/lambs/rams tax break to Levites Royal Treasury & Administrative Staff: governors/princes magistrates/judges wood

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Israelites	Exodus 35:4-7 36:3-7	“everyone whose heart stirred him & everyone whose spirit moved him both men & women” (possessions/skills) 35:21ff	Moses/Assembly	“take from among you a contribution to the Lord whoever is of a willing heart” 35:5 “the people are bringing much more than enough... thus the people were restrained from bringing any more” 36:5	the work of the Tent of Meeting (for all its service & for the holy garments) construction of the sanctuary	freewill offerings every morning (gold, silver, bronze, linen, goats hair, rams skins, porpoise skins, acacia wood, oil, spices, incense, stones/jewels)
	I Chronicles 29:2-9	David, Rulers, Princes, Commanders, Overseers, People of Israel	Assembly “offered willingly... they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart” v. 9	“Both riches & honor come from Thee...but who am I, who are we that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from Thee, & from Thy hand we have given Thee...All this abundance that we have provided to build Thee a house for Thy holy name, it is from Thy hand, and all is Thine” v. 12-16	Temple-Jerusalem Campaign	“Out of all they had” “with all my ability” v.2 (gold, silver, bronze, brass, iron, wood, precious stones, alabaster)
	II Chronicles 31:3-7	King Hezekiah & people of Judah & Israel (removed high places & destroyed idols)	Priests & Levites House of the Lord	“that they might devote themselves to the law of the Lord” v.4 “provided in abundance” (over 4 month period & placed in heaps => prepared rooms in the house of the Lord to house) v.5ff	Temple Reform (distribution of portions to all priests, their wives, sons & daughters: both in the House of the Lord & in the pasture lands of each city in Judah)	contributions/tithe: goods for burnt offerings, for sabbaths, for new moons, for the fixed festivals (first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, produce, oxen, sheep, sacred gifts/consecrated things)
	II Kings 12:1-16	King Joash & people of Judah	“let the priests take it for themselves, each from his acquaintance” v.5	“all the money of the sacred things which is brought into the house of the Lord, in current money, both the money of each man’s assessment <i>and</i> all the money which any man’s heart prompts him to bring” v.4	Temple Repair	money
	Nehemiah 10:32-39	Nehemiah/ Ezra Zerubbabel (Leaders/Levites/Priests) People in Jerusalem	Priests & Levites (Tithe of ground for Levites: those who receive tithes in all the rural towns => tenth of tithes to chambers of house of God)	“we also placed ourselves under obligation to contribute yearly 1/3 of a shekel for the service of the house of our God” v.32	Atonement for Israel	for showbread, grain offering, burnt offering, sabbaths, new moon, appointed times, holy things, sin offerings, supply of wood, first fruits (ground, trees, sons, cattle, herds/flocks, dough, wine/oil)

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Christ	Luke 8:1-3	Women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna	Jesus	supported ministry	personal ministry from one city & village to another	contributing out of private means
Apostles	Acts 4:32-37	Christian Individuals “not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own but all things were common property to them” v.32	Christian Individuals	needs of spiritual community	Individuals	sold houses/land & gave proceeds for distribution
Disciples	Luke 19:28-36	Man in Town	Disciples (2)	“The Lord needs it” v.31 response to personal ask	Christ	colt
Christ Followers Galatia Corinth Jerusalem Asia	I Corinthians 16:1-4 Romans 12:13	Saints/Church in Corinth v.1 “as I (Paul) directed the churches in Galatia, so do you also” – delivered by Brothers as representatives of churches/communities “messengers of the churches” II Cor 8:23	Saints in Jerusalem	asked for collection for the saints due to persecution “contributing to needs of the saints”	“ministry to the saints” v.1, 15 survival of persecution	a sum of \$ in keeping with income each week v.2 “on the first day of the week put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collection be made when I come...to carry your gift to Jerusalem”
Macedonia Achaia	II Corinthians 8-9 Romans 15:25-27	8:1 “the grace of God has been given in the churches of Macedonia” (amid great affliction & deep poverty: their abundance of joy overflowed in liberality) “they gave of their own accord” 8:3 “proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love” 8:8	Jerusalem	“service to saints in Jerusalem” (the poor) Rom 15:25-26 “fully supplying the needs of the saints” 9:12 => personal aid Titus/Corinth/Saints throughout Achaia: “see that you abound in this gracious work also” – 8:7 completion of desire to do so a year before “Titus welcomed <u>our appeal</u> & is coming to you with much enthusiasm on his own initiative” 8:17-20 accompanied by Brothers: fellow workers & administrators of liberal gift	“begging for the favor of participation in support of the saints” - <u>privilege to participate</u> 8:4 “they also by prayer on your behalf yearn for you” 9:14	as much as they were able according to their ability & beyond ability 8:3 “acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have” 8:12
	II Cor 11:7-9	“when brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need” v.9	Paul	“robbed other churches, taking wages from them to serve you” v.8 ministry service	personal needs while serving Corinthian Christians & preaching the Gospel	freely given support

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Christ Followers (cont'd) Thessalonica Philippi (Macedonian Region)	Phil 4:14-19	Philippians delivered by Epaphroditus	Paul	“you’ve revived your concern for me...sharing with me in my affliction” “no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone” v.10, 14-15	“even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs” v.16 to continue missionary journey/service	“sent aid again & again when I was in need” v.16
Rome	Romans 15:22-28	Saints in Rome	Paul	to enable continuance of missionary journey in Rome & Spain v.24	“I hoped to be helped on my way there by you” – <u>personal ask</u>	base of operations for mission to Spain

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Conclusion

In this gallery hang many stories – brush strokes painting a beautiful picture of various places and people sensing God's leading and carrying out God's plans, meeting Kingdom needs. Community always underscored the act of giving and receiving among this spiritual family, and even when personal aid was given, the emphasis was always a Higher Purpose – ministering and carrying out His plans, displaying the essence of His Character among His people, resulting in worship of God's Glory.

The most pivotal words...“that there may be equality” (II Cor 8:13-15)...reveal the Divine Purpose of this Kingdom Design. Like the manna from heaven in Exodus, equal distribution was the desired goal with the excess of some ministering to the deficiency of others that true community would be experienced – a sensitivity to and reliance upon the need for one another with the absence of pettiness and self-sufficiency that inequality brings – a knowing that sustenance and provision comes daily from El-Shaddai, the One Who gives all things. This gives new conviction to those richly blessed who selfishly exist while others suffer without, including the inequality of larger churches and ministries with smaller churches and ministries. Likewise, in this family, we must be careful of the subtle expectation of being served versus serving others. The individuals who asked never asked for themselves or their own need but always sought for the needs of others or for a Divine cause. The individuals who received were always given to because of a practical, physical need, never because they themselves asked. Regarding non-believers, they too were used of God in supplying the needs of His people for His purposes, but only when God had so moved in their lives and displayed Himself were they prompted to participate in His plans through giving. This gives new meaning to: “The earth is the Lord's and all it contains and those who dwell in it.” (Psalm 24:1) Over all, the focus always revolved around God and His movement – spiritual activity among people.

Variety summarizes God's ways and this phenomenon known as Kingdom giving. As the Creator Himself is multi-faceted and limitlessly creative, the Bible sparks our creativity to give as well. Our place is to sense where God is working and to participate as He leads. And from this overflow, worship takes place with many expressions of gratefulness to God for all He has done and continues to do. May we be found boldly faithful in raising the spiritual consciousness of people around us that we all may experience the power of His Kingdom in our midst and reliance upon His provision and direction. And in the end, we will know it is by His doing and not our own – for His glory, not our purposes.