

GIVING AND MISSION



GENEROSITY



“[Giving] is a very rich and beautiful activity.

It is a confident, joyful and hope-filled expression of ministry. In ministering to each other, each from the riches that he or she possesses, we work together for the full coming of God's Kingdom.”

Henri Nouwen



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Exploring Giving and Mission.....	2
Moving to Missional Giving	3
Practical Ideas for Embedding Missional Giving.....	4

INTRODUCTION

Giving and mission are topics so closely entwined within the life of the church. Each give reason for the other, grounded in our calling to grow to be the generous church God calls us to be. In understanding this connection, we can be better equipped to encourage generosity, as we shape our narrative towards one of missional giving – looking beyond the immediate outcome, to the greater story of enabling ministry in your local church.

“Generosity is realizing that you are so blessed that you can’t help but allow it to overflow into the lives of those around you and in need. It’s recognising that the only thing better than having abundance is giving abundantly. We are blessed to be a blessing, and that’s what giving is about.”

ASHLEY MCLLWAIN

EXPLORING GIVING AND MISSION

We begin by grounding ourselves in the basic principles of giving and mission.

Giving

What do you think when you reflect on the idea Christian giving? What do you think motivates our generosity, and what does it look like? You could write some of these ideas down, and here are some points to get you started:

- *We give as a gift, a response to God's generosity to us, and as priority and commitment within our discipleship*
- *We give as an act of worship*
- *We give because we are made in the image of God, in whose nature is generosity*
- *We give to enable mission and ministry*
- *We give to reveal the glory of God, as our actions point beyond themselves*
- *We give because it is transformative, to ourselves and to the world*

Mission

Again, have a think about what Christian mission is. Where does it come from, what is its purpose, and how do we play our part? Think about some of the ideas below, and reflect on what your answer might be.

- *Mission is the work of God, and we are invited to join in*
- *Mission is to fulfil commandment of Jesus: to make disciples of all people*
- *Mission is to make this world more like the Kingdom of God*
- *Mission is to be Christ's hands and feet in the world*
- *Mission is transformative*

Connecting Giving and Mission

Bringing these two ideas together, let's explore how they interact with each other.

- As we give, we enable mission. Our mission enables us to share God's love in the world, and this church growth draws us into greater generosity.
- Growth can be viewed in a number of ways: we grow missionally, numerically, and in our discipleship.
- In all this, we grow as disciples, Christ at our centre
- Created in the image of God
- Giving itself is missional as we express the nature of God; giving as witness
- "Preach the Gospel at all times. Where necessary, use words."



MISSIONAL GIVING

Drawing the two subjects of giving and mission together, we arrive at the idea of missional giving – giving which is in itself missional, as well as enabling the ministry of the Church. Missional giving can be embedded in the way that we talk about generosity in our churches today. Here is a simple way to illustrate the journey towards missional giving:



This narrative helps us to move our conversations about giving in our churches from a place of caution and apology, to one of joy and gift as we look beyond the immediate transaction to the mission which is enabled.

Five Marks of Mission

Each of the Five Marks of Mission have generosity at their centre. Have a look at each mark – what can you think of which speaks of generosity in that area?

- *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom*

- *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers*

- *To respond to human need by loving service*

- *To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation*

- *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth*

Faith, Hope and Love

There are many reasons why people give to their local churches. For some it is a spiritual commitment in response to God's generosity, for others it is a means of supporting the local community through the mission of the church, and others it is to care for the building which speaks of our faith and allows us a space to offer hospitality and prayerful sanctuary.

In short, **we give out of faith, hope and love.**

We can use this to ground our conversations in missional giving, in shaping a message which focuses on missional outcomes, inviting people in to participate in that story.

- **Faith**

We need to make space for intentional exploration as churches in giving as a faithful commitment to God (discipleship), a response to God's generosity to us (thanksgiving), and an opportunity to resource the growth of the church (mission).

- **Hope**

Parish churches are often the most active sources of community and charity in their local area. This involves the giving of ourselves (churches and individuals) through service, hospitality, pastoral care and many other ways. This whole-life giving brings hope.

- **Love**

As we looked at earlier giving is an expression of and outpouring of love. We give to express our value of something, and our giving reveals the priorities of our hearts. Giving itself is an act of loving.

“Cheerful giving is born of love. Giving is the language of loving; indeed, it has no other speech. 'God so loved that he gave!' Love finds its very life in giving itself away. Its only pride in possession is the joy of surrender. If love has all things, it yet possesses nothing.”

JOHN JOWETT



Reflecting on Faith, Hope and Love

Here are some questions to help you reflect on the themes of giving in faith, hope and love. You could think about these questions independently, or use them within church groups and meetings.

Faith

- *How does your giving reveal your faith, as individuals or a church community?*
- *How does your faith inspire you to give?*
- *What does your giving practice say about your faith?*

Hope

- *What is your vision as a church?*
- *How does your vision shape the way you want to bring hope to your community?*
- *What resource do you need to fulfil this mission, and how might you inspire people to be a part of it?*

Love

- *What does it look like when you express your love to God?*
- *What does it look like when you share God's love with the people around you?*
- *How can you help your church community to express and respond to God's love?*

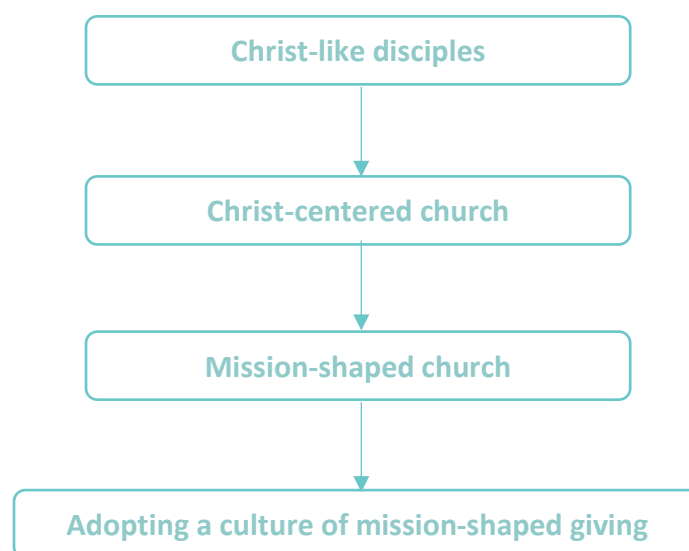
Nurturing Missional Giving

These are five steps of nurturing missional giving, taking us on a journey from perceiving that all we have belongs to us, to understanding that we are simply caretakers of God's resources. These can be used to help personal reflection and growth when articulating your giving message.

1. *What do I do with my gifts and resources?*
2. *What do I do with the gifts that God has given me?*
3. *What does God want me to do with what God has given me?*
4. *What does God want me to give from what God has given me?*
5. *What does God want me to keep from what God has given me?*

Building a Mission-Shaped Church

Adopting missional giving begins with understanding what your vision is as a church. By articulating this, in a way that is shared and owned by everyone in the community, we can create a giving message which focuses on this end point.



Missional Budgeting

Missional budgeting is the way we go about creating a budget in our PCCs – what we prioritise, and how that is reflected in the way the budget is communicated.

- *A budget-shaped mission is where finances are decided first, and then a vision for mission is set according to what can be afforded*
- *A mission-shaped budget is one where the parish has a vision for mission, and sets a budget to enable that*

A mission-shaped budget requires us to place our trust in God and what he is calling us to, and invites us to find ways of encouraging greater generosity and accessible giving mechanisms to see this come to fruition. Communicating this will also build trust with your givers, as they can see clearly what happens when they give.

How does your vision for mission feature in your priorities for expenditure?

Prayer

Prayer is the foundation of Christian discipleship, as we grow in relationship with God and open ourselves more deeply to the transforming grace of God. In the context of generosity, prayer enables us to give thanks to God for all that we are blessed with, and helps us to discern what he is calling us to give, as well as discerning the mission he is calling us to resource.

- *The Lord's Prayer is a good grounding point, as one many of us say each day. As we pray, 'give us today our daily bread', we are asking God to teach us to know what enough looks like, to give us enough for today, and to stop us from wanting more.*
- *You might want to take time within your church in prayer, both to discern what God is calling you to missionally, and how God is calling you to become a more generous church.*

Loving God,
through the expression of grace
your Son came not to be served
but to serve.

Nurture in us generous hearts,
that, in word and action,
our giving may be missional,
and your glory may be revealed;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

- *Leading your Church into Growth:*
<https://www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/>
- *National Giving Team's Building a Generous Church website:*
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/building-generous-church>
- *A Spirituality of Fundraising, by Henri Nouwen*

