

The **Pathway** to God's Kingdom





Our Broken World

We live in a broken world.

During the week, I work in a downtown office building. Outside of our thirteen-story building, there are people that walk the streets all day and sleep in the alleys at night. You can identify them by their unkempt hair and tattered clothing. Some of them smell of urine and seem lost in a sea of confusion.

They are the product of a broken world.

Stories circulate of a man walking around the local streets completely nude. Others tell of a homeless man that sat in the bushes, almost hidden to the eye, who would laugh and giggle as people passed by. One man played his own football games—standing on the street corners, he would frighten unsuspecting bystanders with the deafening cadence of a quarterback. “Down...Set...Hike! Hike! Hike!” Then he would take off running across streets and through courtyards, periodically looking over his shoulder for the imaginary pass coming his way. Meanwhile, the people with leather briefcases and Kition suits stared in amazement.

The typical homeless population struggles with issues much deeper than budgeting and unemployment. Schizophrenia and dementia dominate the landscape of their lives. Their worlds are riddled with the wounds of war, mental disease, and overwhelming trauma. Their minds are revolting against the harshest realities of life. And they have proven to be a vast mission field, even since the days of Jesus.

In the suburbs, where I live, finding a homeless person is as rare as finding a twenty-dollar bill in my pocket. There are very few tattered people walking the streets, but behind the privacy fences and closed doors, there is a wealth of pain. The working poor, the divorced, the abused and neglected are strewn throughout our neighborhoods. In the four or five houses surrounding my own, there is a recently divorced woman, a divorced father with a small child, and an often lonely widow. So, whether I step into my driveway or out in front of my office, I am surrounded by [brokenness].¹

I wrote those words a few years ago as our church was in the middle of a radical project to step into the brokenness of the world around us. At God’s direction, we decided to give away all of our collected offerings for an entire year. We wanted to see what stood at the intersection of deep pain and generous love.

What we discovered was not exactly what we were expecting. We anticipated the funny stares and the distrust. We thought we would find people and families beyond the scope of our help. We expected a complicated mess.

What we found was that the places we had designated as a “mess,” turned out to be God’s dwelling places. Unexpectedly, at the intersection of brokenness and generosity, we found the kingdom of God.



Worlds Colliding

As I look through the gospels, I am struck by the fact that Jesus hung out in messy places, too. He didn't confine Himself to the temple or to the schools for the elite. Instead, He would linger at the intersection of deep pain and generous love. For Him, this intersection was the perfect place to establish the upside-down kingdom of God.

He lived with one foot in the sin-devastated realm of this world and the other rooted in a world of joyful, generous love. He was a man of sorrows who understood suffering and was also a zealot about experiencing joy on earth. For Jesus, the kingdom was not found in the absence of brokenness, but instead it was found mingling among the afflicted of our world.

"Blessed..." He would say, "are the poor in spirit...those who mourn...the hungry and thirsty...the persecuted..." because the kingdom of God is advancing on their lives.

It was the upside-down version of every Jewish expectation. They were looking for a political king, but He was bringing an entirely different type of kingdom. This kingdom consisted of brokenness and joy in the same hand...it was constructed of scars that led to intimacy...it was defined by death that led to life. Wherever the kingdom was found, there was a mess, because worlds were colliding.

From the moment of His conception, Jesus's life was a visible display of two colliding worlds – a malfunctioning world of pain and a world of wholeness and joy. Those two worlds were colliding when Mary rode – full-term – on the jarring back of a donkey (suffering) and hours later, listened to stories of angel choirs that sang over the heads of frightened shepherds (joy). Those two polar opposite worlds were intersecting when a paralytic (brokenness) took up his bed to walk for the first time (wholeness). Those worlds were being smashed together when a Samaritan woman stood at a well, staring down her tumultuous past and simultaneously grabbing onto the hope of the Gospel.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus continually pointed people to the place where these two worlds collide. And not only did He call people to observe the collision, He identified the point of collision as a place – a realm – where God and God-lovers reside. God stands in the center of these two colliding worlds, drawing near to the brokenhearted, leaning in to those who are suffering, and mingling His healing touch with their brokenness.

It's upside-down. But, it's good.

This realm where brokenness and healing are fused is the one thing that Jesus talked about more than any other subject in the gospels. It is the place where the Messiah's mission is fulfilled. If you remember Isaiah's commissioning passage for the Messiah, you know that the kingdom is all over its words;

God stands in the center of these two colliding worlds, drawing near to the brokenhearted, leaning in to those who are suffering, and mingling His healing touch with their brokenness.

The Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor. *(Worlds colliding)*
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, *(Kingdom work)*
to proclaim freedom for the captives *(Kingdom work)*
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn, *(Worlds colliding)*
and provide for those who grieve in Zion— (Isaiah 61:1-3).ⁱⁱ

The kingdom of God is a realm where God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. It's an intersection where God liberally conquers brokenness. This is the realm where, "in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

The kingdom of God resides at the intersection of brokenness and generosity.



The Kingdom of God

Many of Jesus's parables begin with the words, "The kingdom of God is like" and virtually all of His teachings point toward this subject.

- He compares the kingdom to a mustard seed...noting that it starts small and grows into something magnificent.
- He says the kingdom is like a treasure hidden in a field...which is out of place, but is the most valuable thing imaginable to the one who finds it.
- He compares the kingdom to a net being lowered into a lake which catches all kinds of fish.
- He says it's similar to the owner of a house who has a collection of both old (familiar) treasures and new (undiscovered) delights.
- He brackets the beatitudes in kingdom language saying that both the poor in spirit and those persecuted for righteousness will experience the kingdom.
- He outlines His model prayer with a kingdom agenda by initially defining the kingdom (God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven) and then closes by acknowledging that the kingdom and power belong to God alone.

In all of these things, Jesus is continually beckoning us to step into this unique realm of God's work. He is calling us to be people who reside in the kingdom – and culture – of God. He is inviting us to experience a world where God's reign is shining as a light in the midst of the darkness. In short, He is inviting us to salvation. Not just a salvation that is about heaven...but salvation that is about wholeness of life. He is inviting us to an immediate salvation that is characterized by righteousness. And through the kingdom of God, Jesus is pointing us toward a life that is marked by far-reaching joy...in the midst of brokenness.

This is the realm where our lives are recreated into the image of God.

And it's in this kingdom realm that God utilizes our lives to reweave the world around us.

That's what God wants for us. He wants us to be actively engaged in His kingdom business. And it's why Jesus spent so much time talking about the kingdom of God.

Thankfully, Jesus did more than simply tell us about...and call us toward...the kingdom. *He also gave us a pathway to enter its gates.*



One Major Characteristic of the Kingdom

Before we jump to the pathway into God's kingdom, we need to look at one major characteristic of the kingdom. It's important to see this clearly. Because apart from this kingdom characteristic, we may develop erroneous ideas about God and His desires for our lives.

Here it is: God's kingdom is characterized by service rather than dominance.

Once again, the kingdom is seemingly upside-down. And by now, that may seem like "common God-sense" to you. But it is a big deal.

In most kingdoms of the world, the king – and his kingdom – is established through acts of dominance. The United States is considered a "super-power" in the world today because of its military dominance. True, there is not a king at the head of our military, but the point still remains. We are a super-power because we can exercise our will through military force to keep other nations in line with our most cherished values. Right or wrong, the U.S. enforces its value system through dominant displays of force.

There is nothing new about this sort of "kingdom." The Greeks, the Assyrians, the Romans and others used dominance to establish their empires. Their kingdoms were all characterized by powerful people and displays of force.

However, when Jesus was anointed as the king in God's kingdom, he was not anointed into a reign of powerful terror. Far from it. Instead, He was anointed to rule with peace, justice and a servant's demeanor.

In his book, *Heaven on Earth*, Alan Street demonstrates that the baptism of Jesus was a direct affront to domineering leaders.

For Matthew's first-century readers, the description of the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus "in bodily form" as a dove (Luke 3:22) carries special meaning. It denotes that Jesus is divinely inaugurated as Israel's new king. Let me explain.

Rome chose nearly all of its kings by observing the flight of birds, a form of divination known as augury. According to Cicero (106-46 BC), Romulus, the

legendary founder and first king of Rome, was named to his royal post through this method. Augurs were trained to read aviation signs and confirm whom the gods had chosen to be the next emperor. They watched to see upon whose shoulder a bird landed, and that man became the new emperor. Avian signs accompanied the selection and confirmation of all Roman rulers from Octavian to Domitian except one...

To first-century believers, the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus “in bodily form” as a dove is the sign that Jesus is God’s choice to be His earthly King, just as the Roman gods send birds to confirm their choice of the Roman emperor...

The descent of the dove upon Jesus gives a clue to what kind of King He will be. Roman kings ruled harshly with iron fists. They were confirmed to office by the flight of an eagle, the national symbol of Rome. The eagle, the strongest and most aggressive of the birds, dominated the skies...It was a fitting symbol of Roman power. The dove, on the other hand, is associated with tranquility and peace. Unlike the eagle, which devours others and even destroys its own, the dove nurtures its own and doesn’t harm other living things.

At His baptism, Jesus is inaugurated by God to be a new kind of ruler. Unlike Caesar, he will be a Servant-King. (pp. 76-78).

Here’s the paradox of Jesus’s reign in the kingdom of God...He reigns as a servant, through generosity, rather than through dominance, terror and greed. That one characteristic of the kingdom sets the stage for everything else that happens in the kingdom.

The mission of the kingdom is a mission of “putting things to right.”

In the words of N.T. Wright, the reign of Jesus, and the mission of the kingdom, is a mission of “putting things to right.” God is working to redeem and restore the world. As part of that redemptive, kingdom plan, God is also putting people to right. And as God puts people to right, they become the team for putting the world to right. They become the ambassadors for healing and reweaving society in the ways of God.ⁱⁱⁱ

In their upcoming book, *Be Scrooged*, Gordon and Mark MacDonald talk about how our involvement in the kingdom helps to reweave society. They say that as we live kingdom-centered lives, “the Holy Spirit can weave a tapestry of Kingdom generosity into the surrounding lives and worlds that we touch.” Further, they note that as we use generosity to reweave society in God’s image, “we bring the Gospel alive in fresh, powerful and redeeming ways.”^{iv}

The brokenness of the world opens doors of opportunity for the Church to become servants...and that generous service is an inaugural aspect of God’s kingdom.

So, in the kingdom of God, brokenness isn't eliminated (yet). But, it is utilized much like a nurse call button. As suffering is encountered in the world it sends a flashing light to the church...which comes to the scene and generously "puts to right" the suffering that is encountered. It becomes the marker by which the people of God note how – and where – to mend the world and reweave society through His love.

Suffering, though not pleasant at the time, turns to joy because of the servant nature of the kingdom. As Jesus so vividly demonstrated, God puts things to right through giving. The acts of servanthood are driven by a heart of generosity.



The Role of the Church

Let's bring this back to ground zero...where the rubber meets the road. Since many of you reading this are church leaders, the natural question is, "What does this mean for my church?"

On the surface level, it speaks directly to those of us who are leaders. It means that if we are going to lead well, we have to mimic the example of Jesus. We should not be afraid to hold suffering and joy in the same hand.

Further, our ongoing vision and message for the church should not fall into the same space as a secular business vision. Our visions and messaging for the church should be driven by God's kingdom and the mission that He wants to accomplish through His kingdom. Just as Jesus did, we should allow this subject to dominate our conversations and our messages. We should be people who talk regularly about the kingdom.

Finally, in following the King, we should be servant-leaders. There is no room for a pompous attitude as we imitate the Servant-King.

Those should be some practical out-workings of God's kingdom in our churches. But, let's take it one layer deeper. Beyond messaging, what's the connection between the kingdom and the church? How do they support one another or fit together?

In a recent blog post, Pastor Wade Burleson noted that mainline churches in the United States are experiencing declines in almost every area of ministry. He concludes that,

[There] is a vital distinction that must be clear among Christian leaders and people who belong to institutional churches or churches will continue to be on the slope of slow decline. We preachers deceive church members when we act as if our institutions, our budgets, our buildings, our programs, and everything else about our non-profits are equivalent to God's kingdom...

The key...for any [church] is to have leadership that is keenly aware that churches are but tools in the kingdom and all Christians, including Christian leaders of [churches], are simply servants/stewards in the larger kingdom.

While Jesus never functioned in the role of a contemporary pastor, He was the ultimate church planter. *As such, He never encouraged us to hold the church as our top priority.* He did, however, say, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

When writing about that verse (Matthew 6:33), George Eldon Ladd said, “What is the object of our quest? The Church? Heaven? No; we are to seek God's righteousness-His sway, His rule, His reign in our lives.”^v Jesus affirmed that as He spoke about the kingdom being the ultimate goal. And under the direction of His Father, he established the church to serve as a tool to advance the kingdom.

So, the church is a tool for the advancement of the kingdom.

But, how do we train the church to function in this manner? How do we join the mission of God in putting the world to right? How do we reweave society so that the world knows the abundant life of God and imitates His ways? How do we bring people to the place where heaven and earth collide?



A Pathway into the Kingdom

Over the centuries, the church has been very creative in its attempts to advance the kingdom. For example, we have leaned on logic at times. As the church sought to redefine itself through the lens of the Enlightenment, we reasoned our way through countless debates. As we reasoned with atheists and agnostics...or even other believers...we felt good about our knowledge and wisdom, but only occasionally ushered people into the kingdom through this method.

At other times, we decided that dominance was better than servanthood. And so we conducted military-style Crusades to advance...or at least protect...the kingdom. Seven hundred years later, we're still reeling from that one.

At some point, the church decided that the way to advance the kingdom was through payments to the priests...through indulgences. This practice told the faithful that they could be forgiven of sins, could bypass certain religious practices, or could even buy themselves a spot in heaven for the right amount of money. Martin Luther, among others, eventually called out the church and noted that indulgences were not advancing the kingdom of God.

The early church had a very counter-cultural way of pointing people toward the kingdom.

But, the early church had a very counter-cultural way of pointing people toward the kingdom. They had a very different mindset about the pathway into the kingdom. Audaciously, they trusted in the seemingly illogical way of Jesus. Instead of exalting their intelligence, exalting their power or exalting their money, they lived lifestyles of generous service. They exalted the way of the King.

In Acts 2, the followers of Jesus pointed the world to the kingdom of God through their actions. “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need” (vv. 44-45). In Acts 4, Barnabas sold a field and placed all of the proceeds at the feet of the apostles, to be distributed to anyone with needs. As they demonstrated the heart of the Servant-King, the numbers of people in the church – and the kingdom – grew daily.

Later, during the plagues, the early Christians generously put their time and even their lives on the line. When those with infectious diseases were abandoned by their families, the Christians stepped in to care for the sick and dying. Their generosity and service to their communities helped reweave pockets of society into kingdom territories. They were utilizing their money, their abilities, their compassion, their prayer lives, their hospitality and all of their other resources for the advancement of the kingdom. In selfless acts of sacrifice, they determined that the best way to use the church as a tool for the kingdom was to practice servanthood and generosity wherever they went.



A Kingdom-Sized Roadblock

While all of that sounds good, we need to be very honest about this pathway into the kingdom of God. Let’s just admit it. You could probably say it out loud with me. *This is hard.*

It’s hard to find people in the church who are eager to serve. Don’t believe me? Ask your Children’s Minister. They regularly hear statements like, “I’ve done my time. It’s someone else’s turn to serve now.” The message of generously serving is a popular one as long as someone else is doing the serving. And it’s no easier to talk about generously giving money in the church. We easily swallow money advice from the evening news anchor, but we struggle to accept money advice from our churches.

But, in spite of these obstacles, Jesus pressed on in making sure that His kingdom was driven by grace-filled generosity. He washed the feet of those under Him...possibly including the feet of Judas. And beyond His acts of service, He continually talked about the role of money...and generous financial giving...in the kingdom.

Do you remember the Parable of the Sower? Jesus told a story about a farmer scattering seed. Some of the seed fell along the path, some fell on rocky ground, some on thorny ground and some of it fell on good soil. Then He concluded by saying, “He who has ears, let Him hear.”

When the disciples later asked what the parable meant, Jesus told them that it was a story about the kingdom. He said that the seed represented the message of the kingdom. He then explained that some people receive the message of the kingdom with hardness, some receive it with cautiousness and others

receive it joyfully. But, in His explanation, He noted that some of those who receive the message eagerly still fail to fully experience the kingdom of God. Jesus essentially said, “Even though they put down spiritual roots and show some signs of life, they miss out on what God really desires for them. They miss out on the kingdom.”

If you remember that parable, you may also remember that Jesus identified the primary cause for their lack of kingdom fruit. He said, “The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but *the worries of this life* and *the deceitfulness of wealth* choke the word, making it unfruitful” (Matthew 13:22 italics mine).

As they bought into the world’s wisdom about the accumulation of stuff and pursuit of our own self-interests, they were pulled away from the kingdom. Their greed for stuff ultimately robbed them of God’s joy. Their selfishness shut them out of the His “heaven in the midst of earth” kingdom.

Can we be honest? That presents a huge problem for most people across the globe. Our world is becoming more and more consumer driven. Our eyes easily drift from the kingdom of God onto the things of the world. We have become increasingly entangled in the deceitfulness of wealth and are being burdened by the worries of this life. Churches and believers across the globe are finding it hard to get around the very thing that Jesus identified as a roadblock to the kingdom of God.

We live in a consumer oriented society.

In the United States, consumerism often defines our society. Each evening, we hear about “the consumer price index” when we watch the news. We read about “consumer confidence” when we read articles about Wall Street and “consumer spending” is the backbone of our economy.

But, the upside-down kingdom of God is not found in consumerism. The pathway to the kingdom of God is paved with generosity. The advancement of the kingdom is dependent on the humble service of others. The way up is the way down. The first are last. Those who give themselves freely, find abundance.

The King comes riding into town on the back of a lowly donkey. He comes to serve...and die for...both His friends and His enemies. In every aspect of its being, the kingdom strides forward on the back of radical generosity.



Having a Kingdom-Driven Heart

These incredible truths about the kingdom...and the pathway into the kingdom...are demonstrated through a tool that is at the center of the current generosity movement. The tool is called the Generosity Ladder. You may have seen it before. This ladder has eight rungs which all lead up toward a selfless, kingdom-minded, generous lifestyle. The Generosity Ladder doesn’t simply look at givers and non-givers. It shows the condition of our hearts. It exposes the motives in our generosity.^{vi}

If you look closely at the Generosity Ladder, you'll notice that there is a shift from selfishness (on the left side of the ladder) to selflessness (on the right side of the ladder). And this tool, as much as any other, demonstrates that the pathway to God's kingdom is a journey from serving self to serving God and serving others. It is a pathway of giving that helps us experience the life that the King truly desires for us.



In 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Paul states that generosity leads to the kingdom in this way; "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. *In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*"^{vii}

That's why it is so important for us to see generosity as something grander than a hand-written check. The pathway to God's kingdom is not found in a transaction. It's not even found in percentage giving. But instead, the pathway to God's kingdom is realized through transformational, lifestyle generosity. It is seen as our feet hit the ground each morning and we eagerly ask, "What do I have (material or non-material) in my possession that I can generously give to heal and reweave the world around me today?" It is grasped as we ask, "What do I have that will allow me to pursue, first and foremost, God's kingdom today?"

A kingdom-driven heart will become increasingly generous; and a generous heart is on the pathway to God's kingdom.

There is a family in the Kansas City area that can tell you about this pathway to the kingdom better than I can. They came to faith later in life and also got married later than most. As a result, this couple has biological twin daughters that have just passed the age of ten. At the point in life where most men are thinking about retirement, he is ramping up to be the dad of teenagers. And in a remarkable turn of events, this couple recently added three more orphan girls to their family.

I had a chance to have lunch with this gentleman about a month ago and in a very short time realized that he is passionate about giving his life away. In fact, he told me that he thinks he was born for this lifestyle of servant generosity; he just didn't realize it until about ten years ago. As he tells his story, Larry says,

We looked at our most precious assets...that is, our family and our home. Not our house, but the *values* of our home. And we said, "Let's share this with some adoptive kids."

At first it was going to be one [child], and then we said, "Well...we'll take siblings." [Then the adoption agency later came to us and said], "We actually have three little sisters who are under [the age of] four. Would you take them? Because if you cannot take them, we will have to separate them."

I said, "We have the resources. We can handle this." So, our family grew from four to seven almost overnight. And it has been a great blessing from God.^{viii}

He's not willing to slow down because he has discovered the pathway to the kingdom of God. Therefore, as God leads, their family follows joyfully, giving away anything that has been entrusted to them. Even though it is not always easy, they sacrifice for the joy that is set before them. They imitate the generosity of God knowing that it leads to deeper experiences of His kingdom on earth.

The pathway to God's kingdom is realized through transformational, lifestyle generosity.

Larry is a new hero of mine. Not because of the fact that he adopted three young girls, but because of the fact that he is daily seeking first the kingdom of God with all of his available resources.

Wouldn't it be great to join him on this pathway? Okay...let me clarify that. You may not be ready to adopt three young children. But, wouldn't it be fascinating to join him in the pursuit of the kingdom?

Wouldn't it be amazing to join God – through generosity – in healing the brokenness of the world around us (for His glory and our good)? Wouldn't it be incredible to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," trusting that God would take care of everything else we need?

I could go on, but let me tell you one final story.

At the beginning of this ePaper, I mentioned that my church took on a radical project to step into the brokenness of the world around us. As we used our financial resources to bring the tangible love of God into our community, we met a family that was grappling with cancer.

In the middle of this project to help the hurting, a leader in our church nominated a friend for help. Donna and her husband were struggling to stay financially afloat. He was battling liver cancer and had endured debilitating side effects as the cancer was treated. Operations and ongoing medical treatments for the liver cancer forced him to leave his job, and although Donna was working full time, they could not cover their expenses. It would be several weeks before his disability income would be available to them.

During this time of crisis, Donna approached her friend from our church with tears in her eyes. It was a humbling moment, but she desperately needed help. Within a few days, our church was able to bridge the financial gap for them as they waited on his disability income. But God was orchestrating more than a transfer of funds. He was preparing this family for a valuable, loving friendship.

The weekend after we began assisting Donna's family, a couple joined our church from another local congregation. Phillip and Ginger agonized over leaving their church home but knew that God wanted them to join his work at Traceway. They did not know anything about our work with Donna's family and had no intentions of intervening in this situation. But God had other plans. He brought them to Traceway with a missional assignment already in place.

Ginger came into our church as a survivor. Over twenty years prior, she had endured a liver transplant and now was able to boast that she was the longest surviving single transplant patient in our state. So, when Donna visited Traceway for the first time, she was able to connect with one of the only liver transplant survivors in our city. She found encouragement, and Ginger found a new outlet for sharing the love of God.

God was displaying the wealth of His kingdom.^{ix}

The kingdom of God is real. It's as tangible as the keys on my computer and through the grace of God, I've frequented its abundant joy.

Here's the other truth I've learned. The pathway is clear. The road to the kingdom is constructed with the heart of a generous servant.

How quickly can you get there? Don't wait too long...because you don't want to miss the magnificent, awe-inspiring display every time heaven and earth collide.

Want to join us on this journey? Better yet, do you want to help your local church engage in this journey? Visit us at www.GenerousChurch.com, contact GenerousChurch via email at cindy@generouschurch.com, or call us at 601-707-5551.

Notes

ⁱ Richardson, John D. *Giving Away the Collection Plate*, Tate Publishing, 2012. Pp. 73-74.

ⁱⁱ Phrases in italics are mine

ⁱⁱⁱ To hear Wright speak on this, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEHliSDNx4> (seen on 2-28-14).

^{iv} *Be Scrooged* by Gordon and Mark MacDonald will be available in limited release later in 2014.

^v Ladd, George E. "What is the Kingdom of God?" as seen at

<http://www.gospelpedlar.com/articles/last%20things/kogladd.html> on April 8, 2014.

^{vi} To explore the Generosity Ladder in more depth, you can freely download [The Generosity Ladder](#) ePaper through [this link](#) or through the GenerousChurch website – www.generouschurch.com.

^{vii} Italics are mine.

^{viii} You can watch a video of Larry's story at <http://vimeo.com/generouschurch/powellgc>

^{ix} Richardson, John D. *Giving Away the Collection Plate*, Tate Publishing, 2012. Pp. 89-90.