

THE GIVER AND THE GIFT

PRINCIPLES *of* KINGDOM
FUNDRAISING

PETER GREER *and*
DAVID WEEKLEY



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Dedicated to Terry Looper and Rusty Walter
for their friendship and generosity.

A cord of three strands is not easily broken.
Ecclesiastes 4:12 HCSB

Books by Peter Greer

The Giver and the Gift

(coauthored by David Weekley)

40/40 Vision

(coauthored by Greg Lafferty)

Mission Drift

(coauthored by Chris Horst with Anna Haggard)

The Spiritual Danger of Doing Good

(with Anna Haggard)

Entrepreneurship for Human Flourishing

(coauthored by Chris Horst)

Watching Seeds Grow

(coauthored by Keith Greer)

Mommy's Heart Went Pop!

(coauthored by Christina Kyllonen)

The Poor Will Be Glad

(coauthored by Phil Smith)

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FOREWORD

Several years ago, I wrote a review for a book on fundraising that was never published. I took issue with one of the assumptions about relationships with donors. The author started from the premise that wealthy donors are rich in possessions but poor in spirit, and the role of the fundraiser is to minister to their hurts and needs. There was no mention of the opportunity to learn from the experience and competence of donors, nor of the possibility that not all donors might need another ministry friend to come alongside them just then.

The formulaic relationship described in that book does not at all reflect the dynamic, honest, and sincere bond forged by Peter Greer and David Weekley. What they have found in each other's company is a shared respect for their different strengths and perspectives. The genuine friendship and mutuality that they have is rare between peers but almost nonexistent between major donors and ministry leaders. The pressure for the leader to conform to donor expectations or for the donor to control the programs of the ministry is ever-present, and learning how David and Peter have managed to resist that pattern is one of the rewards of reading this book. Over time, they have learned to grow each other and not be content with a merely transactional relationship.

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Foreword

Yes, there are plenty of very practical ideas and issues addressed in this book, but for me, the extraordinary relationship they have formed based on trust is what is truly remarkable. When I first worked with Bob Buford at Leadership Network, we sat down and said, “What can we expect of each other?” We wrote down several things and would review them periodically to make sure our relationship stayed healthy. We wanted to be partners in the work that was larger than either of us. That is what David and Peter have done in their own way. They are committed to accomplishing a common purpose, and they each bring different gifts to the work.

Among all the other things you will get from this book I would hope when you are finished you will be motivated to find someone with whom you can have a similar relationship of trust, friendship, and mutual respect. Whether you are a donor or a ministry leader, there could be nothing more satisfying than being engaged in work that is purposeful with a partner whose life and strengths you value and from whom you can learn.

Fred Smith
President of The Gathering

INTRODUCTION

PETER GREER & DAVID WEEKLEY

On December 5, 1835, a young preacher fell to his knees in prayer after reading a simple statement: “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”¹ To George Mueller, these words were the promise of something he had long dreamed of building: an orphanage in his underserved English neighborhood. With faith in God’s promised blessing, he boldly petitioned the Lord for an orphanage house, staff, furniture, children’s clothing, and finances. He spoke to *no one else* about his requests.

In the days and months that followed, Mueller received everything that he prayed for in full. Without being asked, one couple donated all of their personal furniture for the orphanage and volunteered as unsalaried orphan caretakers. Another couple provided fabric and clothes for the children. Still others promised weekly gifts or large one-time donations. Mueller’s answered prayer was the start of a lifelong commitment to faith in God’s provision.

Just a few years later, Hudson Taylor was preparing to move from England to China, where he would eventually found the China Inland Mission and raise over \$4 million (more than \$118 million in today’s valuation). In contrast to Mueller’s method of silent prayer,

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Taylor often spent large amounts of time speaking to potential donors about ministry needs.

From Mueller and Taylor's experience in the 1800s to today, philanthropy has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry, grossing over \$330 billion each year in the U.S.²

What is the "right way" to go about fundraising today? Is it to silently pray and wait, like Mueller? Is it to actively seek new opportunities to share the message, like Taylor? Or is it something else entirely?

Today, most nonprofit staff and boards spend considerable time praying, thinking, planning, and fretting about fundraising. More than virtually any other subject, raising the annual budget is a regular focus and concern.

Likewise, many donors meet with peer groups, attend conferences, and read books to discuss generosity and high-impact philanthropy. The desire is to help without hurting and ensure our charity does not turn toxic.³

Bur rarely is there a place for organizational leaders *and* donors to join in thoughtful conversation about fundraising and generosity. Typically, books and conferences target *either* donors or fundraisers; there are few places for both to engage in honest discussion and learn from the others' perspective.

Our hope is that this simple book provides a safe place for this type of conversation.

Our friendship started after David returned from a trip to Rwanda and began considering if and how he should engage in international philanthropy. Since Peter had recently returned from living in Rwanda, we connected on a phone call, which was followed by a brief meeting in Houston, which was followed by a trip together to the Dominican Republic, which was followed by a trip to Rwanda

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and Burundi, which was followed by a decade of conversation and partnership.

We chose to write this book together because we believe supporters and organizational leaders are called into relationship with one another. We believe everyone has something to give and something to learn. We believe there is a different way to think about a Kingdom approach to fundraising. And we are excited to imagine the impact of unleashed generosity through mutually encouraging partnerships.

The first half of this book, “The Gift,” is written from Peter’s perspective as a ministry leader. The second half, “The Giver,” is written from David’s viewpoint as a donor. Although we write from an individual, first-person perspective, our thoughts have been sharpened, challenged, and impacted by our friendship. Our hope is that the principles in this book have relevance for anyone involved in raising or donating funds for Christian causes.

Join us as we consider how to invest, support, partner, and serve together in seeing “Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.”⁴