

Book Review – Jim Wright

Christ-Centered Generosity

Global Perspectives on the Biblical Call to a Generous Life

Edited by R Scott Rodin

The Global Generosity Network and Kingdom Life Publishing, 2015, Paperback 195 pages, \$16 or £2.30 Kindle edition. ISBN: 978-0983472780

I must confess that my first thought on receiving this book for review was to question whether reading a book about generosity would stimulate people to be generous if they were not so already.

The Global Generosity Network (GGN) describes itself as “a joint initiative between the Lausanne Movement and the World Evangelical Alliance to encourage evangelical Christians to be better stewards of their resources, live more generously and give more of their income to Kingdom causes where it is most needed”. In his foreword, Ram Gidoomal describes how, in his work with GGN, he and others realised that there is a need for a good, easy-to-read book on biblical generosity that could be used by Christians around the world. They commissioned Dr Scott Rodin to edit a book with contributions from different continents which would include both reflections on biblical generosity from Christians from a variety of contexts and stories about the impact of generosity in a wide range of cultures.

The book is comprised of six parts or sections which include contributions from numerous authors from many different countries. Parts I to V follow a repeating pattern; an introduction from an author describing the norms and practices for giving and generosity in a specific cultural context (the Global Christian context, Western Europe, Africa, India and South America); three stories illustrating the impact of Christ-centered generosity in different countries; and a reflection from a writer on his or her cultural perspective on Christian giving, to illustrate how generosity is lived out in different vocations and cultural settings. Part VI, written by the heads of seven international ministries, provides an invitation to set aside one week for focus on the Christ-centered generous life. It includes daily

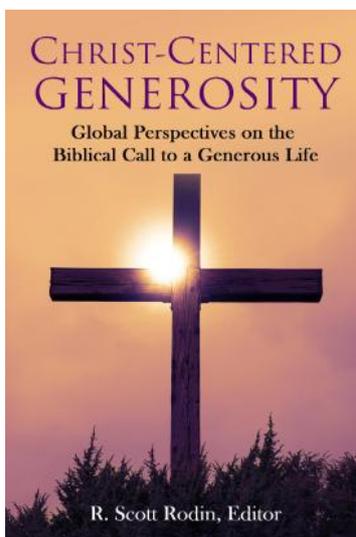
scripture, meditations and actions to encourage the reader to embrace and practise joyful generosity.

Unsurprisingly, a book written by 33 authors from 22 countries varies greatly in the quality of writing and content, regardless of the skill of the editor. Nevertheless, I found the variation of style refreshing. It improved my understanding of the differences in cultures, beliefs and practices with regard to generosity in the many different contexts of the writers.

Dr Rodin’s first chapter in Part I provides a stimulating and thought-provoking vision for the life of joyful generosity. It makes the distinction between ‘being generous’ and ‘cultivating a heart that is generous towards God’ if we move into the freedom that Christ offers us. It challenged me to reflect on the truth that generosity is not what I do, but who I am, as well as to examine how I might be more open to the opportunities God is putting before me to use my – or more accurately, his – resources effectively for his work.

The contributions from the different cultures reminded me that Christ-centered generosity is not something the rich west does to the poorer developing countries, but that all followers of Jesus, regardless of our means, are blessed to be a blessing to others, demonstrating the love of Jesus.

And the answer to the question that was my first thought? The book may or may not challenge people who are not generous to be more generous. But I believe it could stimulate those of us who think we are generous to be more prayerful about our joyfulness, obedience and generosity in using more effectively the resources God gives us. 



Jim Wright worked in the pharmaceutical industry prior to starting his consultancy business. He is a governor in two secondary schools, mentors leaders, runs leadership workshops, and is a Director with Angello Opportunity Caucasus, investing in leaders of SMEs in Central and Eastern Europe. He is married to Sheila with three married sons and one delightful grand-daughter.