

What moves us...

Our Story at Givers by Design began with a book: Richard Stearns' award-winning *The Hole in Our Gospel*. We already had a nagging awareness of the massive disparity between the comfortable lives we lead here in America, and the desperate lives led by those trapped in extreme poverty... *Why are we so blessed, while others suffer so?*



What blind-sided us was the Church in America's anemic response. We were stunned and shamed to learn that the Church in America (by far the wealthiest in the world) devotes **less than 2%** of its resources to serving those suffering daily in extreme poverty. Lazarus is indeed lying at our gate, and like the rich man, we the Church are passing him by – despite the clear biblical mandate for compassionately helping the least and the last.

*This apparent indifference deforms our discipleship, compromises the integrity, relevance, and reputation of our churches, and is a **profoundly negative witness** to a watching world. Will we, the American Church, go down in history as those who, blessed with an abundance of resources, preferred to fund self-serving internal programs to the near exclusion of external ministries that could have lifted the world's poorest people out of their desperate poverty? (Consider Ezekiel 16:49, Isaiah 58:5-8, James 1:27....)*

This is more than unfortunate... it's unconscionable! Surely, we can do better than this!

We began talking with people about giving and extreme poverty, and quickly noticed some common threads. We found that many followers of Christ genuinely *want to give, to **make a lasting difference*** for the desperately poor... *but have some reasonable, serious concerns about the real-world effectiveness of such giving.* Tragically, these concerns, or roadblocks, often result in a sense of futility that sidelines many who truly wish to help.¹

We are convinced that a **flood** of Christian generosity towards those suffering in extreme poverty lies waiting to be willingly, even *enthusiastically*, unleashed... *if we could be reasonably assured that our gifts would indeed make a real and lasting difference.* *Givers by Design* was created to address these concerns and provide followers of Christ with the resources and tools needed to take effective action in answering our Father's call to lend a "hand up" to the world's least and last.²

.....Imagine that flood..... unleashed!



In our wildest dreams, we see Christ's followers – you, I, local congregations – taking a lead role in making extreme poverty a thing of the past, to the glory of God.

By many credible estimates, it can be done in this generation. We see followers of Christ faithfully, sacrificially, yet joyfully, giving the 1% of their incomes necessary to complete the task. We see the Church actively championing the work of the Christian humanitarian organizations (the “Parachurch”) to help bring this about. And in the process, we see Christ’s followers deepening their discipleship, local congregations revitalized, and the broader church reclaiming a bright and dynamic witness to the world that God has placed her in... a light to the nations, indeed! If this vision of how things *could be* quickens your pulse, you can add your name to our “Call” at www.GiversByDesign.org/Sign-the-Call.

Blessed to be a blessing, we *are* Givers by Design. We hope that you will join us in challenging both ourselves and our churches to a more compassionate, generous, and faithful engagement with the problem of extreme poverty... start today at www.GiversByDesign.org.



¹ The first common concern, one that we heard over and over again, arises from the many, well-known stories of waste and corruption, of well-intended but ineffective or counter-productive efforts at helping, of dependencies created rather than sustainable, positive change brought about... would-be givers are concerned about *waste*. The second common concern came from those who would prefer to give to or through their churches, but feel frustrated by the fact that the overwhelming majority of their church’s budget goes to fund internal ministries which serve the church membership, leaving little (typically less than 2%) to help those suffering in extreme poverty... would-be givers are concerned about *dilution*. Taken together, these well founded concerns over waste and dilution can produce a sense of futility, creating *roadblocks to generosity* that keep many who genuinely want to give to help the desperately poor from doing so – out of the game, on the sidelines.....

² The in-depth articles under the [Effective Giving](#) tab thoroughly examine the concerns, or roadblocks, that keep many on the sidelines — and suggest scripturally grounded solutions: for more on concerns about *waste*, read the article titled [Helping Well](#); for more on concerns about *dilution*, read the article titled [Donor-Directed Giving](#). The good news is that clearing these roadblocks frees us to give joyfully and generously, with the *confidence* that our gifts do indeed make a lasting, even transformational, difference for the world’s least and last.

While education will certainly help to release the flood of Christian generosity that we envision, it takes action-oriented tools to make that flood a reality. To this end, Givers by Design brings you the tools you need to make a difference for the world’s poorest people.

The one tool that people we talked with repeatedly identified as **most useful** is a well-researched list of “parachurch” (Christian relief and development) organizations noted for truly **effective** front-line work in bringing about lasting change for those living in extreme poverty. This tool directly addresses our well-founded concern over waste – or rather, for avoiding it. We might be willing to give sacrificially to help those suffering in extreme poverty, but, understandably, only to the extent that we are confident that our gifts can be **effective**. Gifts to any of the organizations on this list ([Top Parachurch Organizations](#)) can be made with the assurance that you are making a real and lasting difference.

The second tool is a collection of advocacy materials (see [Advocacy](#)) for use with your church. These materials have been created to help you to encourage your church to give a larger place and priority to the work of the parachurch. The local church is, in fact, in the **ideal** position to effectively champion the work of the parachurch, by actively promoting opportunities for her members to support them, whether directly or through their missions program. Most people we talked to were just as stunned and shamed as we were to learn of the Church’s anemic response to the problem of extreme poverty. Actively championing the work of the parachurch is an efficient and effective way for the church to play its part in God’s plans for the least and last.