Rethinking Stewardship from the Ground Up
Rethinking Stewardship from the Ground Up

Existing harbor facade.
Rethinking Generosity from the Ground Up

Existing harbor facade.
Why is church giving declining
Answer: Giving has everything to do with identity...

...and we have a relatively poor understanding of how identity is formed.
Identity
malleable

Identity
malleable

Identity

fluid
Identity

malleable
dynamic

fluid
Identity

malleable

dynamic

multi-faceted

fluid
Identity Formation

Cognitive/Narrative

Experiences

Habits & Practices
Identity Formation

Cognitive/Narrative

Experiences

Habits & Practices
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Common Misunderstandings
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Common Misunderstandings
(a.k.a: opportunities for growth!)
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Common Misunderstandings
(a.k.a: opportunities for growth!)

1. Beliefs and attitudes (cognitive) are almost always expressed as stories.

Identity is essentially “the story we tell ourselves about ourselves.”
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Opportunities for Growth

1. Employ minimal statistics and maximal stories.
2. Stories of *commitment* are far less effective than stories about *community* and *compassion*. 
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Opportunities for Growth

2. Stress what giving accomplishes in terms of extending compassion and building community.
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Common Misunderstandings

3. Crisis is the most powerful motivator of all.
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Common Misunderstandings

3. Crisis is the most powerful motivator of all.

Joy is a more powerful motivator than fear.
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Opportunities for Growth

3. Ask a crucial question:
How does every stewardship story you tell share the joy of the Gospel?
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Opportunities for Growth

3. Ask a crucial question:
*How does every stewardship story you tell share the joy of the Gospel?*
4. The most critical misunderstanding is that cognitive and narrative messages are the most significant element of identity formation.
Cognitive/Narrative Dimension of Identity

4 Opportunities for Growth

Explore the world of practice & experience!
Identity Formation

Cognitive/Narrative

Experiences

Habits & Practices

Tuesday, July 29, 14
Identity Formation

Cognitive/Narrative

Experiences

Habits & Practices

Tuesday, July 29, 14
Aristotle: Humans are the rational creature.
Lose: Humans are the rationalizing creature.
Q: In change or die situations, how many change?
Cognitive Dissonance: a conflict between belief & practice...
Why?

...that is incredibly uncomfortable and ultimately intolerable.
Why?

And precisely because we are highly cognitive we find it easier to adjust our cognition.
Habits & Practices: The Behavioral Dimension of Identity
Habits & Practices: The Behavioral Dimension of Identity

Why is changing behavior so d*%&** hard
Because change itself is pretty d*% hard!

And we often misunderstand the dynamics of both habits and change.
Habits & Practices
Habits & Practices

1. Habits serve a purpose....
Habits & Practices

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...which means they need to be dependable...
Habits & Practices

1. Habits serve a purpose....
   ...which means they need to be dependable...
   ...which means they’re hard to change...
Habits & Practices

1. Habits serve a purpose....
   ...which means they need to be dependable...
   ...which means they’re hard to change...
   ...and that’s a good thing!
3 Principles of Changing Habits/Practices
3 Principles of Changing Habits/Practices

1. Change is difficult in groups, but nearly possible alone
3 Principles of Changing Habits/Practices

1. Change is difficult in groups, but nearly possible alone.

Support groups are essential.
3. Principles of Changing Habits/Practices

2. Big Change is often easier than incremental change.

Plan something worthwhile.
3. Principles of Changing Habits/Practices

3. If the change matter, then everything needs to be affected.

Q: Does everything we do align with what is the most important thing we do?
Identity Formation

Cognitive/Narrative

Experiences

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Habits & Practices

Tuesday, July 29, 14
Identity Formation

Cognitive/Narrative

Experiences —— Habits & Practices
The Role of Experience in Identity Formation

1. Experiences - good and bad - invite reflection (change in cognition) and adjustment of practices (change in habits).
The Role of Experience in Identity Formation

2. Experiences don’t just happen to us.
We can and do create experiences.

So create some!
Identity Formation ~ Creating a Culture of Generosity

Cognitive/Narrative

Experiences  Habits & Practices
Identity Formation ~ Creating a Culture of Generosity

Cognitive/Narrative

Experiences  Habits & Practices
Creating a culture of generosity is entirely possible
Creating a culture of generosity is entirely possible

But know this: Practice is everything!
Good news & Bad news.
Bad news first:

There is no playbook.
Bad news first:

There is no playbook.
But the good news is...
But the good news is...

There is no playbook.
But the good news is...

There is no playbook.

Experiment
But the good news is...

There is no playbook.
But the good news is...

There is no playbook.

Experiment

Let go!

Play
But the good news is...

There is no playbook.
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

1. Send people to look for abundance.
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“We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.”

~Matthew 14:17-18
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

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“We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” And he said, “Bring them here to me.”

~Matthew 14:17-18

Have loaves and fishes plaster the walls.
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

2. Cultivate Faithful Dependence.
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

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You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food.

~Matthew 11:9-10
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

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a) Form “simply enough” small groups.
b) Form “faithful finances” conversation groups.
3. Create an experience of reflective abundance.
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

3. Create an experience of reflective abundance.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool!"

~Luke 12:19-20
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Share responsibility for generosity with others.
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

4. Practice talking about abundance.
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

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“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” ~Phil. 4:6
Exercises in Coloring Outside the Lines

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“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” ~Phil. 4:6

Starting everything with conversations about blessing.
There will be obstacles.
There will be doubters.
There will be mistakes.
But with hard work, there are no limits.
I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.