

## Blessed Are the Closers ....

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Although it's hard for me to grasp this at times (Yes, Virginia, denial is still alive and well), I'm frequently reminded that I've now spent more than 40 years in the field of development. Over those years I've gained some priceless insights. Truths on which hang "all the law and the profits."

Like the truth that big gifts add up quicker, an insight I could attribute to my grade school math teachers. Or, the truth I learned from the mining industry that you're either an inch from a million dollars or a million inches from a dollar. And why, with that in mind, it pays to know where you're digging.

I've also learned from an old Apache proverb that "What is needed is less thunder in the mouth, more lightening in the hand." Or as Otto von Bismarck put it poignantly, "I'd rather have pointed bullets than pointed words."

But, I'm still persuaded that of all the truths I've learned in development, this is the greatest by far: **Of all the reasons why people give, and they are myriad, the most important is that someone asked.**

The amazing thing to me is that after decades in the field and enormous strides made in the disciplines of development (there are now more than 50), so many Christian fundraisers are still reluctant to ask for the gift. They just can't close. Although the reasons for reluctance are multiple, here, from my vantage point, are just a few of the usual suspects:

**Extrabiblical baggage:** Far too many Christians want to appeal to mythologized, rose-colored accounts of how George Mueller and Hudson Taylor did things, rather than how Moses, David, Solomon, or Paul did things.

In short, their fundraising models simply aren't biblical. Their appeals to extrabiblical authorities are often mere camouflage; they are convenient escapes from responsibility when the truth is that they just don't think it's "spiritual" to ask for money.

**Passionectomies:** Some fundraisers have apparently had their passion surgically removed. Because much of selling or persuasion is the transference of feeling, too many fundraisers fail to realize that the most important sale they'll ever make is when they sell themselves on the cause. Remember what the -iasm on the end of "enthusiasm" stands for: I Am Sold Myself!

**Fear of rejection:** Too many people think that asking for funds is about them. If the gift is declined, they feel personally rejected. Well, it ain't about you so get over it! It's about creating a transformational "bridge" across which God-given resources can travel to change lives. In transformational development God touches the lives of benefactors as well as beneficiaries.

**Lack of knowledge:** Just as Paul told Timothy that there are those who are "always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (2 Tim. 3.7), so in development there are legions of "grip and grin" types who are always lathering but never shaving!

Because precious little is accomplished in charities without financial resources, and because most of these resources come when people are asked, here's a beatitude you can take to the bank: "Blessed are the closers..."