

The Communion of Giving and Receiving

There are so many aspects to the communion of giving and receiving. In this episode: what the concept of "With You" is, the importance of sustained interdependence, what the communion of giving and receiving means for fundraisers, how to face failures in fundraising, and more!

Introduction

Rob: I'm on today with Dr. Gary Hoag. Gary, thanks for being on this podcast. Particularly, this is the initial podcast of When Money Goes on Mission.

We originally were gonna call it Fresh Bread, and It's All About the Dough, but I think we're gonna keep it on, on the title of the book, so that we can get into some of the concepts covered in the book.

As you learned in the introduction about Gary, he's the author of several books.

And we'll be touching base on some of those in the course of this podcast and hopefully a couple of follow-up podcasts because we're gonna be discussing this very important theme of the communion of giving and receiving.

This is something both Gary and I have been working on together through something called the [Global Trust Partners](#), as well as in other spheres.

Myself in [Lausanne](#), and Gary in the accountability world through the [Evangelical Counsel for Financial Accountability](#) and also through the various places where he teaches these concepts.

So, Gary, when we last were talking, we got to talking about this concept of "With You." And I thought, why don't we begin there and explore it as it relates to the communion of giving and receiving.

And so, and this idea of sustained interdependence and the things that we wanna talk about.

Gary, why don't you talk about how you introduced that concept to those of us on the board of the [Global Trust Partners](#)?

Gary: Sure, well, and I wanna thank you for inviting me to be on this initial podcast. What a privilege it is.

And I have to just say, before I expound on "With You," when I got your manuscript, this, that would eventually become "When Money Goes on Mission," "With You" was really my spirit.

In other words, you know that I read the whole book, and then I suggested constructive ways to improve it because I said, "You are a master storyteller, and you've tapped some critical ideas."

So, I'll unpack "With You" in a second, but I want you to know, I am truly with you from the editing phase of this book to its publication, and I hope everybody's who's listening reads it.

Rob: Well, let me just make one comment about that. And for our listeners, Gary mentors PhD candidates and reviews their, reviews their dissertations before they actually get to wear the moniker of Doctor.

And when he told me he was going to attack the book with the same approach that he takes to others' PhD concepts, I was both deeply honored and deeply concerned.

Because I, well, let me just say, Gary, you took that raw manuscript and really helped, helped me reshape the ideas in the second preparation so that Moody got happy with this thing and finally published it in March.

So, back to you and back to your concept.



What is the Concept of "With You"?

Gary: Well, praise God. So, let me talk about "With You." My pastor plays rugby, and there's an expression in rugby that is simply, "With You."

Now, I want you to imagine you're on the rugby field, you play for the All Blacks.

You're running down the field, and you're up against the Aussies, the Wallabies, and you're about to get whacked by some big guy.

And you're running along, and one of your teammates is running behind you, next to you, and shouts, "With you."

And so, when you don't have eyes in the back of your head, but you can hear out the side of your ears, and so you hear that, "With you," so you know you are not running alone.

So, the concept of this phrase, "With You," started by my pastor who says to me, when he is leading a congregation the direction God leads, he loves it when people say in response, "With you," because we're running with him on mission.

Now, when I had the privilege of becoming CEO at [Global Trust Partners](#), I want you to know that I reached out to a half a dozen friends who are CEOs and who've been fruitful, and I said to them, "Give me advice on building a great culture with this organization from the beginning."

I have the privilege of starting the international entity that's birthed by [ECFA](#), which is this amazing organization that's existed in America for 40 years. And one of my CEO buddies from Australia said, "Go out and buy the book, 'Legacy.'

"It's the story of the 15 values of the All Blacks," and the All Blacks, and I'm wearing an All Blacks jumper today, the All Blacks are the greatest sports team in human history.

They have won 80% of their matches in the history of the team, which is unthinkable when you think of every other sport, and the key is how have they done it?

And one of the keys is they have a "With You."

They don't use the words, "With you," but they have this interdependent culture that they have developed through the reinforcement of their values.

So, I become CEO, and I pray, and I say, Lord, how do I, what's an expression I wanna use to be a CEO of an organization that has a board with 12 board members in seven countries that has regional facilitators in the 12 regions of [Lausanne](#).

So my life is doing Zoom calls from about four a.m. to 10 p.m. because people around the world are always wanting to talk?

And I'll tell you, the way to build a culture of an organization with people disbursed all over the world is simply to send correspondence to people and ask them, if you're running with me, if you're right with me, running down the field, and you've read this correspondence, and you're tracking with me, just reply by saying, "With you."



A Biblical Example of "With You"

Now, that's where the expression started, but one more thought on "With You."

As I studied God's Word, as a CEO leading this organization, I've been humbled by the fact that the greatest Bible verses in Scripture, more than 300 of them have this expression, "With you."

Let me remind you of a great one. We call it the Great Commission. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end "of the age."

So literally as we do our work, as we think about "When Money Goes on Mission" and practicing sustained interdependence, and we think about the work of God we're doing all over the world.

I wanna remind everyone that our Lord Jesus Christ is running with us.

And if we are in our quiet place, we can hear his still, small voice saying, "With you," or in the noise of all the craziness we're doing, we hear, "With you."

And so, that's the backstory to the with you culture that I'm trying to create.

Rob: And as a old, well, as a long-time-ago football player with a very checkered career over a few games, I remember being slammed very hard to the ground by people that didn't want me to advance the ball, right?

Gary: That's right.

Rob: And so, when you brought up the phrase at the Global Trust Partners' first meeting, the focus I had was all the other players coming towards the guy with the, one guy with the ball, trying to advance the ball.

And it felt like that walk with Christ when the opposition comes at you from whatever corner it's coming at you, and you're carrying the ball, and you can't carry it any further, but behind you.

On either side, in your ear, are two players that are ready to carry the ball for you and carry it forward, and they're saying to you as you're moving, "With you."

Gary: And, you know, it fits with, I think it's the African proverb that our board chair Rene Palacio, our Cuban brother, who's just amazing board chair, it fits with the African proverb he recited, which is, "If you wanna go alone, you'll go fast, "but if you go as a team, you'll go far."

And so, with this With You posture, we're gonna, we're gonna go far in accomplishing the work of multiplying disciples of faithful administration and mobilizing peer accountability groups to increase Gospel participation in every nation.



"With You" in the Community of Giving and Receiving

Rob: Okay, so, let's take the phrase and look at it in terms of the community of giving and receiving.

That is, this idea that we are equals at the foot of the cross, no matter whether we have the money and the investment of time and talent that goes into a ministry, or whether we're leaving the ministry and need that investment of time and talent from people or funds.

And this quite often, because of the money, this overdog/underdog concept starts to happen, and in 40 years of doing this work, actually 43 years of doing this work.

I have been on the other side of the desk at times, where I'm seeking the investor to be involved.

And I am paying a deep attention to that person, and it is very easy to get weak in the knees when they make suggestions to you that are either nonsensical in light of the presentation that was made or where you were.

Where you got off-base, but you're always in this struggle of equality, and what we worked on for years on behalf of the [Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization](#), this group that, of course, if you're a new listener, if you're a listener to this podcast, you may not have learned about that, and you may hear this phrase come up.

Lausanne is a global ministry started a long time ago by Billy Graham and John Stott and others to advance evangelization around the world.

And it's got regions and all sorts of resources, old meetings and various things like that, and they assigned me some time ago to work on this concept of communion of giving and receiving.

We didn't have that phrase in mind when we did. What we had in mind was the struggle between Western investors and global South receivers, and why this underdog/overdog thing happened all the time.

And so, when I look at the concept of "With You," it seems to be almost a perfect expression of this idea of the communion of giving and receiving, where we work to find trust and accountability, things that are necessary.

See, the trust is is that if I'm running down the field, and the opposition is focused on me because I have the ball, but I have in my ear my teammates saying, "With you."

I know that at the last moment possible, I can still pass that ball off to one of them, and then become part of the force that goes alongside with them as they're carrying the ball, and it just seems to fit somehow into this concept.



The Importance of Sustained Interdependence

Gary: Can I make a comment that just came to mind, the way you described it, going down the field?

What I've noticed in my global view of accountability and my global view of generosity, I've noticed that in a lot of the majority world, ministries will grow.

And because they don't have structures of accountability and transparency in place, the ministries grow, and the resources flow through relationships of trust with individuals rather than organizations, and so, guess what?

When the individual dies, what happens to the organization? It's gone, and so what I love about "With You" is that it's this sustained interdependence.

What is sustained is we together are working together with the gifts that we have and the goods that we have to make known the Gospel, and so what people bring to the table is what they have.

Rob: Yes.

Gary: Now, let me, let me parse this further from a Biblical scholar. Let me be a nerd just for a second.

Let me, let me use that training. When you read books like the Book of Acts, and you read, if I just say Acts chapter 2, what do you see?

Sustained interdependence, you see this beautiful communion of giving and receiving.

Where by the time you get to Acts chapter 4, it says there's no needy person among them because as many as had resources shared 'em, and they were this beautiful community of giving and receiving, right?

Well, the Greek word that appears from the 30s to the 60s in the world of the New Testament is Koinonia.

You probably heard that word mentioned. People would, when some people say Koinonia, it drives me nuts a little bit.

They think, "Oh, yeah, that's the name of my adult Bible fellowship Sunday School class," so they think of--

Rob: Or a campfire experience of, of fun fellowship.

Gary: Yeah, yeah, they just think it means fun fellowship with coffee and donuts, and it's, like, "No." The communion of giving and receiving is if you have giftedness, you put it to work.

If you have resources, you put them to work, 'cause what faithful stewards do in this communion of giving and receiving is they use what God has supplied according to God's design.

So the one who sustains everything is God through the interdependent obedience of his people.



What the Community of Giving and Receiving Means for Fundraisers

Rob: Now, Gary, let's take this to, to the listeners of this podcast, many of whom are going to be folks that are seeking funds.

Gary: Sure

Rob: They may be, and perhaps if they're listening to this podcast, they're seeking funds in the United States or in the Europe from a Western framework.

So would you, would you help them think through what "With You" means and what the community of giving and receiving means to that person that's actually going out and seeking funds.

Gary: Okay, so, here's a perfect picture because I can relate to your question 'cause I, for the sake of the listeners, I was for almost two decades a development officer or a vice president.

And my job was to rally people to participate with the organization I served.

So in plain terms, everybody said, you know, "He was the fundraiser," and I would always say, "God is the fundraiser, but I encourage people to participate with God in his work and what they have."

But here's where the rubber meets the road for the listeners and where "With You" fits in.

When, when you're thinking about the community of people that God has raised up that are with you and have demonstrated they're "With You" by voting with their checkbook or their bank transfers or their grants.

Like, they've made gifts to you, approaching them and approaching others who may be prospects needs to always be not just about what you want from them, which would be one-directional, but also what you want for them.

That's the communion of giving and receiving. You see, if I just approach you in what I want from you, I'm actually not giving you what Henri Nouwen says is one of the greatest gifts I have to offer you.

And that is the privilege of participating with me in God's work, so "With You," this interdependent or two-directional approach really takes us to a place which says, "I realize God's given me the opportunity to have a role in his work."

And He's resourced you to participating in his work. And so my interaction with you must not just be what I want from you but what I want for you.

That way, if you make sure your interactions with people cover both sides, they won't just, you won't just be labeled as the guy who just wants to take from people but is coming to give as well.

Rob: And now, this is exactly the thing that hangs up most people who start out fundraising or somehow get through it, is they always feel like I'm asking, almost like begging in this one-way transaction.

And you've correctly brought that out, and in mentioning Henri Nouwen's book, I should mention that is called [The Spirituality of Fundraising](#) by Henri Nouwen.

And if you're at all in our work, that is as an investor or a prayer partner, or as a, as a ministry leader anywhere, I would highly suggest that, among a number of other resources, that you start with that one.



Fundraisers Must Sow Truth

Gary: Yeah, well, and I would, I would shamelessly add to that that when Dan Busby at [ECFA](#) asked me to write the book [*The Sower*](#), he had heard me give, like, a seminar.

And in this seminar, I talked about the fact that our job as fundraisers or ministry development officers isn't just to go take from people, it's to go sow truth as sowers.

That's why the book's called *The Sower*. It's to sow truth in people's lives, that they've been blessed to be a blessing.

They've been resourced with spiritual gifts and material goods to make known the eternal Gospel, and if we're sowing truth in people's lives, they're gonna get in the game, Rob.

They're gonna get in the game with what they have, and what sustains the ministries will be our interdependent obedience and service.

Rob: For those of you that are seeing this in video, I'm holding up a copy of the book of *The Sower*.

There's a number of other resources, which were mentioned in the introduction of this podcast, but you can also go to the website, and those resources I'll be listed.

And they are wonderful, and I thank you for that, Gary, so that book also helped when Lausanne assigned me this, this issue of working on the struggle between the majority world in seeking funds and the dynamic.



The Importance of Trust in Ministry

Rob: There were a lot of dynamics going on at the turn of the century, of this century between the West and the global South in terms of resourcing that were causing a lot of problems, and it kept rising up.

And so, Lausanne, we had a task force, and out of that task force, I got assigned to lead a committee to look into the issue, and that's where we developed this concept of the community of giving and receiving in there.

And embedded in that is a conversation between the potential investor and the ministry seeking the funds and how they can arrive at this place of communion.

And what we said was, as you work through this, your cultural differences and the overdog/underdog stuff and get rid of it and really get down to true fellowship.

And, as you were describing, what you arrive at is a place where that person that is giving, or that organization that is giving offers trust, true trust, because you cannot run a ministry without trust from your stakeholders.

Because the daily changes and challenges that you face on whatever strategies you have will always have to deal with the, with what's going on as you launch that strategy and work it in your settings.

And that never fits exactly what you put in the proposal, and so you have to have trust because you're operating out there, and you have to provide.

The other side of this is accountability to the investor because the investor knows through accountability so that they can go before God and say, "I am investing my money wisely in your kingdom," and that comes back through the accountability that is offered in exchange for the trust.

That's actually the whole thing that we worked on and came to in this community of giving and receiving, which was expanded in my book.

Gary: Here's my copy.

Rob: [When Money Goes on Mission](#), so there's a couple of shameless plugs, but, you know, hopefully this stuff will help whoever is listening to get better at their investing or their praying, more on point, and their receiving.



It's Not About Being an Overdog or Underdog

Gary: Can I make a comment? You've used the expression overdog and underdog. Can I just comment on that?

Rob: Yes.

Gary: So, remember you said you really love how the expression, "With You," captures the heart of sustained interdependence.

And "When Money Goes on Mission," when we function instead of just, just one-directional, like giving or taking, when we don't have that communion, you have the underdog/overdog setting, so it doesn't feel like With You.

You know what it feels like? Over You, or it feels like Under You, and it really doesn't feel like we're equals at the foot of the cross either.

It feels like I'm below you, less important, or I'm above you and lording over you, and so this "With You" posture, where people come to the table.

When I was doing a translation project and we were looking at Koinonia, we were looking at the fact that it's translated three or four different ways.

It's translated participation, like Paul's in prison, and he's in chains, and it's in the sixties, and he's writing the Philippians, and he says, "Thanks for your Koinonia in the Euangelion, your participation in the Gospel from the first day until now."

Now, we know they provided support, and they engaged with him on mission, and so Koinonia for them was their participation with them with what they had.

So we see participation, but it also means, like, vested participation, so in other words, we have, what's the modern expression?

They have a skin in the game? People who are disciples of Jesus, whatever skins they have, they put 'em in the game, and watch this, this is the abundant economy of God.

When God supplies, we use it faithfully, and we, we pray the posture of dependence, which is, "Give us this day our daily bread."

He supplies again, and the economy of God is abundant because He's, His eyes are looking to and fro for people who are gonna be not underdogs or overdogs, but let's just say good old dogs who are willing to have this "With You," this vested, all-in participation with what they have.



The Joy of Giving and Transformation

Rob: And that really gets down to the joy of giving.

So there's a place where some might feel, "Oh, I'm obligated to give because I'm supposed to tithe," or some such thing.

And they may come at their giving from a struggle. And I think that struggle is worth going through and working through, particularly if you don't feel joy in your giving.

If you're listening to this podcast right now, and you think, "You know, I don't necessarily have joy," and I'm not talking about excitement.

I'm talking about this sense of fulfillment that you've met your calling before God, and that comes in fellowship.

It's not this independent thing because you're now working with somebody that's taking a resource that you have and are giving sacrificially from a, you've made a decision not to use that money on something else, but to use it on this.

And this is the accountability that's given back to you that helps you shape your joy.

So that you understand what you've just said, that you're actually redirecting God's resources into a place that you feel has been shown to you to be a part of.

And then becomes this warm sense of fulfillment, and it's not unlike, it is the, it is part of the aspect of the return that you got for the investment that you put in.

It's a kingdom return to see lives changed, to see transformation.

Gary: I like that you used the word fellowship because that's the other translation of Koinonia, fellowship.

Imagine, okay, so we're approaching, like, seasons of, like, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Just think of all the times over the years you've gone to, like, a school program, and all the kids have practiced and are gonna bring something to the program, right.

And when heard you say the word joy, I pictured the kid who learned his part in the program, and he's so excited, it's almost his cue, and he comes, and he does his part, and then everybody else does their part, and in the end, it's this beautiful celebration.

It's this beautiful, God-honoring program. That's what the communion of give and receiving looks like, except it's on a massive, global scale.

Rob: Right, and for the person receiving, there's this sense of fulfillment that, "Yes, God, you are resourcing this thing."

"I am working in the direction you called me to go in," and there's this faithfulness to the object of the gift.

Gary: You're getting to why it's so complex to define sustained interdependence because-

Rob: Yeah, we've been struggling with this one some.

Gary: Right, well, and I'm with-

Rob: And it's a godly struggle.



It's Not About the Transaction, it's About the Transformation

Gary: Right, I'm with you in this struggle because as I've leaned into it, "With You," I've realized it's like all these parts connected together of our Christian faith.

And living out our Christian faith in community with the resources we have, with trust and accountability as these pillars.

It's like, wow, this is really hard to just summarize it in a definition.

Rob: Yeah, but it's a little vexing to work it through. I will say this, it's one of these things you think you get when you hear it, you know.

Because it's got words that you understand, and when you're a leader in this work, which I get to work with these marvelous leaders around the world as you do, this idea of interdependence becomes very real.

It can be a little cold sitting back and maybe reacting to a letter that you receive seeking funds or sitting in an office somewhere in a meeting.

Or, you know, it can feel a little cold and transactional, and what we're moving to is transformation.

You know, 'cause the purpose of the gift, the giving and the receiving of the gift, is that something transformational is going to happen from this mere transaction.

It's not the transaction that counts. It's faithfulness to the transaction, but it's the transformation that occurs because of the transaction.

Gary: And as I've leaned into it, "With You," it's, there I go again, saying, "With You."

As I've leaned into it, "With You," I've come to grips with the fact that it's really, like, and, and if you're a listener out there, and again, you're responsible for resource development with your organization.

It's really realizing that you're, you play a bigger role than just being the development officer for the rescue mission.

You're actually playing a role in helping people see they're part of something bigger, and the bigger picture is that God's design for fueling his work around the world is faithful, humble servants just willing to play their part.

And when they all play their part in this communion of giving and receiving, there's always enough. God supplies the gifted people the resources.

They come together. They experience joy. It builds trust.

When there's accountability and appropriate oversight, there tends to be growth associated with it because people on the sidelines wanna get in the game.



Three Ways to Face Failure as Fundraisers

Rob: Okay, Gary, so all of this can sound like a happy dance.

What about joy when it just blows up on you, when you've got a gift, and you applied it, and everything went, they actually tackle you and get the ball, the opposition does, okay?

The "With You" didn't work. The fullback wasn't behind you, and, and something fell apart, right. There's still joy in that, and there, what do, how do you find joy in failure?

Gary: So, I was actually talking to a mentor friend yesterday, Rich Haney.

He's one of the fellow authors in the book that another mentor of mine, Wes Willmer, wrote called *Revolution in Generosity*, and when Rich and I had coffee yesterday, it was actually about this very topic because I'm CEO of this new organization.

And he wanted to prepare me for when things go wrong, so we actually talked about this, when the, we didn't use the, when you get, when the "With You" doesn't happen or when you're hung out to dry and you're all by yourself, here's the two things he reminded me.

1. Know That God is With You

Gary: Number one, he said when people fail or disappoint you or things don't go as you expect, don't forget this one thing.

The first thing he told me was, "God is with you," and that's when he reminded me of Emmanuel, God with us, like, he reminded me that when you feel like everything collapses, you are not alone.

God is with you, 'cause he said being a CEO, or for those out there who are at small organizations, if you feel like you're all alone, number one, he reminded me when everything falls apart, God is with you.

2. Know That God Uses Failure to Help Us Realize We Need Him

The second thing, though, he reminded me is that God uses those circumstances to often help us realize maybe we weren't with him.

In other words, maybe we were thinking, watch, it's kind of like God begins a good work, and somewhere along the lines, we kind of said, "God, I'll take it from here, and all I need is this grant, and then everything is gonna happen great," and we don't get it, and we think, "Wait, what happened?"

And the reality is, God with us maybe is trying to teach us that that's not necessarily right now the direction he wants us to go.

And that's okay, and we can report back to our board, we can report faithfully back to our, our CEO if we report to the CEO, and we can say at that moment, you know, I went down this path because that was the faithful activity we marked, and I learned that this is not the path we're going at this moment in time.

And, and so, that was helpful to me to hear those two things. What's your reaction to that?

3. Study Failure

Rob: Well, my reaction is that it's important to study failure.

Gary: Yes.

Rob: And to really look at it. You know, I, I follow sports, and I was a sports writer many eons ago, and so, I love the fact that when, when everything goes wrong, everybody goes to the film room and studies what happened.

And being honest about what happened gives you another sense that God is with you and that he's actually showing you how to learn through this, no matter how difficult the slam against you because Satan is a, seeks out to devour us.

If you're doing a good work, you're gonna encounter several things that are gonna come against you to finish that good work. One is is your own proclivity to goof things up.

I have an unbelievable ability in my own personal life to be clumsy, for one, but two, to get excited, like you said, and just barrel down a path that's all wrong, but feel like it's right until I get slammed.

And so, there's our own proclivity, it's like failure follows us around like our shadow. It's just there.

It's just a part of life, and it's a part of our learning experience and therefore part of that, it's part of building the joy, of understanding the struggle and understanding when the struggle goes wrong because there's not only our proclivity to failure, there's our opposition.

I mean, if you are truly working in the kingdom, you're penetrating darkness with light, and that darkness tries to overwhelm and come back and take the light back.

And it could be any number of things that form the opposition, and you need to study that and learn it so that you are better equipped the next time out to deal with that, that thing that happened to you.

In the same way, you need to study your successes and be careful because you can push a success too far and miss what's changing because of your success.

It's amazing to me in my coaching that I do for First Fruit how many times I'm dealing with ministries who think they're failing with their partners, when they're really dealing with the result of their success, and their partners are moving on, and they haven't moved on with them.



Closing Thoughts

Gary: The Biblical picture of this is we need to lay aside every weight and the sin which besets us.

We need to lay aside the good, all those awards, whatever, and commendations as well as the bad things. We need to forget.

We kind of forget those success headlines as well as move beyond those failures and learn from them.

I couldn't agree more because don't you think depression and defeat and discouragement, which are the mental game things that the evil one throws at us, are really where our ministry work is really won and lost?

Rob: Right, and this is why, in another iteration of this, Gary, as we go to Part Two and Three, we can talk about the role of intercessory prayer in building the team.

I mean, what does the team look like that's With You when you're rolling down the field, and the opposition is coming at you with everything they've got?

Gary: You know, I have been, people have told me recently that the team, that global team that by God's grace we've put together for GTP, is really what people like most, so maybe let's use that as the carrot to get people to come back and listen to the next episode.

When they come back, we'll tell them who's on that team, why we formed 'em, and how the communion of giving and receiving between those team members actually is, is the, the critical part of building a fruitful ongoing ministry.

Rob: Yes, and we will, and thank you, Gary. Thank you for listening to this podcast.

That's it for today. Part Two of this will be up next. Thank you.