

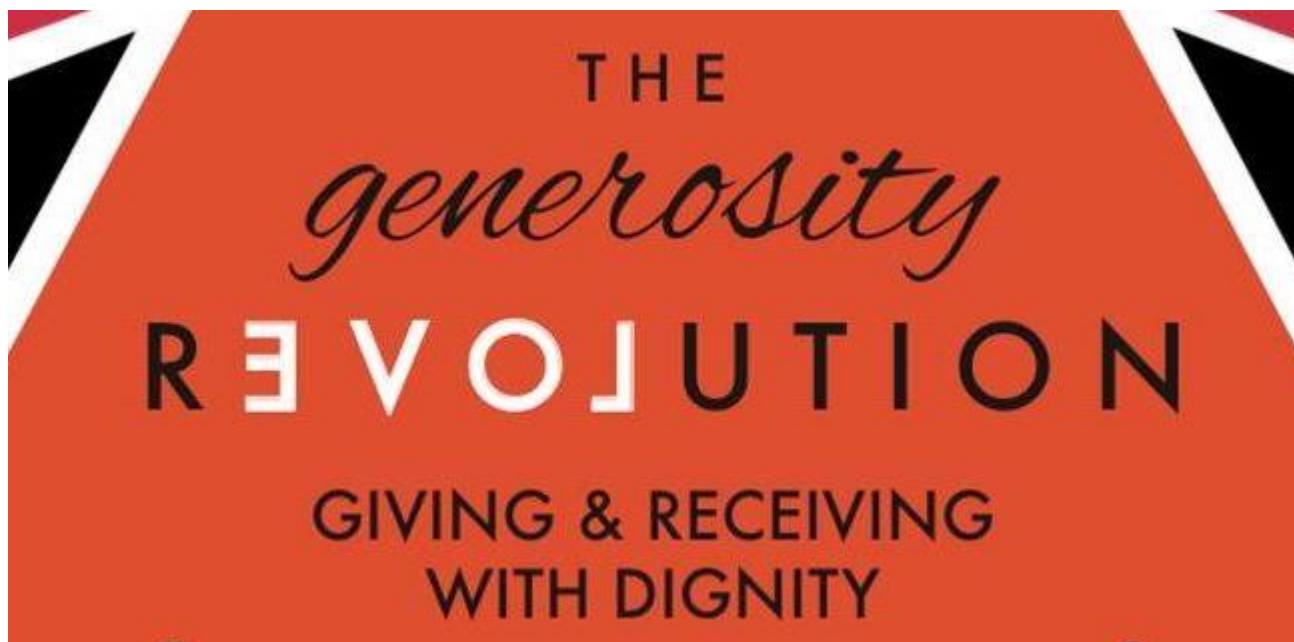
## 5 first steps Christian believers can take to make a difference in SA today

By Caroline Powell

Many South Africans are asking how they can become more relevant. Here are some first steps that may help ...

1. Read the bible with people who are not the same as you and allow the reflections that emerge to change the way you understand your cultural reading of the bible.
2. Take a look at your lifestyle - how you spend your time, treasures and talents. Do you live in a way that changes the way things are in the South Africa? How do you live in ways that keep South Africa the way it is?
3. Listen! To other people, to your own heart, to the world around you and to God. What are you hearing? What do you need to take notice of? What are the first simple steps you can take in response to what you have heard? Who can you talk to about this?
4. Speak! Tell your story. Our faith is a story-telling faith. The richness of all our stories make up our hope for a different South Africa. Talk about what you have learnt from other people's stories. Weave your story and others' stories into God's big story and share this with everyone you meet. We need more than a single story about our country and each other.
5. Ask yourself this one simple question: "Do I believe that all South Africans have been created equal in the image of God?" If your answer is yes, then ask the following question: "Does the way I and my family and community live, reflect this truth?" Start making small changes where it is obvious that what you believe is not reflected in how you live.

## Sharing your treasures



How do we share well with those in our city? Many people are generous and want to share with others, especially during times of crisis. However, sometimes this giving is done without the care and dignity that people in need deserve.

We have put some tips together to help us give well, in ways that enhance dignity.

- Ensure that all items, whether clothing, household items or toys are newly washed, smell fresh and are not stained, torn, chipped or blemished.
- Donate items in a well-packaged, attractive condition: folded or well stacked and protected in sturdy cardboard boxes or see-through plastic bags (avoid using black refuse bags) and if possible, pre-sorted and labelled into genders, sizes and ages.
- If an item is in generally good shape but has something that needs fixing (e.g. a button sewn on, a hem cleaned up or toy fixed) please spend the time doing this before giving the item.
- Consider buying additional gifts such as brand new underwear to accompany clothing.

- If you would like to spend money, contact the organisation you are planning to give through to find out what current needs are, especially during disaster relief. The Warehouse and churches will also have this information on websites during specific responses
- Ensure that you donate seasonally appropriate items: this may mean that you go through your cupboards at the beginning of each season and donate what can be used immediately, or if you have items for a different season, store them until the correct season.
- It is difficult for relief organisations to store excess items and often causes them to become mouldy or stale smelling.
- Ask yourself these questions: Would I give this to someone I love? Would I be blessed to receive this? Does this give someone the message that they are made in God's image?
- Please see the insert regarding what Urban Gleaning at The Warehouse is able to help you distribute, and our website during disaster responses.