

Should Donors Be Upset That New Crystal Cathedral Owners Removed Their Names?

Now that pastor Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral has been sold to the Catholic Church, big changes are happening. For instance, it's being reported that a walkway constructed of bricks with engraved names of Crystal Cathedral donors is being pulled up to make way for new landscaping.

Although the new owners are making the bricks available to donors who would like to claim them, it's still causing an uproar among many former donors. I've seen similar stories at other nonprofits and ministries, where walls with donor names have been torn down or other structures honoring donors have been remodeled and changed. In every case, donors get upset and make a stink.

Well, here's my advice to these donors: Get a life. After all, why did you give in the first place? To build something significant for God and for humanity or to get your name engraved on a sidewalk brick?

The truth is, most of these ministries knew what they were getting into back in the 70s and 80s. They knew people loved recognition, so they named college buildings after donors or created special gifts or "ministry premiums" for donations—and how many ministries have you seen with a big tree painted on the lobby wall with donor names on the leaves? It was a two-way addiction—ministries wanted the money, and donors wanted to be recognized.

Maybe it's time for a donor reset. Let's rethink why we give and what our expectations should be. The era of the 70s and 80s was the prosperity theology period, when people were erroneously taught that God will bless you (when you give to

my ministry of course). The truth is, God does bless givers, but that's not why we should give. It's not about getting our names on a plaque; it's about making a difference.

If we could get that message out there, just think how much donor money could be diverted from creating plaques and redirected toward actually doing good?

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