

The logo for "Cross Currents" features a stylized orange cross symbol to the left of the text. The word "Cross" is in a bold, dark brown font, and "Currents" is in a similar font below it.

### *The Best Blessing*

My Rotarian buddy Bill Countiss and I were back at the front door of the same Walmart store where every year we ring the Salvation Army kettle bells on one afternoon just before Christmas.

It was a cold Saturday. Not the kind of blizzard cold Bill and I had braved several times in seasons past, but it was more than nippy.

The blustery winter winds chilled our more-than-mature bodies that afternoon, but the delight on the faces of the kids who stopped by to help fill our little red kettle warmed our hearts.

One precious two-year-old—probably making her first kettle contribution—at first had trouble inserting her flat dollar bill into the kettle’s purposely small slot. But she was as smart as she was pretty. Before any of us adults could show her how, that sharp little girl figured out on her own how to fold the dollar to make it slide easily into the tiny hole.

When Bill and I wished her “Merry Christmas” and thanked her for her gift, her bright little eyes danced with delight and a smile lit up her cherub face.

After that sweet child and her grandpa made it out into the parking lot beyond hearing us, Bill reacted to that memorable experience by observing to me that the gifts being put into our kettle that day appeared to be blessing the givers far more than the recipients of the gifts.

It’s almost always that way, isn’t it? We don’t have to wait until Christmas to be reminded just how right Jesus was when he told us that indeed “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

When members of my own flock began to raise funds to assist victims of Hurricane Harvey, the generosity of their gifts amazed me. As I listened to some of their coffee shop conversations, though, it became apparent to me that those liberal givers felt far more blessed than any of the Gulf Coast victims they were helping.

The more generous our gifts, the more they bless us as givers. That’s probably what the apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote, “He who sows generously will also reap generously.”

Do you recall a time when you gave one Christmas gift so generous that it defied reason? Although you’re always careful not to exceed your family budget, that time you splurged on a gift for someone you love dearly. Do you remember how happy it made you, the giver?

May your giving make you merry this Christmas!

**By Gene Shelburne**