

## Giving to religion

- In 2006, giving to religious organizations reached an estimated \$96.82 billion, an increase of 4.5 percent (1.2 percent adjusted for inflation) from the revised estimate of \$92.69 billion for 2005.<sup>1</sup>
- Giving to religious organizations represented 32.8 percent of total estimated charitable contributions in the United States in 2006.
- Since 1966, in current dollars, gifts to religion have increased an average of 6.8 percent per year. Adjusted for inflation, the average annual 40-year increase is 2.0 percent. The ten-year average increase is 4.7 percent per year (2.1 percent adjusted for inflation).
- Giving to religion increases over time, but more slowly than does giving to other subsectors. As a percentage of total giving, religion's share has fallen from roughly half (45.7 percent) in 1966 to just under one-third (32.8 percent).
- Countless religious congregations organized volunteers in 2005 and 2006 to go to hurricane-affected communities in the American South to assist with rebuilding. Volunteer hours and expenses that volunteers paid for these trips are not included in the estimate of giving to religion.

### ***Giving USA* findings about giving to religion, 2006**

The 2006 *Giving USA* estimate of giving to religion<sup>2</sup> includes:

- Contributions to religious congregations, including nondenominational congregations; and
- Giving to other entities for organized religious practice, including:
  - Offices of faith groups;
  - Missionary societies;
  - Religious media; and
  - Other organizations formed for religious fellowship, worship, or evangelism.

It does not, however, include contributions made to separately incorporated, faith-based organizations (FBOs) that provide education, healthcare, or other services. Thus, giving to St. Elizabeth's Hospital, the Reform Jewish Academy, or Lutheran Social Services and similar organizations appears in health, education, and human services, respectively. This chapter includes some news items related to funding for FBOs because that topic is often of interest to people who work in or volunteer for religious organizations.



Contributions to religion are predominantly from individuals.

To consider giving without including religious giving, take \$96.82 billion out of individual giving (as an approximation). The result is \$126.07 billion in individual giving for nonreligious (secular) causes. With other types of giving, the adjusted total is \$198.20 billion, and individuals still contribute 64 percent.

### Million-dollar gifts awarded to religious organizations

At least seven gifts of \$2 million or more each were given to religious organizations in 2006 and publicly announced in the media:

- An anonymous gift of \$30 million was given to the Catholic Diocese of Memphis to support its inner-city Jubilee Schools effort.<sup>3</sup>
- The Estate of Henry William Edwards, Jr. gave \$18 million to Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, California, to be used to maintain and restore the building.<sup>4</sup>
- \$8.17 million from the Lilly Endowment went to the Indianapolis Center for Congregations for operating support.<sup>5</sup>
- Donald Saltz gave \$5 million to the Adas Israel Congregation in Washington, D.C., to bolster the congregation's endowment for future programs; the gift was given in honor of his late wife, Mozelle.<sup>6</sup>
- The Rollie Boreham, Jr. Estate gave \$4.8 million to the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Smith in Arkansas to provide support for outreach and benevolence, support the church's Center for At-Risk Youth, and provide scholarships and program development for its Hobson Preschool.<sup>7</sup>
- Pew Charitable Trusts granted \$3 million to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to support construction of the Billy Graham Library, featuring multimedia presentations, films, memorabilia, and the restored Graham family homestead.<sup>8</sup>
- An anonymous donor gave \$2.45 million to the Faith First Baptist Church in Indiana for the purpose of creating a new residential center for girls and young women.<sup>9</sup>

One other significant gift will have an impact on religion, although the recipient is a foundation. Jim Joseph bequeathed at least \$500 million to The Jim Joseph Foundation, which focuses on helping Jewish children and improving education in the religion's traditions and history.<sup>10</sup>

### Multimillion dollar fundraising campaigns for churches and missions

A number of major campaigns for religious organizations were covered in the media in 2006 or early 2007. While not a comprehensive list of all campaigns and fundraising efforts under way, this selection shows the range of goals and purposes.

An article in *Church Executive* reported that 7,000 donors contributed or pledged \$105 million to Calvary Chapel in Fort Lauderdale for expansion of its ministry, which already reaches 20,000 people in attendance weekly.<sup>11</sup> The Catholic Diocese in Biloxi announced a rebuilding campaign for \$14 million to raise funds needed for expenses not covered by insurance.<sup>12</sup> Other Catholic dioceses launched campaigns for growth and outreach, including a \$100 million initiative in Santa Clara County, California, announced in fall 2006.<sup>13</sup>

The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod World Mission launched a six-year



A growing, but still relatively small, share of the population (< 20%) is not affiliated with any religion. Studies have shown that secular people give for secular causes at the same—or a lower—rate as religiously affiliated people. Growth in the secular population suggests that nonprofit organizations may need to “work harder” to raise funds.

effort in 2004, called “Ablaze!” with the goal of raising \$100 million in new mission dollars (above church operations). In 2006, that campaign began working in a limited number of districts within the denomination to contact potential donors one at a time. By December 2006, the campaign report showed a combined total of \$10 million from the first three districts to participate in the “Fan into Flame” program.<sup>14</sup> The “Fan into Flame” component is just one portion of the overall \$100 million goal.

**Congregational membership shifts see growth in churches that are more likely to expect tithing; people with no religion also increase as percentage of population**

The National Council of Churches of Christ maintains historical records of church membership going back to 1916. In the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* released in 2006, many mainline Protestant denominations reported a decline in membership in 2004, while the Mormon, Pentecostal, and Catholic churches reported an increase.<sup>15</sup> Of the 25 largest churches in the U.S., those showing the largest increases in membership were:

- Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal denomination, up by 1.8 percent to 2.8 million individuals;

- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, up by 1.7 percent to 6 million individuals; and
- Roman Catholic Church, up by 0.8 percent to 67.8 million individuals.

Several studies released in 2006 found different percentages of the population who reported no religious affiliation. A survey by the Gallup organization and Baylor University, a faith-based higher education institution affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, found that 10.8 percent of the U.S. population is unaffiliated with a religion, which is lower than the 14 percent stated in previous studies.<sup>16</sup>

A separate study published in *USA Today* reported that Americans who say they “consider themselves part of a Christian tradition” fell 6 percentage points (from 80 percent to 74 percent) from 1999 to 2006. The number of people who say they are not part of any religious tradition rose from 13 percent to 18 percent in the same period.<sup>17</sup> It is likely that different wording on the questions in the two studies accounts in part for the difference found in the Baylor and the *USAToday* results.

**Conflicts over social issues rock some faith groups**

Religious beliefs and values shaped how Americans responded in 2006 to a number of issues. Some donations

made to religious groups may have increased or decreased as individuals “voted” with their support (or withdrawal of support) based on their position about the social concern.

An issue that might have spurred giving concerns the state referenda banning same-sex marriage. Same-sex marriage has been constitutionally banned in 19 states.<sup>18</sup> In another example, the Episcopal Church in the U.S. was divided after a General Convention decision affirmed support for gays and lesbians, and opposed state or federal constitutional amendments that prohibit same-sex civil marriages. Also within the Episcopal Church, election of Katharine Jefferts Schori as Episcopal Presiding Bishop led several Episcopal dioceses to refuse recognition of her leadership. Some of these dioceses sought to align themselves with Anglican communions in other countries.<sup>19</sup>

### **Muslims face challenges for giving in the post-9/11 world**

*Zakat* (giving alms), the third of the five fundamental pillars of Islam, is an annual obligation to donate 2.5 percent of savings and higher percentages of other assets to specific types of charitable causes (the poor and the needy are listed first).<sup>20</sup> Since 2001, many American Muslims have felt they

cannot give to organizations such as private Muslim foundations that they previously supported because they might be accused of giving to terrorist organizations.<sup>21</sup> Muslims have been looking for alternative ways to fulfill their religious duty.

In the 2006 book, *Islamic Perspective on Charity: A Comprehensive Guide for Running a Muslim Nonprofit in the US*,<sup>22</sup> Khalil Jassem, head of the Michigan-based Muslim charity Life for Relief and Development, presents information about:

- How Muslim charities operate; and
- The concept and significance of charity in Islam in a comparative context, among other topics.

Dr. Jassem, formerly a university professor of surveying and measurement sciences, spoke in 2006 at a forum organized by the U.S. Department of State about issues related to Muslim integration into U.S. society.<sup>23</sup> The organization he now heads, Life for Relief and Development, has consultative status with the United Nations and is reportedly the largest Arab-American nongovernmental charity.

### **Bankrupt donors may still tithe**

President Bush signed a law allowing people who file for bankruptcy to tithe.<sup>24</sup>



WHAT THIS  
MEANS TO YOU

It is important to remember faith-based giving is more about faith and transformation than it is about politics. Too much politics either way can obscure the mission of the institution, polarize followers, and restrict donations.

The law allows households to continue to tithe and to make charitable contributions even as their debts exceed their assets. Approximately 2.04 million households filed bankruptcy in 2005,<sup>25</sup> but legal reform to bankruptcy-filing regulations lowered that number to about 500,000 in 2006.<sup>26</sup> If 45 percent<sup>27</sup> of those 500,000 households give an average of \$1,884 to religion (the national average for giving to religion in 2005), this would equal about \$423 million in contributions to religion that might otherwise not have been made before passage of the law. Even under the assumption that all households facing bankruptcy who would otherwise give to religion continue to do so at the national average amount, the total is less than .5 percent of all giving to religion.

### **Congregations promote giving through technology and theology**

A number of trends in religious belief and fundraising practice may influence contributions to religious organizations. For example, churches have put ATMs in their buildings to make it easier for worship participants to contribute.<sup>28</sup>

Giving to religion is an important component of many faith traditions. A *TIME* magazine poll found that 31 percent of those surveyed agreed that if people give their money to God, God will bless them with more money.<sup>29</sup>

### **Faith-based organizations (FBOs) benefiting from federal and private funds**

Faith-based organizations are eligible for federal funding under the Charitable

Choice Act, which was extended through 2010. This provision of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 allows faith-based groups providing social services to receive federal funding without altering their religious identities or changing their hiring practices.<sup>30</sup>

A March 2006 report showed that nearly \$2.1 billion was awarded to FBOs through seven federal agencies in Federal Fiscal Year 2005.<sup>31</sup> (This is about 2 percent of all charitable contributions to churches.) From 2003 to 2005, the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives saw a 38 percent increase in the number of grants to faith-based groups from five federal agencies and a 21 percent increase in the amount of grant money awarded.<sup>32</sup>

In a first-ever look at five grant programs that provide federal dollars to be allocated at the state and local level, it was revealed that FBOs receive a small amount of funding, ranging from 1.7 percent to 5.5 percent, from state and local government funding decisions. This funding level is disproportionately low compared with the number of FBO grant applicants. By 2006, 32 governors and more than 115 mayors had established either an office or a liaison for faith-based and community initiatives. In part to increase the state and local funding allocations made to FBOs, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives held a series of regional conferences in 2006.<sup>33</sup>

The Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives was created by



The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives created in 2001 within the White House may or may not endure into 2009, when the next president is inaugurated. The related offices at the state and local level are likely to continue in some form, especially if the executive order extending charitable choice to 2010 is not countermanded by the next president so that federal funding continues to remain an option for faith-based organizations.

Disaster relief funding, when next needed, may be accessed through the Department of Homeland Security, which is also seeking to make it available to faith-based organizations in a more streamlined process than was the case in the past.

President Bush's executive order in March 2006 within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). According to President Bush, the Center "coordinates DHS's efforts to remove regulatory, contracting, and other programmatic obstacles to the participation of faith-based and community organizations in its provision of social and community services, including disaster relief and recovery services."<sup>34</sup>

### Court rulings benefit FBOs

Two federal courts upheld AmeriCorps grant recipients' right to teach faith-based subjects in religiously affiliated schools.

- In the October 2005 case of *Lown v. Salvation Army*, the Federal District Court for the Southern District of New York ruled that churches and religious organizations must retain their hiring autonomy when receiving federal financial assistance. The court recognized that FBOs do not become an arm of the government merely by receiving funding to provide social services.
- In the January 2006 case of *American Jewish Congress v. Corporation for*

*National and Community Service*, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals upheld the right of AmeriCorps to grant recipients to teach religious and secular subjects in religiously affiliated schools.

### Bank of America Study of High Net-Worth Philanthropy finds widespread support for giving to religion

The study finds that those in high net-worth households are more likely to give to religion than the general population (72 percent versus 45.4 percent). Also, religious beliefs motivate 57 percent of high net-worth respondents.<sup>35</sup>

This mail survey was a random sample drawn from neighborhoods in which the households' invested net worth was \$3 million or more, and included respondents with an annual household income over \$200,000 and/or a net worth over \$1 million. The study was conducted and analyzed by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

### Religious conservatives more generous than liberals, study says

In *Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth about Compassionate Conservatism*,

author Arthur C. Brooks concludes that religious conservatives donate far more money than secular liberals to charitable activities, after controlling for income. He cites extensive data analysis to demonstrate that values advocated by conservatives—from church attendance and two-parent families to the Protestant work ethic and a distaste for government-funded social services—make conservatives more generous than liberals.<sup>36</sup> Dr. Brooks is a professor of public administration at Syracuse University.

### **Religiously committed citizens are exemplars of civic responsibility**

Dr. Stephen Monsma's study, *Religion and Philanthropic Giving and Volunteering: Building Blocks for Civic Responsibility*, asserts that people who want to understand and strengthen giving and volunteering in the United States need to take religion into account.<sup>37</sup> Monsma found that Americans who attend religious services on a weekly basis are more likely to give money to charities, both religious and secular, and are more likely to volunteer than those who seldom or never attend church.

Mainline Protestants tended to be more likely to give to charity than were people in the other traditions, although they were closely followed by evangelical Protestants. Respondents who gave money to charity or volunteered for charitable organizations also showed higher levels of political involvement than those who neither gave nor volunteered, suggesting that religiously committed people who give and volunteer are also active citizens in other areas of civic life.

### **A study of Catholic giving shows overall growth in 2005, but decline in the South**

The International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) continued a multiyear research program on Catholic giving to parishes and dioceses. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University annually surveys members of the ICSC on levels of Catholic giving. The ICSC data for 2005 contain replies from 60 percent of the dioceses and archdioceses in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Joseph Claude Harris, an independent research analyst, used the ICSC data to create an estimate of



People are motivated to give where the work is the outgrowth of a spiritual mission. In some cases, people might want to do targeted appeals to individuals who are likely to share a faith motivation and call upon the faith origins of the nonprofit where appropriate.

As disposable income rises, households give more money to a wider range of causes and types of organizations. Among the wealthiest households, gifts to religion are fewer than one-quarter (22.6 percent) of the total estimated dollars given, even though more than three-quarters of high net-worth households contribute to religion. The high net-worth donors are giving higher amounts to secular causes.

giving to all parishes in the country. His analysis, which was prepared for *Giving USA*, includes data from 2005, a year which was affected by reported scandals of abuse by priests.

Harris found that average household donations were the lowest in the Pacific (\$172) and Northeast (\$227) regions. These two regions had the largest number of estimated households per parish of any region in the

country. The Midwest, with the smallest average number of households per parish (458), had the largest average household donation of \$630. Harris' data underscore the finding that the cost of operating a parish does not substantially increase when more Catholics register as members. The exercise of religion tends to be a fixed cost endeavor. Table 1 summarizes parish offertory collections by region.

**Table 1**  
Estimated offertory collections for the Roman Catholic Church, 2005

Region	Number of parishes	Total offertory collection (\$ in millions)	Estimated Catholic households*	Average household donation (\$)	Average parish collection (\$)	Average number of estimated households per parish	Percentage of dioceses reporting
Northeast	5,003	\$1,660	7,303,281	\$227	\$331,801	1,460	56%
South Atlantic	1,506	\$826	1,851,682	\$446	\$548,473	1,230	61%
South	2,463	\$855	2,850,848	\$300	\$347,138	1,157	58%
Great Lakes	3,907	\$1,448	3,516,620	\$412	\$370,617	900	62%
Midwest	2,722	\$784	1,245,315	\$630	\$288,024	458	64%
Mountain	876	\$364	1,018,410	\$357	\$415,525	1,163	33%
Pacific	<u>1,641</u>	<u>\$665</u>	<u>3,871,480</u>	<u>\$172</u>	<u>\$405,241</u>	<u>2,359</u>	<u>76%</u>
United States	18,118	\$6,602	21,657,636	\$305	\$364,389	1,195	60%

**Notes to table:**

\*The estimate of Catholic households in this edition is based on work done at the Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University. It differs from previous editions of *Giving USA*. This change affects the average donation per household, but not the total or average parish collection (although there are also changes in the number of parishes).

<b>Northeast</b>	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont
<b>South Atlantic</b>	Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
<b>South</b>	Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas
<b>Great Lakes</b>	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
<b>Midwest</b>	Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota
<b>Mountain</b>	Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
<b>Pacific</b>	Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

Data from: Joseph Claude Harris, sharris7@earthlink.net

Over time, Harris has found that Catholics continued to give more money to support parish programs. Total Catholic offertory collections increased by \$254 million, or 4 percent, between 2004 and 2005. Collections increased by \$208 million between 2003 and 2004. The increased funding for 2005 probably came from two sources: the estimated number of Catholic households increased by 415,900, and the average annual gift increased from \$298 to \$305 for all estimated Catholic households.

There was a significant decline in offertory contributions in the South region. Hurricane Katrina devastated the heavily Catholic area of southern Louisiana. Offertory collections in the South region declined by \$77.9 million, or 8.4 percent, between 2004 and 2005. The fact that Catholic New Orleans has only half of the prehurricane population is likely a major factor in the loss of donation revenue.

*Chronicle of Philanthropy's* list of "The Philanthropy 400," released in fall 2006 for contributions in 2005. The estimate also includes financial information from additional large religious organizations, including some religious denominations whose contribution information is publicly available through the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

- 1 The *Giving USA* estimate for religion in 2006 includes a revised estimate for giving to religion in 2005. To form the revised estimate, the following data were used: the National Council of Churches giving to Protestant churches in 2005; Catholic giving in 2005; and contributions to other religious organizations, such as media ministries. The revised estimate for giving to religion in 2005 is \$92.69 billion, or a growth rate of 4.9 percent (1.9 percent adjusted for inflation) from 2004 to 2005.
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