

INSIGHTS ON FAITH & GIVING

Mission

The Lake Institute on Faith & Giving exists to serve the public good by exploring the multiple connections between philanthropy and faith within the major religious traditions.

Resources



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Course: [Faith & Fundraising](#). This course, offered by contract, is a joint offering of the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving and The Fund Raising School of the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

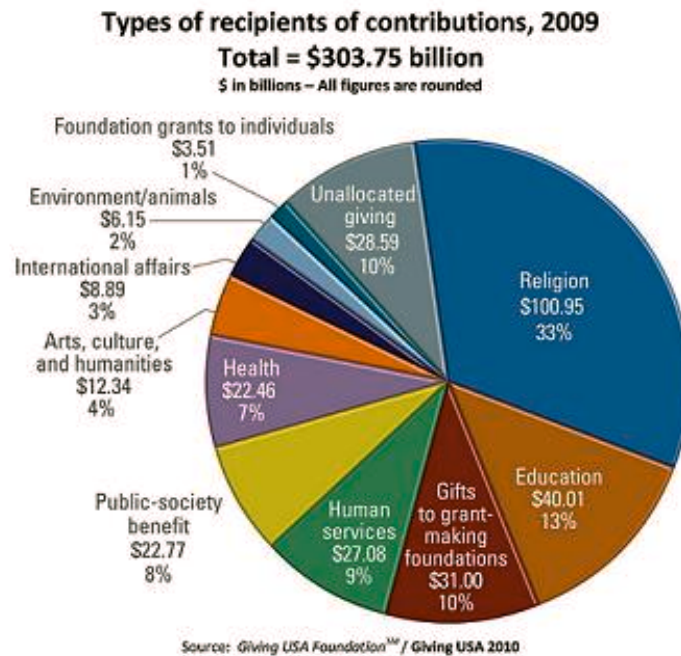
For more information, [click here](#).



Seminar: [Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity](#). The Lake Institute

Giving USA 2010: Religious Giving Virtually Flat

The Giving USA Foundation recently released its 55th annual report analyzing charitable giving in the United States. While overall giving was down -3.6% (-3.2% adjusted for inflation), giving to religion was down just -0.7% (-0.4% adjusted for inflation). Giving by individuals, which accounts for 75% of all charitable giving, was also flat. The estimated total charitable giving for 2009 was \$303.75 billion. Researched and written by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, a free executive summary, individual subsector reports, the full report and presentation materials are available at <http://www.givingusa2010.org/>.



So what do the numbers mean? Giving to religion remains resilient. During the past two years giving to religion has been virtually flat in terms of current dollars but down -3.3% when adjusted for inflation. During this same period, overall charitable giving declined by -5.5% when

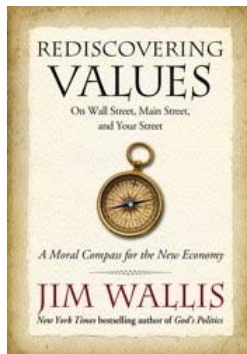
recently completed the fourth and final installment in a serial version of this seminar in partnership with the [Center for Congregations - Southwest](#) in Evansville, IN.

According to Wendy McCormick, director of the center, the program *"allowed us to see a group of congregations change and grow in significant ways over time. The instructor's skill at helping them learn from one another, together with his mastery of the subject, gave the congregations a transforming experience."*

To find out more about the different ways your organization can partner with the Lake Institute contact lfi@iupui.edu.

Book Recommendation

In his recent book ***Rediscovering Values***, Jim Wallis asks: "What is a Christian, a Jewish, or an Islamic response to the deepening economic crisis? What should people of faith be thinking, saying and doing?"



Rediscovering Values: On Wall Street, Main Street, and Your

adjusted for inflation.

However, Giving USA 2010 underscores an important reality for religious practitioners; the religious landscape relative to faith and giving is changing the way donations are both given and gathered. A few examples:

- From 1969 to 2009, the portion of charitable dollars going to religion declined from 50% to 33%.
- The top five religious groups making The Chronicle of Philanthropy Annual Top 400 Public Charities were from the Evangelical world.
- While giving to religion steadily increased from 1969 to 2009, the increase was at a slower rate than giving to other types of charities.
- Faith traditions are blurring as many people attend multiple places of worship; in the meantime, more individuals are embracing beliefs and practices from divergent religions.
- There are significant generational shifts in giving habits and practices as well as in church attendance between those over 65 and those under 40.
- The 1980s and 90s witnessed the explosion of what is called the "megachurch." Amidst the Great Recession, megachurches made headlines with massive staff reductions, salary reductions and budget shortfalls.

How should religious practitioners plan for the future? With savvy caution. Beware of either budgeting your optimism or bowing to your pessimism. We are at a time in history when the "wait and see" approach may well spell wisdom. Only time will tell whether or not we will return - and if so, how quickly - to the boom years of the fifties and late nineties or to the more sobering decades of the seventies and eighties.

Contributing to the tempestuous climate, **competition for the religious dollar has dramatically intensified** as the number of reporting charities in the religious subsector have increased 89% from 1997 to 2007, even as giving to religion overall continues on a historical downward trend (see graph below). As religious nonprofits compete for the shrinking charitable dollar, they will have to **learn how to describe their unique mission with clarity, simplicity and arresting passion.**

Street. A Moral Compass for the New Economy.

by Jim Wallis

Howard Books, January 2010

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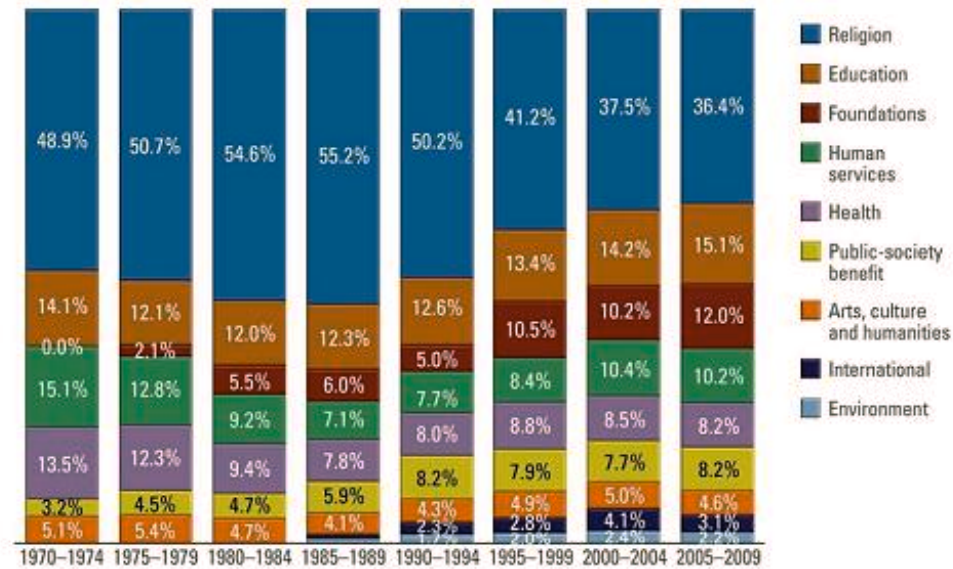
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Giving by type of recipient as a percentage of total giving Five-year spans; does not include "unallocated"



Note: Data began in 1978 for foundations and in 1987 for environment/animals and international affairs.
Source: Giving USA Foundation™ / Giving USA 2010

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"Eye-opening, challenging, and some of the best continuing education I've had in 25 years of ministry."

John R. Woodall

Sr. Pastor, Westwood United Methodist Church
Los Angeles, California

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a seminar offered by the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving
For more information, visit our [website](#)

