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 for Tough Times

Seminar: Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity. In this two-day seminar you will learn: (1) how to talk about money with theological integrity, (2) how to create an organizational climate of fiscal transparency and accountability, (3) how to extend the practice of pastoral care to care for donors, and (4) how to become a generous share-the-vision type of organization. For information contact lfi@iupui.edu.

Course: Faith & Fundraising. This four-day course is a joint offering of the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving and The Fund Raising School of the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana

2009 Congregational Economic Impact Study

In late October, the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving at the Center on Philanthropy, Indiana University, in partnership with the Alban Institute, released the 2009 Congregational Economic Impact Study. Prior to the study, much of the focus of the effects of the economy on congregational life has centered on larger churches and growth mode congregations, while the story of the recession’s effect on average sized and smaller congregations has remained largely untold. With over 1500 congregational respondents across the United States, this report breaks that silence as it describes the impact of the recession on congregations both large and small. While the story is mixed, the study underscores the resilience and vitality of American congregations, unmasking the selfless and imaginative ways in which churches are reaching out to address the needs of the communities of which they are a part. The full report can be found on our website.

Key Findings

- **The majority of congregations have not seen a decline in giving.** Nearly 37% reported an increase in fundraising receipts for the first half of 2009; 34% stayed the same and almost 30% saw a decrease.

- **Just over one-third of the responding congregations reported making budget cuts in 2009.** Almost 16% did not increase salaries, 14.5% reduced their utility costs and 13.6% cut some programs. Mission and benevolence giving as well as local outreach programs were the last to be cut, if at all.

- **The recession provided congregations with a teachable moment to talk about money and the faithful use of possessions.** Almost 40% reported that they talked more openly and frequently about money and giving. About 28% said that since 2008 they have offered special courses and seminars on personal finance. 36% initiated new activities to increase their fundraising success.

Inside the Numbers

- **Type of congregation matters.** Based on information about congregations' financial growth during the past five years and the change in weekly attendance rates during the past five years, the study categorized congregations into four groups: **Survival** (declining attendance and just barely enough finances), **Maintenance** (attendance and finances have stayed...
University. The next offering of this program will be May 10-13, 2010. For information, click here.

**Lake Institute Highlights**

**Thomas H. Lake Lecture**
The Lake Institute will welcome its seventh annual lecturer, Dr. Ingrid Mattson, on March 25, 2010. Dr. Mattson is president of the Islamic Society of North America and will speak on philanthropic discernment and Islamic giving. Click here for information on this event and past lectures.

**Book Recommendation**
Looking for a valuable resource for your stewardship committee? We recommend: Not Your Parents' Offering Plate: A New Vision for Financial Stewardship by J. Clif Christopher

As is evident in the chart below, congregations in a survival or maintenance mode for the past five years were more likely to see a decrease in pledge amounts for 2009.

- **Age of congregants matters.** Congregations where the average age of congregants was under 50 were more likely to report an increase in fundraising receipts for the first half of 2009, while those with an average age over 61 were least likely to report an increase.
- **Household income matters.** Congregations with an average household income over $80,000 were less likely to report a decline in receipts in 2008 than congregations with lower average incomes - $40,000 or less.
- **Size of budget matters.** Congregations with total revenue less than $150,000 were more likely to report a decrease in fundraising receipts from 2007 to 2008. Congregations with budgets over $600,000 were more likely to report an increase in giving.
- **Dependence on endowments matters.** Almost 57% of the responding congregations reported having an endowment. These congregations were less likely to report an increase in their 2009 budget.
- **Geography matters.** Congregations on the West Coast and the South Atlantic region were less likely to report an increase in fundraising receipts from 2007 to 2008.

**Tips for Planning your 2010 Budget**

- **Communicate, communicate, communicate!** Keep your congregation informed as to the
financial realities of your budget and state of giving. Honesty breeds trust.

- **Tell stories that touch the heart** and inform your members as to what your church has been doing to address the needs of the hurting amidst the recession.

- **Be wary of budgeting your optimism.** The economic outlook is too uncertain to risk bullishness in budget planning.

- **Recessions are not sprints; they are endurance events.** Be prepared for a slower economic recovery. The current economic scene has been described as an inverted letter "L": __/__, which suggests we will be flat for some time before we experience a full recovery.

- **Protect your core mission.** You may not be able to pursue all your usual activities. Prioritize your core activities by reducing funding for less critical ones.

- **Be a good steward of your endowment.** Don't shortchange tomorrow in order to meet the challenges of today. Endowment income will be less in 2010 than in 2009, as most endowments follow the policy of a set annual percentage payout based on a three year rolling average. This means that your 2010 payout will be based on the value of the endowment in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

- **Revisit your "gift pyramid."** There is a general consensus that donors in the middle of the pyramid were most affected by the economic downturn.

- **Remember to say "thank you!"** Donors need to feel appreciated. People stop giving when they no longer feel connected to an organization.

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**Lake Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship**

The Lake Institute is now accepting submissions for the **2010-2011 Lake Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship.** The $22,000 fellowship will be awarded to a scholar whose primary research focus is on religion and philanthropy or faith and giving and who is in his/her final year of dissertation writing. Requirements and application details can be found [here](#).

Also on our website:

- 2009-2010 fellowship recipient, [Sarah Hammond](#) (Yale University), currently completing her dissertation on the cultural and political activity of fundamentalist Protestants between 1925 and the Reagan
Revolution.

- Completed dissertation and key findings from 2008-2009 fellowship recipient, Bradley A. Koch (now Assistant Professor of Sociology at Georgia College and State University), entitled The Prosperity Gospel and Economic Prosperity: Race, Class, Giving and Voting.