

Regular giving is an evangelical's favourite way of giving

A decade ago giving by cheque was by far the most popular way of giving followed by giving by standing orders and CAF accounts. Today, we see a significant increase in giving by direct debits and standing orders, while giving by cheque remains almost at the same level it was ten years ago.

The rise of legacy giving

Four out of ten evangelical donors stated that they had included a charity or a church in their will. And, we believe that there is no reason why this number should not increase in the future.

Trustworthiness and transparency are key motivators for giving

The most compelling reasons for giving according to our survey are: trust in a charity's effectiveness and transparency about how the money is used, followed by donors having some kind of first-hand experience of a charity's work and personal interest in the people or the area where the charity is helping.

Good relationships at the heart of giving

Most evangelical donors desire a relationship with the charities they support. Evangelical donors like being in a relationship with charities that tell them how the money is being spent, that appreciated their support and do not send them too many financial appeals.

Staying in touch with their favourite charities

Four things appeared to prompt nearly half of the evangelical donors to take a stronger interest in a charity's work. They were: being asked to pray regularly for a charity's work, allowing the donors to determine how and when they hear from the charity, receiving excellent donor care and being asked to respond to urgent financial needs.

The recession has impacted evangelicals giving

One in four evangelical donors stated that their giving has been impacted by the recession. While most evangelicals are keeping their regular giving commitment some of them are making fewer one-off donations in response to appeals and nearly half of them are not taking on new giving opportunities.

Why Christians Give report is available from **McConkey • Johnston international UK for £40 + pp.**

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Why Christians Give

Report Review

Research project background

Most Christian leaders dislike talking about the need for money to facilitate their church's or charity's mission. They tend to believe that God has called them to 'do mission' not to fundraise - hence, more often than not, they relegate the task of raising funds to inadequately resourced, even inexperienced fundraisers or volunteers.

But, the reality is that: *leading a church or a charity to make a difference in the world requires adequate human and financial resources.* And, fundraising is one of the strategic activities that can enable leaders to mobilise their constituencies by sharing their vision and offering them opportunities to turn the vision to reality through their gifts.

That is why those who are involved in leadership in local churches and Christian charities must be enthusiastic, knowledgeable and wise about what motivates people to give generously to charitable cause.

In order to help church and Christian charity leaders to engage effectively with their supporters and release more resources for Kingdom work *McConkey • Johnston international UK* and the *Evangelical Alliance* conducted a survey of the attitudes and giving behaviour of evangelical donors as represented by the *Evangelical Alliance* constituency.

The statistical data and conclusions from this survey conducted in August/September 2009 with a random and representative sample of 2,000 Evangelical Alliance members, are included in our report titled: *Why Christians Give? Understanding the hearts and minds of 21st century evangelical donors.*

Christian giving report sponsors



Why focus on Christian giving now?

Today churches and Christian charities are facing significant challenges. Here are some of them:

- *The continuing decline in church attendance.* If current trends of decline continue, by 2015 Sunday church attendance in England will drop below 2.5 million, just 4.7% of the population
- *Fewer people are going to church and the commitment of those who do so is declining.* Lack of attendance is likely to translate into reduced giving to support church's mission.
- *Churches are struggling to engage with people in their 20s and 30s.* Donors from these age groups are also missing from the support bases of most Christian charities too.
- *New Christians who have been brought up in non-Christian homes have no real understanding of stewardship* and a very limited knowledge of Christian charities and their work.
- *The ways in which new generations of donors want to give differ from how the older generations give.* Yet most churches and Christian charities have not developed robust strategies to engage with younger givers.
- *A growing number of churches and charities are competing for a limited pool of funds.* This situation is made worse by the current recession which has forced several Christian charities to close their doors, while others made their staff redundant or, cut their spending budgets.
- *Fewer people are giving habitually.* More and more donors evaluate where and how they give – so it is becoming harder for charities to generate increased support without insights on dynamics of giving.
- *The types of religious activities that motivate people to give are evolving* and churches and Christian charities need to understand people's attitudes towards mission and ministry to inspire and challenge them effectively.
- *The technology revolution and the Internet are impacting the ways people relate to charities and how they give.* A new type of donor is emerging – one who gives online and is involved in thriving web based communities.
- *Major donors are playing a significant role* in supporting various mission agencies and are entering into dynamic relationships with them.

Christian giving survey goals

The Christian giving survey focused on addressing a wide range of questions whose answers remain largely ill-defined when it comes to Christian donors at large:

- What are the demographic traits of 21st century evangelical donors?
- What are the lifestyle patterns and expectations that shape their lives?
- What are the beliefs and behaviours which impact their views on supporting churches and charities?

- How do evangelicals give to their churches and Christian charities?
- What are the critical values that underline their decision to give money away?
- What are the factors that potential donors explore when confronted with a request to give?
- In what ways do evangelical donors today want to relate to the charities they support?
- What do evangelical donors want to know about the charities they support?
- What are the main types of charitable activities that evangelicals like to support and why?

Answers to these questions can help Christian leaders and fundraisers to encourage their supporters to become better stewards of God-given resources, especially those who would potentially give more if they were offered compelling reasons to do so.

Key findings

Evangelicals are generous givers

Nine out of ten evangelicals in this survey donated to their church and to charities in 2009. The average monthly amount donated by evangelical Christians is 11.5% of their household income of which 6.5% is given to local churches and another 5% to Christian charities. On the whole, giving to the local church continues to be higher on evangelical donor's agenda than giving to charities.

A demographic profile of today's evangelical donor

The typical evangelical donor is likely to be 55 – 64 years old, male, a university graduate, married, still in full-time employment, in a household with a pre-tax income of £30,000 – £40,000. He is likely to play an active role in their local church and lives in the South East.

Faith impacts giving decisions

The majority of evangelical donors see themselves as people who are using their faith to shape their every-day life including their charitable giving decisions. 74% of evangelicals consider their faith crucial in decision making while 73% of them find their faith relevant every day.

Evangelicals are not taught consistently about giving

Evangelicals today are receiving an array of mixed messages about giving. What's more, we noted a lack of teaching about stewardship in two out of ten congregations.

Tithing is not being actively taught in local churches. Also, although some church leaders are emphasizing proportional giving in reality we do not know whether they are saying to their congregations 'give what you can afford' or challenging their members to give sacrificially.

Evangelicals donors like being online as much as they like to read

Surfing the net is one of the top leisure time activities of evangelical donors yet, few of them are donating online or using social network sites like *facebook* or *twitter*.

Causes supported by evangelical donors

The top three causes supported by evangelicals in a typical month are: Christian outreach charities (83%), followed by international relief charities (59%) and healthcare and medical charities (31%).