

# INSIGHTS ON FAITH & GIVING

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## 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.*

## Join the discussion



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## Interested in reading more about the role of money in religion?

## Giving and the Economic Cycles

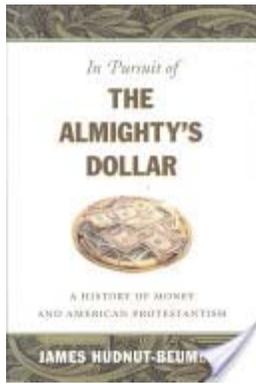
Charitable giving is related to economic cycles. Recent research at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University on giving from 1970 to 2010 charts the relationship between charitable giving and the rise or fall of the S&P 500. [1] An essay published in 1950 by the Russell Sage Foundation noted a similar economic relationship when examining charitable giving from 1920 to 1949. [2]

In a recent conversation on the religious giving and its relationship to the economy it was noted that we have little reliable historical data to go on. The observation is valid; nonetheless, the 1950 study gives us both insight and pause. In the 1950 study the author looked at religious giving based on data collected from fifteen Protestant religious bodies or denominations. He found that per member giving to these religious groups reflected the economic boom of the lush twenties, the challenge of the doleful thirties and the recovery of the roaring forties. [3]

- 1920 per member giving = \$17.53
- 1924 per member giving = \$23.03
- 1934 per member giving = \$11.76
- 1949 per member giving = \$28.29

Based on various surveys and estimates of charitable giving the author then estimated total religious giving for each year from 1920 - 1949. The highs and the lows again reflected the status of the economy:

- 1920 = \$618 M
- 1927 = \$1.02 B
- 1936 = \$630 M
- 1949 = \$1.9 B



[In Pursuit of The Almighty's Dollar: A History of Money and American Protestantism](#)

by James Hudnut-Beumler

Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

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So what might this detour into history portend for faith based organizations and congregations today?

1. History provides us with a lens through which to view the unforeseeable future; so take the time to learn from the past.
2. Savvy religious leaders take Wall Street seriously in a monetarily driven culture.
3. Don't throw in the towel on hope.

People of faith are tenacious in their generosity. The \$11.76 given per member in 1934 was actually worth \$17.56 in 1920 dollars, a year in which per member giving was \$17.53.

## **Lake Institute Offerings**

### **Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity**

Our most popular and core teaching seminar, Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity (CCCG) is designed to help pastors and their leadership teams rethink their role in congregational finances, become better stewards of their donors' gifts, and awaken an ongoing spirit of generosity within their communities. It is provided in both a 2-day and 3-day format, and typically serves approximately 40 individuals comprised of small congregational teams. Class participants explore the 3-legged stool of generosity:

1. Leadership Modeling Theological Integrity
2. Institutional Accountability & Fiscal Transparency
3. Embracing Donor Sensitivity as the Practice of Pastoral Care

CCCG programs are designed to fit the needs of our strategic partners, capturing the current research and most comprehensive data available. The tailored nature of CCCG allows Lake Institute the flexibility to build upon over a decade of teaching this seminar, while leveraging the specific nuances of each faith tradition, cultural community, socio-economic sector and congregational stage of development. Materials for this course are updated annually and capture significant learning objectives for congregations, religious

non-profit agencies, professional development staff and clergy.

For more information, visit our [website](#). To inquire about contracting this seminar, [email](#) us. If you have a generosity story to tell, share it with us on [Facebook](#). If Insights On Faith & Giving resonates with you, [Tweet](#) us!

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Hear more from Dr. William Enright at the upcoming 22nd Annual International Greenleaf Leadership Pre-Conference. The conference will include [\*workshops, featured speakers, networking opportunities, dinner, and more!\*](#)

## **"Servant Leadership in Philanthropy"**

Wednesday, June 20, 2012 at 1:30 p.m., Marriott Downtown Indianapolis.

[\*\*Register Here!\*\*](#)