

5 Major New Trends in Church Giving, Budgeting, and Generosity Identified in Latest Research

by Brian Kluth 2/18/2010

5 Major New Trends in Church Giving, Budgeting, and Generosity Identified in Latest Research

2nd Annual "State of the Plate" research surveys show new trends impacting churches in a down economy BY BRIAN KLUTH, Pastor, Author, Speaker, and Media Expert

A "new normal" is emerging in the church world when it comes to giving, budgets, and generosity initiatives, according to ongoing research surveys conducted by Church Central blogger, Brian Kluth of MAXIMUMgenerosity.org and Christianity Today International's Church Finance Today and Leadership Journal.



Nearly 800 churches of all sizes have responded so far to the second annual "State of the Plate" research surveys.

Five major developments are emerging from the survey, which asks church leaders and pastors to report on how their church giving, budgeting, and generosity initiatives.

1) The poor economy is hurting a growing number of churches.

If the media headlines may the economy is improving, its impact hasn't shown up yet in the offering plate:

- The number of churches reporting a decline in giving this past year has increased to nearly 36% of churches surveyed, compared to 29% at the same time a year ago.
- Only 38% of churches saw giving increase this past year, compared to 47% a year ago.

2) Many churches say December year-end giving fell short.

While Rick Warren's December appeal to more than 100,000 e-mail recipients helped his church adequately close the gap on a year-end budget shortfall, many other churches weren't so fortunate.

- 30% of churches surveyed said that their December year-end giving "missed" their expectations.
- Only 24% of churches indicated that year-end giving surpassed their expectation.
- With nearly a third missing giving expectations at the end of 2009, many churches likely entered 2010 looking for ways to slow their church spending

3) Some churches decreased their budgets while others increased budgets.

While a growing number of church budgets are being trimmed, others increased theirs heading into 2010:

- In the survey, 32% said they made budget cuts of 1 percent to 20%. A year ago, only 14% said the same.
- The top three cuts came in the areas of travel and conferences, ministry programs, and expansion/renovation projects.
- 24% of churches kept their budgets the same as last year.
- Surprisingly, 45% of churches increased their budgets for the coming year, compared to 23% who said the same a year ago. Churches that increased their budgets did so primarily in the areas of benevolence giving, ministry programs, and missions giving.

4) More churches plan to preach and teach on finances and generosity in a variety of ways


The Bible provides more than 2,000 verses on finances and generosity and a growing

Most Popular

Blog White papers Videos

- [Ten Tips for Administrative Leadership at Church](#)
- [5 Things the Dave Matthews Band Taught Me](#)
- [The 4-Way Worship Test](#)
- [10 Ways Pastors and Leaders Can Inspire Generosity and Increase Church Giving in Any Economy](#)
- [Perform a Contentment Audit](#)
- [The 5 Deadly Sins of Worship Services](#)
- [The 3 Ingredients of Meaningful Worship](#)
- [Five Flaws of Weak Leaders](#)
- [6 Words That Could Change Your Worship](#)
- [What's in your small group?](#)


Showcases


Featured Suppliers 


New Members


Jaime Fluker Umoja Christian Church Joined Jun 6	OBWINE ISAAC WORD OF LIFE CHURCH Joined Jun 6
Elaine Murry Kingdom Connection CCC Joined Jun 4	GUY LAL MERCEDAT HAITIAN CHURCH OF GOD OF UNITY Joined Jun 3
Denice Tinnon Friendly WILL Missionary Baptist Church Joined Jun 3	Fred Penney Emmanuel Community Church Joined Jun 3
Frank Perez Iglesia Sobre La Roca Joined Jun 3	Tommy Baker First Church of Christ Joined Jun 3

Church Central Bloggers

 [markhowell](#) New from MarkHowellLive: Exponential
<http://bit.ly/aTxRMt>
2 hours ago

 [TomRHarper](#) The power of deadlines in an organization -
[#leadership">http://bit.ly/aJmWYJ #leadership](http://bit.ly/aJmWYJ)
3 hours ago

 [markhowell](#) all quiet in mokena...except that good sound of the peet's perking...and the 5:45 metra roaring by
3 hours ago

 [GregAtkinson](#) Watching Robin Hood 

twitter

Join the conversation

number of churches say they are planning or considering to share God's Word on these subjects in the following ways:

- Preaching, 75%
- Financial classes/courses/groups, 66%
- Sharing a Bible verse during the offering, 63%
- Pamphlets, 52%
- Making financial counselors available, 49%
- Running an annual stewardship drive, 48%
- Videos in the worship service, 46%
- Giving families a generosity devotional, 45%
- Estate planning materials/seminars, 44%
- Stewardship training for leaders, 40%

Regarding e-giving options, 36% of churches say they offer this already, and another 29% say they're considering it or seeking additional information about it.

5) More churches utilizing outside resources and guidance. More churches say they're seeking outside resources to help with church finances, giving, and generosity. The top resources identified by respondents:

- Dave Ramsey, 58%
- Crown Financial Ministries, 57%
- Maximum Generosity, 47%
- Denominational resources, 44%
- Church Law & Tax Report, 38%
- Your Church magazine, 34%

Pastors and church leaders can still participate in the second annual "State of the Plate." Important Note: All participants will receive free electronic resources, access to the full results, and an executive summary outlining graphs, charts, benchmarks, and trends.

Watch in March for a full final report covering the "State of the Plate" findings.

Brian Kluth is a pastor, author, speaker, and media expert on church giving and biblical generosity. His bestselling www.GenerousLife.org 40 Day Bible devotional has been given out by over 1300 churches to teach stewardship, inspire greater generosity, and increase giving. Kluth is also the founder of www.MAXIMUMgenerosity.org website, eNewsletter, and the author of the ***free online eBook: 50 Best Practices and 80 Best Websites to Increase Church Giving.***

Reader Comments

Want to join in on the discussion? [Sign In](#) or [register](#).

Be the first to post a comment for this story.