

**Getting to the Bottom  
of a Full Collection Plate:  
*How Values Enhance Giving***

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The purpose is to understand giving patterns for an entire congregation (vs. why an individual gives)

## **BASIC FACTS I.**

- Where does the money come from?
- How large a role do individual donations play in the big budget picture?
- How much is raised per worshiper?

## **BASIC FACTS 2.**

- What do worshipers report about their giving?

## **MULTIVARIATE ANALYSES**

# Two Key Variables

- **Faith Tradition**

- Catholic parishes
- Mainline Protestant churches
- Conservative Protestant churches

- **Size of Congregation**

- Small (worship attendance is 100 or less)
- Medium (worship attendance is 101 – 350)
- Large (worship attendance is more than 350)

# Basic Facts I

## (Information from Key Informant)

- Where does the money come from to finance the local church?
  - what individuals contribute through their offerings, pledges, donations, and dues

**Table 1.**

Three Largest Sources of Congregational Income by Faith Tradition

	<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Mainline Protestant</b>	<b>Conservative Protestant</b>
Offerings, pledges, donations, dues	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Charges for use of facilities	41%	28%	14%
Trust funds, investments, bequests	32%	48%	20%
Other	5%	12%	21%

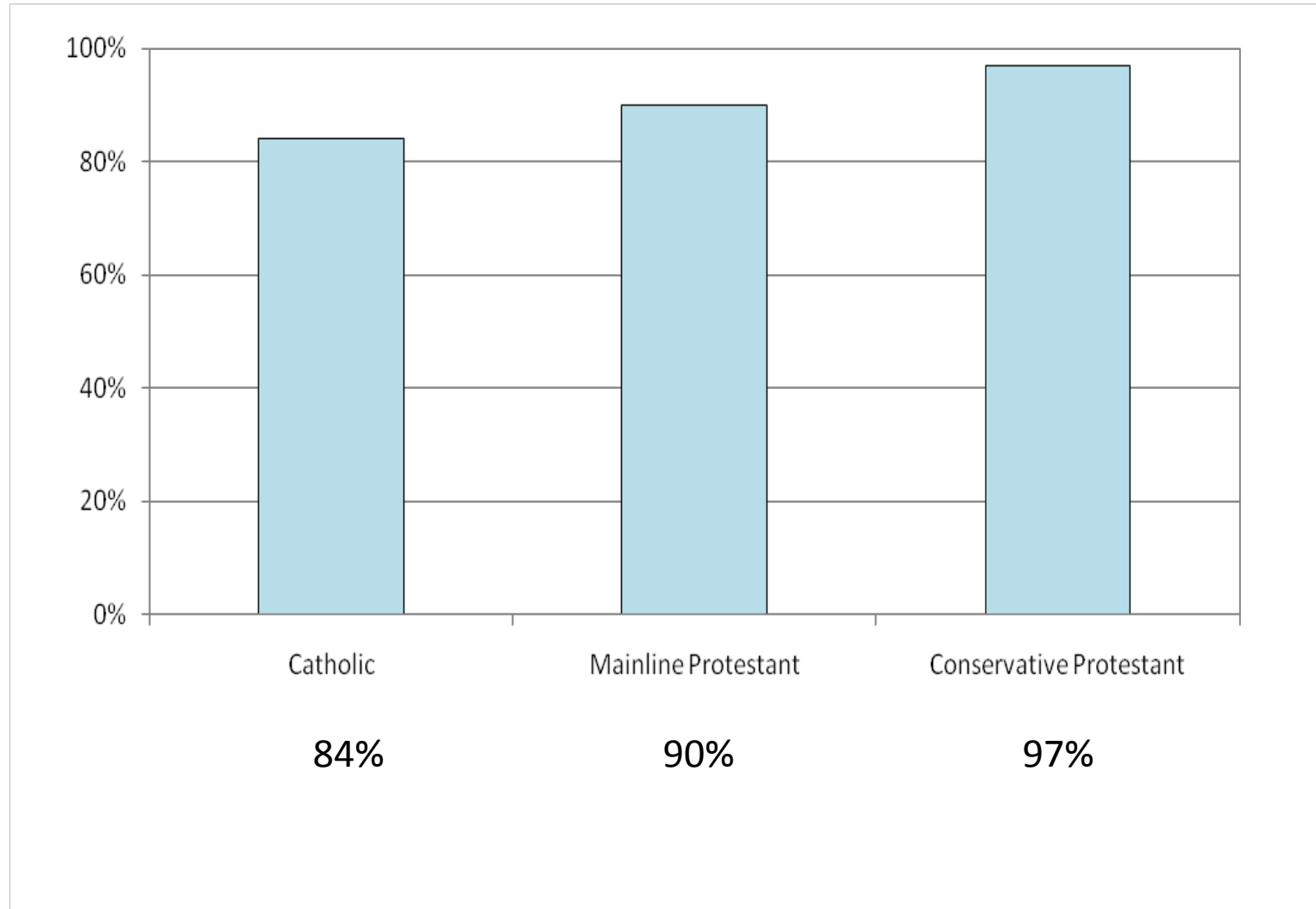
**Table 2.**

Three Largest Sources of Congregational Income by Church Size

	Small	Medium	Large
Offerings, pledges, donations, dues	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Charges for use of facilities	16%	<b>36%</b>	31%
Trust funds, investments, bequests	<b>41%</b>	34%	<b>33%</b>
Other	23%	4%	5%

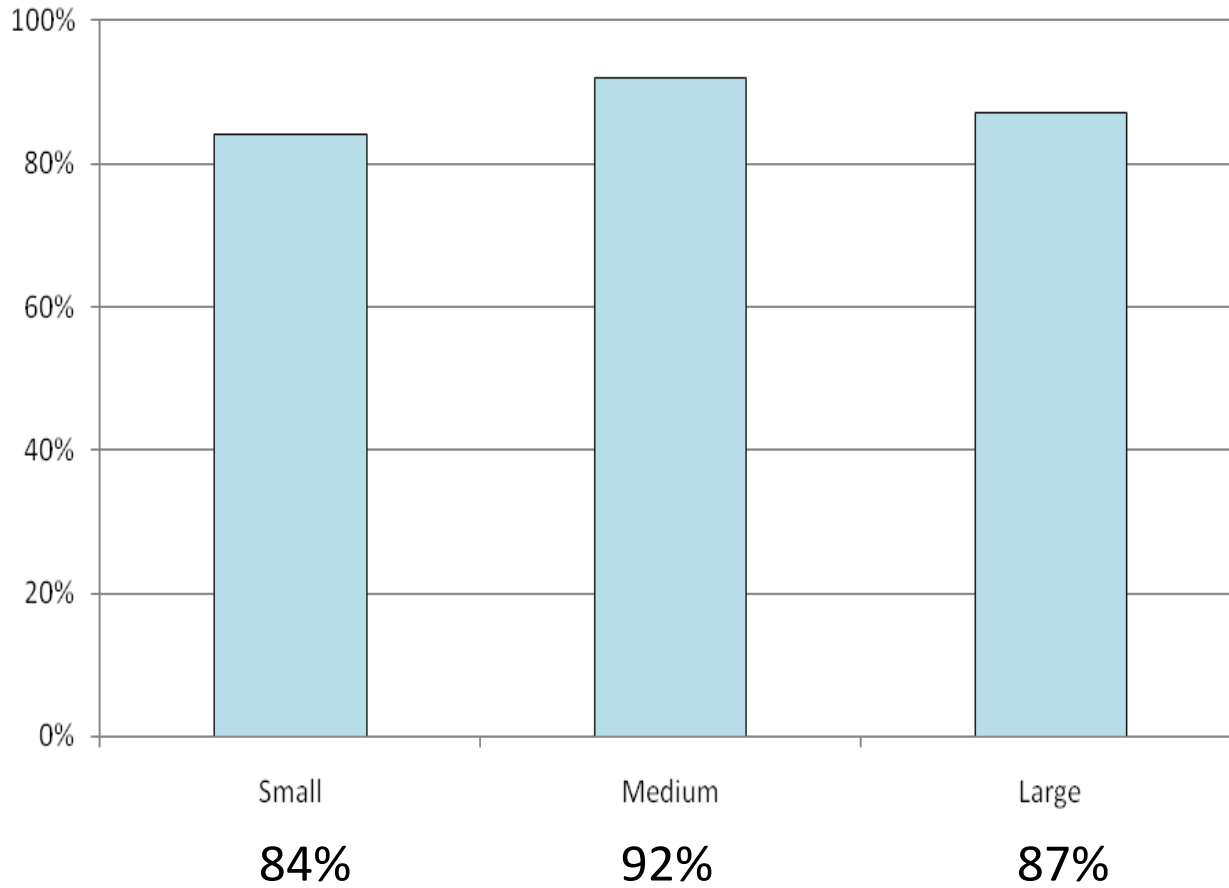
**Figure 1.**

# Individual Donations as Percentage of Total Church Income



**Figure 2.**

**Individual Donations as Percentage of Total Church Income**



### Table 3.

#### Average (Median) Donation Per Worshiper

- Catholic
  - \$727
- Mainline Protestant
  - **\$1,627**
- Conservative Protestant
  - \$1,448

F = .892

Not significant

- Small
  - \$1,530
- Medium
  - **\$1,656**
- Large
  - \$758

F = 9.435

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# Basic Facts 2

(Information from worshipers)

**Table 4.**

Categories of Giving Across Congregations

**Median Scores for Congregations**

**Catholic Parishes    Mainline Protestant    Conservative Protestant**

**Percentage of worshipers:**

10% or more of net income regularly	11%	18%	<b>43%</b>	***
5% to 9% of net income	29%	<b>36%</b>	23%	***
Less than 5% of net income	<b>31%</b>	22%	11%	***
A small amount when attend services	21%	13%	11%	***
Do not contribute financially	6%	3%	6%	***

# Multivariate Analyses

Independent Variables Linked to Levels of Congregational Giving

- **Congregational Demography**
  - Gender ratio, racial-ethnic composition, attends with spouse
- **Congregational Participation and Beliefs**
  - % weekly worship attendance, % new worshipers, % with conservative theological views
- **Local Institutional Factors**
  - Size of congregation
- **Congregational Values (% of Worshipers)**

# Congregational Values

- Prayer ministry for one another
- Reaching out to those who do not attend church
- Adult church-school classes
- Bible study or prayer groups, other groups
- Ministry for children or youth
- Sermons, preaching, or homilies
- Traditional style of worship or music
- Practical care for one another in time of need
- Contemporary style of worship or music
- Congregation's school or pre-school
- Sharing in Holy Communion, Eucharist
- Social activities or meeting new people
- Openness to social diversity
- Wider community care/justice emphasis

## Table 7. Catholic Parishes: Predicting Church Giving at 10% or More

- ***Accelerators***

- More weekly attendees
- More theologically conservative worshipers
- More worshipers value community care/justice
- More worshipers value reaching the unchurched

- ***Decelerators***

- Size of parish
- More worshipers value ministry for children/youth
- More worshipers value sharing in Holy Communion

## Table 8. Mainline Protestant Churches: Predicting Church Giving at 10% or More

- ***Accelerators***

- More male attendees
- More weekly attendees
- More attending with spouses
- More theologically conservative worshipers
- More worshipers value community focus
- More worshipers value Bible study or prayer groups
- More worshipers value prayer ministry

- ***Decelerators***

- Size of congregation
- Greater racial-ethnic diversity
- More worshipers value school/pre-school

## Table 9. Conservative Protestant Churches: Predicting Church Giving at 10% or More

- ***Accelerators***

- More male attendees
- More weekly attendees
- More new attendees
- More theologically conservative worshipers
- More worshipers value reaching the unchurched
- More worshipers value prayer ministry
- More worshipers value ministry with children/youth

- ***Decelerators***

- Greater racial-ethnic diversity
- More worshipers value Bible study or prayer groups
- More worshipers value Holy Communion

# Conclusions

- Even when models control for church demography, participation, beliefs, and church size—the values held by worshipers remain important for predicting high levels of giving.
- Values make a difference!
- We were better able to identify a set of factors related to high levels of giving for Protestant churches (vs. Catholic parishes).
- A few local church features—high percentages of weekly attendees and worshipers who are theologically conservative—fuel high percentage giving.