



## 3 Ways to Boost Giving, Increase Diversity and Glorify God

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Although our nation is a patchwork quilt of cultural, ethnic and racial diversity, U.S. giving remains relatively monochromatic. According to the research report, *Diversity in Giving: The Changing Landscape of American Philanthropy*, this does not relate to generosity or the lack thereof but instead suggest that nonprofits need to do a better job of engaging their diverse communities.

### **The Differences**

The report, published in February 2015, provides profiles of three racial or ethnic subgroups: African Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans. The secular study, intended to deliver data to nonprofit professionals, included 1,000 respondents. While the study does not reflect religious giving specifically, it analyzes data in patterns, attitudes and preferences regarding giving. Here are a few highlights.

#### *African-American respondents*

- The majority say religion and faith are the most important factors for giving.
- Those polled say they would give more if they were asked more.
- Respondents are very interested in giving to organizations that support their heritage and communities.
- Fewer than half of respondents say they budget their giving; they are more likely to give spontaneously.
- Those polled are more likely to fall into the lower- or middle-income classes.

### *Asian-American respondents*

- Those polled are most likely to have been born outside the U.S.; yet they are still very generous U.S. donors.
- Respondents are younger, better educated and more likely liberal and female.
- Responses indicate they are least likely to give because of faith or religious beliefs.
- They say they are more likely to visit and give via an organization's website.
- Respondents favor crowdfunding or giving in response to a friend or family member's request.
- Those polled say health, children and social service organizations are the most important causes to support, especially in relation to emergency-relief efforts and education.

### *Hispanic respondents*

- Respondents give a larger percentage of their income to their places of worship.
- Respondents are most likely to have children at home. They strongly support children's causes.
- More than half of the Hispanics surveyed said they are more likely to respond emotionally and to give "in the moment" rather than to budget their donations.
- Those polled are infrequently asked and not as likely to give through primary market channels.
- Most (55 percent) say they prefer receiving fundraising appeals in English, but 37 percent of those born outside the United States prefer Spanish.

## **The take-away**

How does this information help churches encourage members to give more?

### **1. Don't approach giving with a one-size-fits-all mentality.**

Not everyone thinks about giving in the same way. While some people find person-to-person requests extremely uncomfortable, 28% of African-Americans and 22% of Hispanics reported giving to canvassers on the street or at their homes. In addition, almost half of the Asian-American group stated that they were more likely to give to support a friend or family member's request. In addition, the study showed that regardless of the overall increasing popularity of online giving, some people are still less likely to participate in those forms of philanthropy. Churches need to help create a joyful giving experience for all donors.

The moral of the story? Make giving easy. Don't toss out the collection plate in favor of text-giving, but don't rely on the church website to do what you can do in person. Use a variety of ways to present your requests, and give donors a variety of ways to respond.

## **2. Don't just ask those who have given in the past.**

In comparison to 9% of the overall donors, 20% of African-Americans in the study agreed that they would give more if they were asked more often. In addition, more than half of the Hispanics surveyed said that they give spontaneously "based on who asks me/and or what pulls at my heartstrings." Learn what motivates people to give and show them the impact of The United Methodist Church.

It's important for church leaders to seek consciously to include all members of their congregation when encouraging people to give. This means thinking intentionally about the results of studies such as these and making efforts to reach those donors (even those who have not previously been givers) on their own terms.

## **3. Connect, connect, connect!**

While you obviously want to increase giving in the church, remember that it's not just about giving. Giving is an avenue to reach people. Since both of the underrepresented groups were found to give most often based on their religion or faith or to their churches, it seems only logical that churches need to do a better job of connecting to these groups. As the report stated, the goal "must be to meet all donors where they are, as opposed to using an outmoded one-size-fits-all model." In order to connect to these groups, it may be necessary not only to consider giving but also to consider the programs being funded. Do the ministries within your church reach your entire congregation? Do they extend to meet the needs of a diverse community? In addition, the report states that organizations may need to go as far as to reconsider the amount of representation given to these groups in terms of leadership. Does your church leadership reflect the various races and ethnic groups to which you are ministering?

Although it is easy to look at the differences among groups, we should never focus on just the diversities. Despite the wide range of dissimilarities among the three groups studied, similarities exist. First, no one group has a monopoly on compassion. The desire to help those in need is universal. Second, religion and faith are strong influences and indicators for giving. People of faith often give to their churches and, in general, they tend to give more. As author Mark Rovner concluded in his report, "The color of a person's skin is not a significant predictor of giving amount. Nor is age, education or how long they have lived in this country. What does drive how much a donor gives is that person's connection to faith or house of worship."

Giving is a form of worship; people of faith give. Ethnic diversity is critical to the future of the church. Connect with the ethnically diverse people of faith within your community and help increase diversity among the philanthropy of your church.

Source: [www.umcom.org](http://www.umcom.org)