

Depth Perception™

Commentary from Design For Ministry™
Los Angeles • Milwaukee • Philadelphia

Generosity Reflections 15 May 2007

Here is some helpful information about generosity. According to a map of the 10 states with the most generous populations provided *Business Week* (2 October 2006, p.12)*, the most generous people tend not to be found in coastal towns or wealthy areas, but small town America. None of the 10 most generous states also appear in the list of the 10 wealthiest states. One who knows their religious geography can also observe that the most generous areas of the country are those heavily populated by Mormons, Lutherans and Southern Baptists.

Later that same month the *NonProfit Times* (30 October 2006) reported on a Bank of America study that tells us only 3% of the nation's households contribute 2/3 of all charitable giving.

Reading statistics on generosity can sometimes make one's eyes blur. And just how do we reconcile statistics like these?

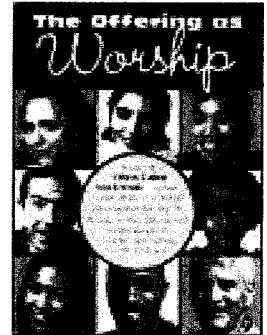
In the first case, giving is reported as a percentage of income. In the second case, ALL giving is included, whether estate giving or giving from income. A large gift from a major philanthropist skews the second number to an even smaller number of households than does the first number.

What these two statistics have in common, however, is the point that a small number of households do most of the giving. This means there continues to much room to invite others to give, and also that we continue to lose ground in teaching generosity as a mark of a mature and meaningful life.

-mark I vincent

*The 10 most generous populations are those of: 1) Utah, 2) Oklahoma, 3) Nebraska, 4) Minnesota, 5) Georgia, 6) Wyoming, 7) South Carolina, 8) Colorado, 9) Mississippi, and 10) North Carolina).

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