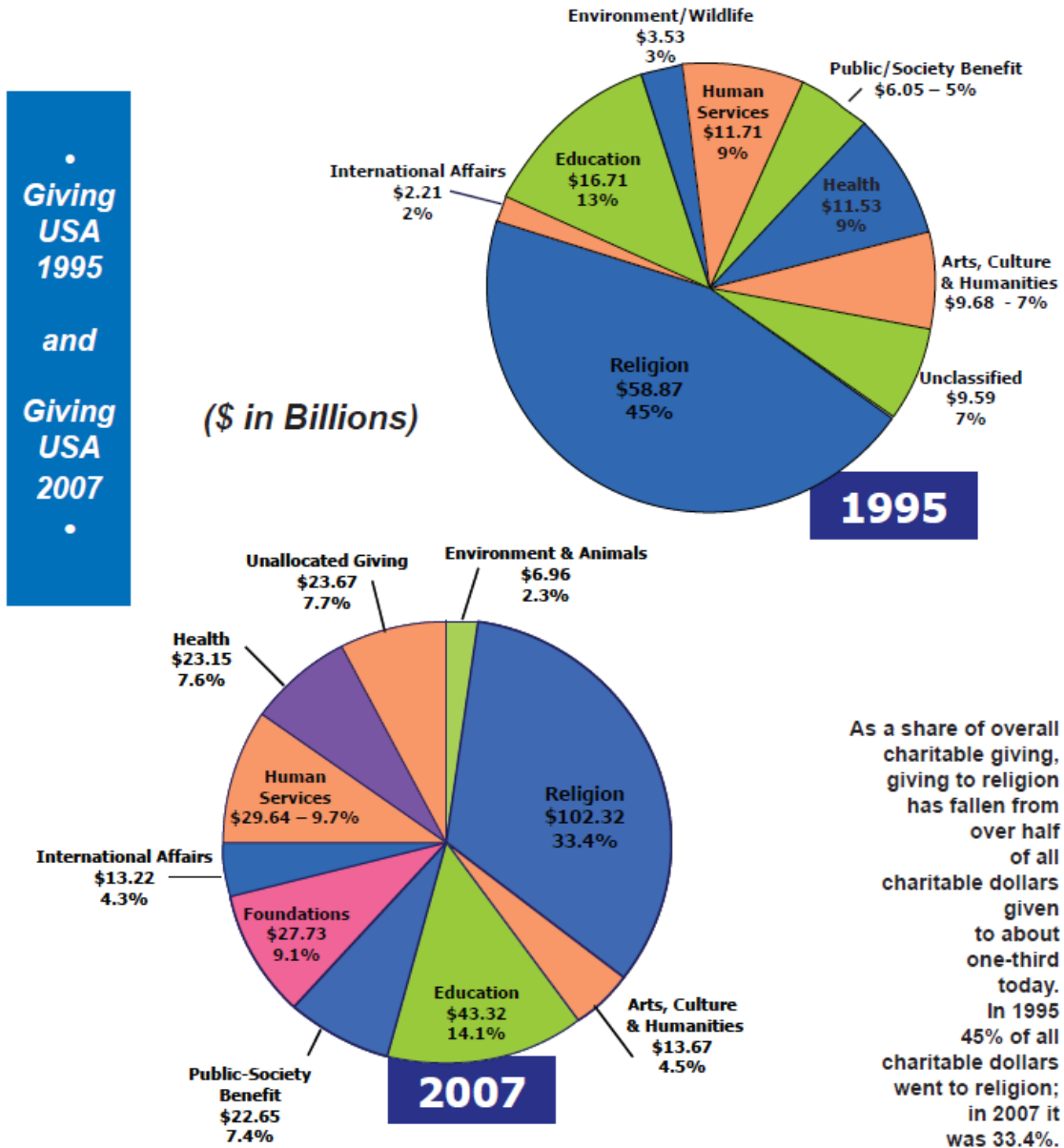


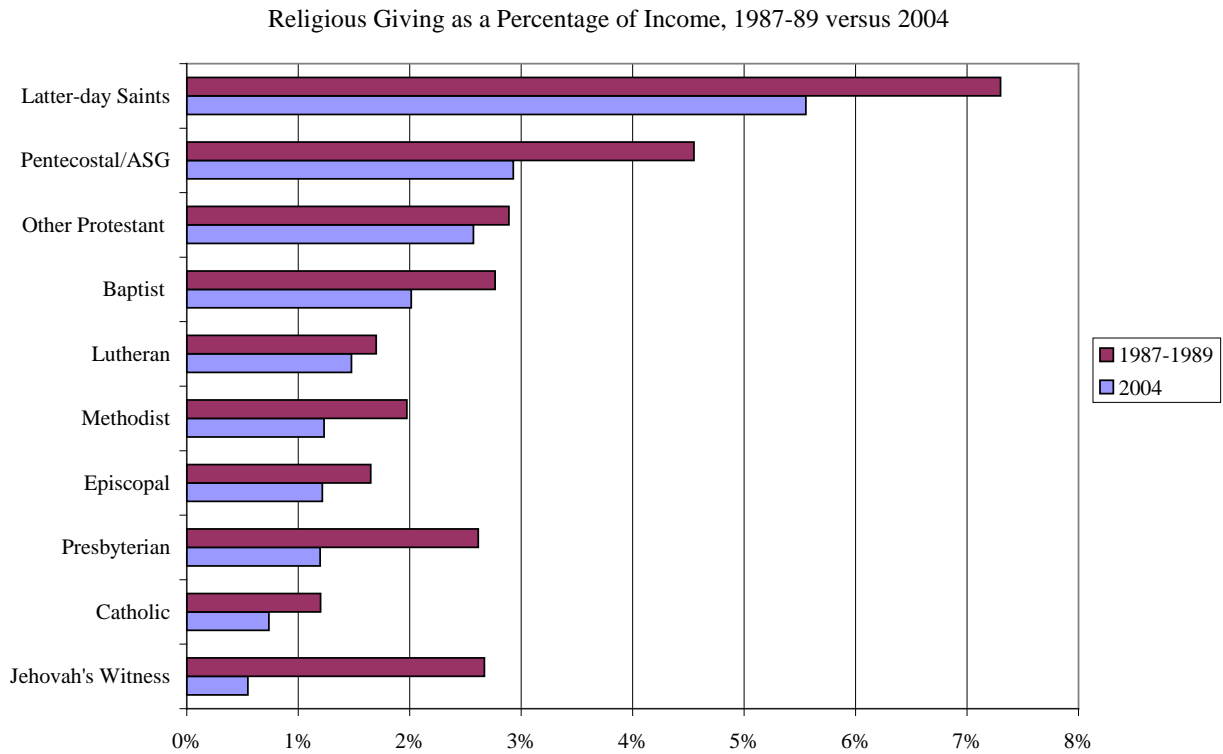
THE ALTERED LANDSCAPE OF RELIGIOUS GIVING

Since the mid-nineties the landscape of religious giving has experienced a seismic shift. Religious giving has been tracked since 1955 and while the dollars given to religion have increased every year, even when adjusted for inflation, the contours of religious giving have significantly changed, indicating a decline in religious giving as a sector of overall charitable giving.



- Religious giving is one of the slowest growing sectors of charitable giving. Over the last forty years religious giving has grown by 2% each year while total giving has increased by 5%. Over the last decade religious giving has grown 2.1% each year compared to 6.5% for total giving.¹
- Between 1987 and 2004 religious giving as a share of income fell between 25% and 50% with most faith groups experiencing a 30% decline.²

Religious Giving as a Percentage of Income, 1987-89 versus 2004



Sources: 1987-89 data, Hoge et al, *Money Matters*, Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, page 12. (Data from General Social Survey)

¹ See: Giving USA, 2008. Unless otherwise documented the data cited in this paper is from the Center on Philanthropy Panel Study (COPPS) which is the property of the Center on Philanthropy, Indiana University. See: Patrick Rooney, *Religious Giving*, a Working Paper; Wilhelm, Rooney, Tempel, *Changes in Religious Giving*, February, 2006.

² The 1987/89 data is from the General Social Survey and is based on answers given by people who attend religious services at least once a year: see Hoge, *Money Matters*, p. 12.

The 2004 data is from the Center on Philanthropy Panel Study (COPPS) where replies are based on self-reported religious affiliation and not on religious attendance: See Rooney, *Religious Giving*, a Working Paper.

- Per-member Protestant giving as a percentage of disposable family income has dropped from 3.51% in 1968 to 2.59% in 2003 - a loss estimated to be more than \$2.3 billion annually.³
- For Evangelicals, per member giving to congregations has declined by 27% since 1968: from 5.02% in 1968 to 3.67% in 2003.⁴
- 62% of all congregations - regardless of type or size of budget and membership - failed to keep pace with inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index in 2006.⁵
- Religious giving as a share of total giving has fallen dramatically despite the fact that more households give to religion than any other subsector (46% per COPPS) and a larger share of household philanthropy goes to religion than any other subsector (60% per COPPS).⁶

**Total Giving as a Share of Income by Religious Affiliation
Sorted by Gift Total as a Percentage of Income**

	Percentage Giving	Mean Total Gift	Mean Religion Gift	Total Gift as Percentage of Income	Religion Gift as Percentage of Total Gift	Religion Gift as a Percentage of Income
Mormon	90.6	\$4,078	\$3,665	5.2	89.9	4.7
Other Protestant*	69.0	\$2,134	\$1,137	3.5	53.3	1.9
Pentecostal/ASG	61.9	\$1,282	\$1,106	3.4	86.3	2.9
Muslim/Buddhist	49.2	\$2,091	\$587	2.8	28.1	0.8
Baptist	64.2	\$1,302	\$1,014	2.6	77.9	2.0
Jewish	91.8	\$2,837	\$1,129	2.3	39.8	0.9
Episcopal	82.6	\$1,573	\$868	2.0	55.2	1.1
Presbyterian	84.1	\$1,349	\$727	1.8	53.9	1.0
Lutheran	77.9	\$1,230	\$760	1.7	61.8	1.1
Methodist	69.6	\$1,107	\$680	1.6	61.5	1.0
Catholic	68.7	\$1,083	\$549	1.5	50.7	0.8
None	52.6	\$642	\$203	1.1	31.6	0.4
Jehovah's Witness	66.4	\$358	\$257	0.9	71.7	0.7
Missing	56.9	\$552	\$292	0.9	52.8	0.5
Greek/Russian/Eastern Orthodox	95.9	\$479	\$255	0.8	53.3	0.4

* Other Protestant includes [non-denominational Protestants and adherents in Protestant denominations not listed](#).

From P. Rooney. (Forthcoming). Religious giving in D. H. Smith, ed., *Religious Giving*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press).

- Recent research indicates that the top 5% of givers among American Christians give 59.6% of all charitable dollars. Traditionally for non-profit charitable institutions, 10% have provided 60% of the annual budget.⁷

³ *Giving USA. 2006*, p.118. The \$2.3 billion figure is cited in Robert Wuthnow, *The Crisis in the Churches*, p. 14.

⁴ John and Sylvia Ronsvalle, *The State of Church Giving Through 2003*. pp. 28, 47.

⁵ In 2006 the Lake Institute and the Center on Philanthropy surveyed 281 congregations across Central Indiana. Included in the survey were 22 Catholic congregations, 118 Mainline Protestant congregations, 129 Evangelical/Independent congregations.

⁶ Op. cit.

⁷ Christian Smith and Michael Emerson, "Passing the Plate", Oxford, 2008, p. 41.