

RECESSION-PROOF GIVING
Jim Newman, Christ's Church Cathedral

There is evidence suggesting that charitable giving by Canadians may be somewhat recession-proof. It's too early to tell for certain this time, and the evidence is anecdotal, but that's the conclusion reached at January's meeting of Anglican Regional Planned Giving Consultants. An increase in giving happened during the recession of the early 1990's. The reasons aren't clear. Perhaps it's because the media help to express the need. Or maybe it's our God-given need to give, coming to the fore.

Many people say that they feel personally rewarded by committing to an intentional program of giving to the church. They say that their commitment to giving is a kind of spiritual discipline, like prayer and worship, which helps them feel closer to God and more closely linked to their community and ministries. That makes sense to me. It all fits three important things I've learned about giving:

1. We are called to give out of a spirituality of abundance, not scarcity.
2. There is a direct connection between our stewardship of money and our spiritual growth. In order to grow spiritually I had to first understand the true meaning of stewardship. One would think it would be the other way around but it's not. The more I have learned about generous giving, the more I understand about faith, trust, grace, and commitment.
3. Finally, as Jesus implies in the Parable of the Talents, giving out of a spirituality of abundance requires you to move beyond fear. If you're too fearful or suspicious or distrustful, you're going to bury your talents. And this leads to "weeping and gnashing of teeth" i.e. sorrow and depression.

Your generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure enable your parish to serve your community with compassion and hope. That's what the world is looking for, and the need is great.

My parish is a wonderfully generous community. I have no access to individual levels of giving, but the overall statistics suggest that some of our parishioners give 5% or more of their income, some likely follow the Biblical tithe of 10%, and a few probably exceed that. And while other parishioners are not able to give at those levels, they give "off the top". That means they give to the parish first, out of a spirituality of abundance which is, of course, a key to spiritual growth.

You were designed by God to give. It's in your DNA. So take a moment right now to determine an appropriate level of giving in proportion to your annual income. And then make that change to your Pre-Authorized or Envelope Giving, starting today.

Annual Income	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%	12%
\$10,000	\$200	\$400	\$600	\$800	\$1,000	\$1,200
\$20,000	\$400	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,600	\$2,000	\$2,400
\$30,000	\$600	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$2,400	\$3,000	\$3,600
\$40,000	\$800	\$1,600	\$2,400	\$3,200	\$4,000	\$4,800
\$50,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
\$75,000	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$9,000
\$100,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$12,000