

What One Can Do – Give

Why Give?

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." – Matthew 6:21

A simple answer is "because people need it." But the simple answer is inadequate. We don't give toward the eradication of global poverty because our vocation is to be the world's ATM. We give because our unity in Christ means the world's poverty is our poverty. We give because Christ tells us we meet and serve him in the poorest of the poor – and some of that service takes cash. But there's even more than that.

We give because as Americans and an American church, our relationship with wealth is our greatest spiritual challenge ... because it is about who and what owns us. In the midst of a superabundance of wealth, we are prisoners of that wealth and of a lived theology of scarcity. We are prisoners because as tightly as we hold onto our wealth, that's how tightly it grips us. Because we believe that in spite of how we pray ("Give us this day our daily bread") it is because of our own efforts and not God's graces that we have what we do ... and that we must keep it or it will disappear and we will have less or none.

We give because the world is crying out for liberation from poverty. But we give because our souls are crying out for liberation, too ... liberation to trust that God will provide for us, that we can freely release the gifts God has so abundantly given us and rest in the trust of God's promise.

What One Person, Congregation and Diocese Can Do – 0.7% minimum giving

The minimum standard for giving to the MDGs is 0.7%. It's a strange number, but it's important because it represents the percentage of the Gross National Income of the rich nations that it will take to achieve the MDGs. It's proportional so anyone can do it. Commit personally to a minimum of 0.7.% giving for the MDGs, then get your congregation and diocese to do the same (the national church is already there!).

Now that you've made the commitment – where to give? A few thoughts:

*Giving is an opportunity to discern God's call. So do your homework. Say your prayers. Where is God calling you more deeply into relationship, and how can giving be a part of building that relationship?

*Here are some qualities to look for that worthy organizations possess:

- Their mission/vision statement includes poverty reduction.
- Their finances are in the black, not in the red.
- A moderate percentage of their budget is spent on overhead and fund-raising.
- Their philosophy and methods are empowering rather than top-down and paternalistic.
- They advocate and address the root causes of poverty.
- Many of their staff are from the country in which they work.
- Others who have observed their activities speak well of them.

*Don't forget your companion diocese relationship (if you have one). How can your giving help enhance that relationship. Remember when bringing money to the table that our money does not give us license to dictate how they will live their lives. We must be listeners and prayers first and foremost. Our money is a gift freely given.

Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation + www.e4gr.org

"That all might have life, and have it abundantly." John 10:10

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What is 0.7%

It's not rocket science ... just simple math. Remember, it's proportional – so it works with any amount. A child who gets \$10 a week allowance can give 7 cents!

Income	0.7%		Income	0.7%
\$40,000	\$280		\$60,000	\$420
\$80,000	\$560		\$100,000	\$700
\$120,000	\$840		\$140,000	\$980

Where to Give?

Here are just a few Episcopal/Anglican organizations working toward the MDGs.

Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation – E4GR (www.e4gr.org) doesn't build clinics or provide bednets or dig wells -- we connect people, congregations, dioceses, organizations and anyone else across the Church so they can do those things better – lifting up the centrality of Christ in the process. E4GR is the connective tissue for this movement of global reconciliation. We make the handshakes happen so nobody does this ministry in isolation, and so that everyone can benefit from the gifts of all. Consider making part of your MDG gift to sustain this movement. Because every dollar given to EGR means more people involved, more people praying, more people giving, more people lobbying ... more people realizing God's dream is about them. Find out how to give at www.e4gr.org/giving/egr.html.

Episcopal Relief and Development - ERD (www.er-d.org) is the official relief and development organization of the Episcopal Church, providing emergency assistance in times of disaster; rebuilding devastated communities and offering long-term program development solutions to fight poverty. ERD works through Anglican Communion partners in nearly 40 countries and because of those partnerships 92 cents of every dollar given to ERD gets to the people on the ground who need it most -- an astoundingly high percentage in the development world. You can support the work of ERD by a direct donation to one of its many relief and development funds, by buying a gift from its Gifts for Life catalog or by selling Bishop's Blend coffee at your church (or anywhere else!).

Five Talents - Five Talents (www.fivetalents.org) is the top microfinance organization in the Anglican Communion. Its mission is to "fight poverty, create jobs and transform lives by empowering the poor in developing countries using innovative savings and microcredit programs, business training and spiritual development." They make nearly \$1 million in microenterprise loans annually with a repayment rate of more than 90% and helped more than 10,000 clients in 2006 alone. They are currently supporting 11 programs through Anglican Communion partners in seven countries and providing technical assistance in three others.

Charity Navigator -- www.charitynavigator.org -- is an excellent online watchdog of nonprofit organizations and is a great way to discover and evaluate potential recipients.

Check out the website of the Advent Conspiracy www.adventconspiracy.org **for great stuff on giving.**
You can find more giving resources on the Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation website
www.e4gr.org/giving/episcopal.html

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