

# tithing\_60203

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## Percentage of tithing households drops

VENTURA, Calif. (RNS)—The portion of American households that tithe, or give one-tenth of their income, to their church dropped from 8 percent in 2001 to 3 percent in 2002, according to the Barna Research Group.

The Ventura, Calif.-based marketing research firm found that groups with the highest proportion of tithers were people ages 55 or older, college graduates, Republicans, Southerners, conservatives, middle-income individuals, evangelicals, and those who attend mainline Protestant churches.

Those least likely to tithe included Hispanics, liberals, Catholics, parents who home-school their children, Midwesterners, those not registered to vote or registered as independents, and households earning less than \$20,000 and without a head of household who graduated from college.

George Barna, president of Barna Research Group, attributed the drop in tithers to a range of reasons.

“For some, the soft economy has either diminished their household income or led to concerns about their financial security,” he said. “For others, the nation's political condition, in terms of terrorism and the war in ... Iraq, has raised their level of caution. The scandals involving Catholic priests last year reduced some people's confidence in church leaders and, consequently, reduced their giving as well.”

The findings are based on a nationwide telephone survey of 1,010 adults in late January and early February, which has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.

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