

Research: Practicing Christians more generous than others

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NASHVILLE (BP)—Practicing Christians outpaced non-practicing Christians and nonbelievers in giving to charities including churches in 2022, the American Bible Society said in the latest release from its [2023 State of the Bible](#) report.

The vast majority of practicing Christians (95 percent) gave to charities in 2022, compared to 68 percent of non-practicing Christians and 51 percent of nonbelievers. The American Bible Society defines practicing Christians as those who identify as such, attend church at least monthly and consider their faith very important in their lives.



“When people practice a meaningful Christian faith, they give, and they give more,” the American Bible Society said in the report’s eighth chapter, focused on generosity. “Again and again we see people transformed by God’s Word, with hearts pried open by God’s love, people of faith moved to share what they have with others—even if they don’t have much to spare.”

Churches, ministries and other houses of worship were the top recipients of

charitable gifts for the year, with religion one of the few sectors realizing an increase in receipts, the report stated. But when accounting for inflation, the estimated \$143.57 billion in religious contributions—a 5.2 percent increase over 2021—represented a 2.6 percent decline.

“Religious organizations—including local churches, parishes, or temples as well as local and international ministries—receive the greatest portion of charitable giving,” the report stated. “Our data confirm what other researchers have found.”

The American Bible Society also gauged giving by spiritual vitality, with 92 percent of those thriving spiritually giving to charities, compared to 85 percent of those with healthy spiritual vitalities, 71 percent of those with unhealthy spiritual vitalities, and 65 percent of those ailing spiritually.

Those thriving averaged \$6,216 in annual giving, compared to the \$991 in giving by those ailing spiritually. The American Bible Society spiritual vitality gauge, used for the first time in the 2023 study and asked only of professing Christians, rates spiritual health based on answers to nine concise questions focusing on belief, spiritual practices and faith in action.

Other findings on generosity include:

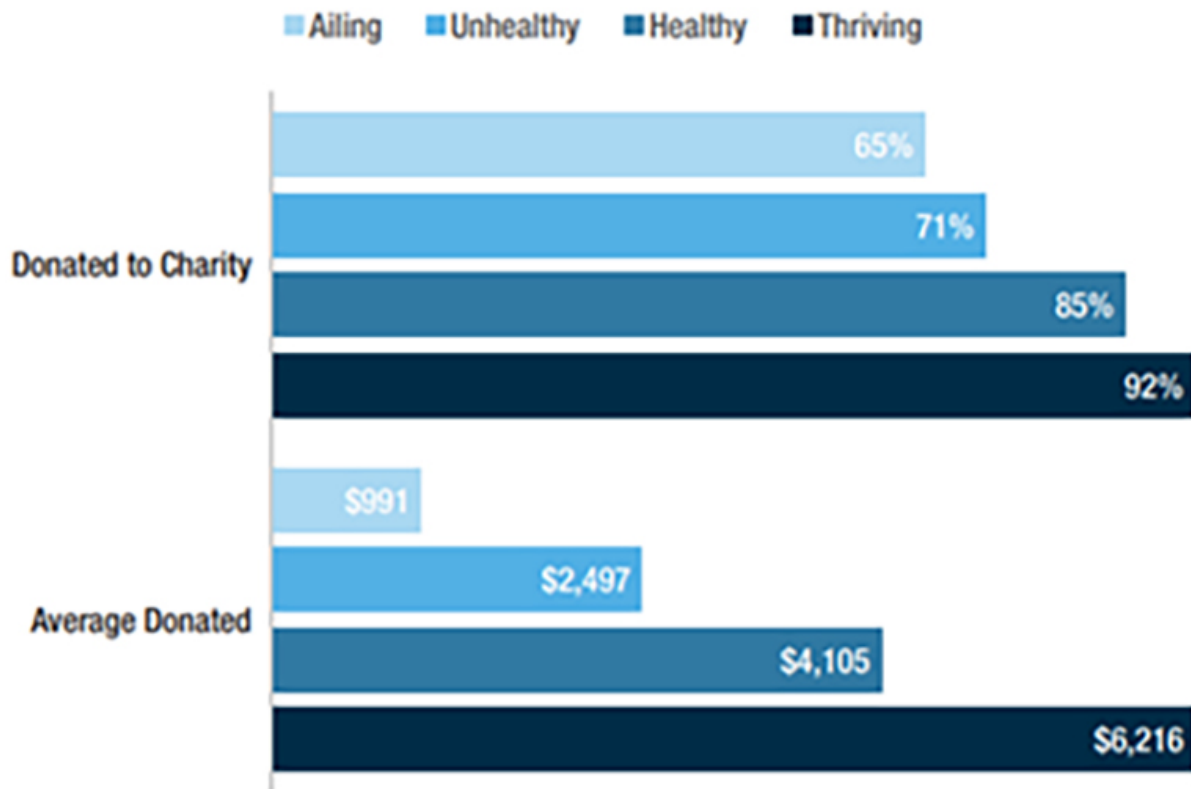
- Regardless of faith, 68 percent of American households donated to charity in 2022, a rebound from the 62 percent who gave in 2021.
- Elders, those age 78 and above, are by far the most generous age group, with 83 percent giving to charity and nearly half of those giving at least \$1,800 a year.
- People give to causes they consider important, regardless of their income or expenses.
- People who volunteer, whether in the church or the community, are also more generous financially.
- Percentage wise, families earning \$30,000 or less a year give more

money than those earning \$100,000 or more, although larger income earners give larger numerical amounts.

“While people who make more money give more money, the percentage of income donated by those who give runs much higher among lower income groups. When someone is earning an annual income of \$30,000 or less, a contribution of \$1,800 or more is a substantial portion (at minimum, 6 percent),” the American Bible Society said, comparing the giving to the story of the widow’s mite recorded in Mark 12 and Luke 21.

“The one-fifth of low earners who contribute at that level are digging deep, giving sacrificially.”

Charitable Giving by Spiritual Vitality



The State of the Bible annually looks at the Bible, faith and the church in America. The American Bible Society collaborated with the University of Chicago’s National Opinion Research Center in designing the study

conducted online and via telephone. The survey, conducted Jan. 5-30, produced 2,761 responses from a representative sample of adults 18 and older within the 50 states and the District of Columbia.