



## Why it is important to ask people to give?

“Giving” is not a natural habit. We human beings are sinners. We are self-seeking and selfish. We tend to look out for ourselves and hoard our possessions and materials. It is not easy for us to be givers. Giving is a learned behavior.

Theologically, giving is a spiritual issue. We are grateful to God for the blessings given to us, so we give because God gives. We give in response to God’s love. We are not trying to win God’s approval, but to celebrate the worth God gives to us.

Giving is a Biblical issue. In the Bible, there are more than 500 verses about prayer, and fewer than 500 verses about faith. But, there are over 2,000 verses about the use of our financial resources.

In the Bible, tithing is the response to what is holy and is one of the most emphasized themes of the Bible. Tithing is not a law and cannot be disregarded as an “Old Testament” idea invalidated by the New Testament. Tithing began when Abraham paid homage to God’s high priest, Melchizedek, by giving him a tenth of his possessions. The prophet

Micah indicates that when we withhold the tithe, we rob God. He invites us to test God’s goodness by giving the tithe and see if God will not pour out God’s abundance on us.

As a practical matter, we give to that in which we believe. We give to what makes us feel that we’ve done something important. We give to that which shows results.

Giving is a noble and spiritual venture. The Christian church is the only institution in the world that has as its purpose the moulding and shaping of lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ. If you are reading this, the church has, no doubt, shaped your life. God has gone before us in prevenient grace to shape our choices and decisions.

As “human” and flawed as the church can be, can you even imagine what your life would be like without the church?

There would be no good news about a loving God, no word about Jesus Christ, no Bible, no Ten Commandments, no honesty, ethics, morality or integrity.

Would you want to live in a world like that?

Giving to God’s kingdom is a

matter of spiritual health. Giving doesn’t create spiritual health, but giving reflects spiritual health.

Very simply, giving is a choice and a response to our level of commitment.

I heard a pastor colleague preach a few weeks back. She reflected about a snorkeling trip she had experienced. Not being a swimmer, she didn’t want to get in the water. The captain urged, encouraged and cajoled her. Finally, she slipped into the water, put her face beneath the surface, experienced a transformation. Beneath the water’s surface, she experienced an entirely new world of wonder and beauty. She saw and appreciated a whole new part of God’s creation. She was elated.

But she hadn’t wanted to get in the water. She wanted to stay safely on the boat. Only after being urged, cajoled and encouraged – and then pushed – did she discover a pleasure she would have never known.

That’s why it’s important to ask people to give. It’s the most transforming and lasting thing in life. ■

*The Rev. Bill Kilday is director of stewardship, available at (865) 690-4080 or billkilday@holston.org.*

## More hurricane supplies delivered to Florida and N.C.

Holston churches reached out to hurricane victims in North Carolina recently when a trailer of flood buckets and water bottles were delivered by Church and Community Workers Harry Howe and Randy Hildebrant.



Photo courtesy of Harry Howe

GOLDSBORO, N.C. – A mission worker at the North Carolina Disaster Relief Center accepts flood buckets donated by Holston Conference churches.

Howe and Hildebrant represented Holston on Oct. 6 when they delivered 180 flood buckets and 18,000 water bottles donated by Holston congregations. Howe is based at Project Crossroads in Marion, Va., and Hildebrant is based at Jubilee Project in Sneedville, Tenn.

The supplies were delivered to Western North Carolina Conference’s Mission Resource Center in Mooresville and North Carolina Conference’s Merci Center in Goldboro.

On Oct. 11, more supplies were dispatched from Holston when an 18-wheeler arrived in Sanford, Fla. The truck was loaded with water, flood buckets, plastic and canned food donated by churches in Knoxville, Oak Ridge, Maryville and Cleveland Districts. Kingsdown Inc. mattress company donated the truck, trailer, driver and gas, according to Deb Krumnacher at First Knoxville United Methodist Church.

Meanwhile, congregations continue to donate funds to hurricane victims through United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Since *The Call* reported that Holston churches had given \$47,930 as of Sept. 29, the total has risen to \$65,645 as of Oct. 13.

Members may give to UMCOR by making checks to their local churches, designating “UMCOR/hurricane relief” on the memo line. The tax-deductible gifts may be placed in offering plates. To make credit-card donations, call UMCOR directly at 1-800-554-8583. ■

In response to Nelda Thompson’s letter [“C-Mail,” Oct. 8], I strongly disagree with her thinly veiled endorsement of George Bush in this publication. While Ms. Thompson begins with the statement that “God is neither Democrat nor Republican,” she then justifies one of the candidate’s political views with scripture to make the argument that only one of the candidates is truly “God’s candidate.”

Regardless of her political views, I believe that her use of this newsletter to promote a political candidate was inappropriate and should not have been published. I hold *The Call*’s editors equally responsible in this matter as they have the ultimate decision what letters should and should not be printed. If *The Call* becomes a forum for political views, then I will cancel my subscription. This newsletter should be about the Holston Conference and the United Methodist Church and nothing else.

**Chris Stafford**  
Dublin UMC  
Wytheville District

In response to a fellow Methodist who commented about the *New York Times* ad, I believe all three candidates say they believe in the sanctity of life. Even so, of these three, one has been responsible for taking more innocent lives than any candidate in recent memory. Thousands of boys and girls and women have died in Iraq as a result of his decision. God’s man?

Should a presidential candidate wear his religion on his sleeve? Probably not. There is much history to suggest that a political leader should bear spiritual fruit, but not toot a religious horn.

The writer seemed to put a lot of stock in the opinions of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. I can’t think of any two men more at odds with the “prominent Methodists” she mentions. Frankly, I must side with the Methodists.

**Jim Price**  
McFarland UMC  
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*Got something to say? Send letters to the editor to: C-Mail, The Call, P.O. Box 32939, Knoxville, TN 37930-2939, e-mail thecall@holston.org, or fax (865) 690-3162. Due to space limits, some letters may be shortened or omitted. Complete text of all letters are available at www.holston.org/thecall. Click on “C-Mail.” ■*