

# Financing Missions 10 years after 2010

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**2010** was a pivotal year in global mission. The Tokyo 2010 Global Mission Consultation focused on reaching the remaining least reached peoples. The *Tokyo Declaration*<sup>1</sup> made it clear that we have the material resources and funding to reach those peoples. Cape Town 2010: The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization provided a global forum in which evangelical leaders explored issues facing global mission. *The Cape Town Commitment*<sup>2</sup> called for “self-sacrifice and generous giving as the marks of true discipleship to Christ;” interdependence in giving and receiving; and “personal compassion, respect and generosity towards the poor and needy.” But did Tokyo 2010 and Cape Town 2010 impact mission giving?

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## State of Christian Giving

Reliable statistical information on mission-giving is extremely difficult to find and analyse. However, there are indications that there has been an increase in mission-giving since 2010. The income from Christians in the world was about US\$60 trillion in 2019.<sup>3</sup> That is up from US\$18 trillion in 2000, giving an increase of about 6.54% per year. In 2019 giving to Christian causes was US\$1.010 trillion compared to US\$320 billion in 2000, giving an increase of 6.24% per annum while the income

of global foreign mission organizations was US\$60 billion compared to US\$18 billion in 2000—an increase of 6.63% per year.

Christians in 2019 proportionally gave slightly more to global missions than in 2010. More people, also in poorer countries, gave more to charities, including churches and mission organizations. In Kenya, more than half of the people donated money to charity in 2018, compared to less than a third in the 2010.<sup>4</sup>

In the USA, Christians gave more to international causes.<sup>5</sup> Giving to international affairs in the USA increased by 9.6% from 2017 to 2018, totalling \$22.88 billion. Commentators suggest that churches should focus more on international outreach to increase income! Christians may be shifting their giving from churches to other faith-based organizations, including mission organizations.<sup>6</sup> Compassion International increased support from \$130 million in 2000 to almost \$820 million in 2017.

Only 6% of the annual global church expenses goes to foreign missions<sup>7</sup> with 82% spent on church ministry. For every \$1.00 of Christian giving less than \$.01 goes to reaching unreached peoples. Much giving is focused on Christian relief and development organizations and mission in already reached parts of the world.

Limited financial resources directed towards unreached peoples is one of the five major challenges to completing

1 [https://www.ggcn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Tokyo\\_2010\\_Declaration.pdf](https://www.ggcn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Tokyo_2010_Declaration.pdf)

2 <https://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment#capetown>

3 Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020) <https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/04/StatusofGlobalChristianity20191.pdf>

4 CAF World Giving Index Tenth Edition (London: CAF, October 2019) accessed 2 January 2020 [https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/caf\\_wgi\\_10th\\_edition\\_report\\_2712a\\_web\\_101019.pdf](https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/caf_wgi_10th_edition_report_2712a_web_101019.pdf)

5 <https://get.tithe.ly/blog/giving-usa-2019>

6 [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/eight\\_myths\\_of\\_us\\_philanthropy](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/eight_myths_of_us_philanthropy)

7 Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020) <https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/04/1EvangelismInfographic.pdf>

the Great Commission.<sup>8</sup> This is also clear from the 2018 GLOBAL Trends in Giving Report.<sup>9</sup> The top five causes of Christian donors surveyed are children and youth (17%), faith and spirituality (11%), health and wellness (11%), animals and wildlife (10%), and human and social services (8%).

### Trends since 2010—Stewardship, generosity and giving as lifestyle

One of Cape Town 2010's greatest contributions was the understanding that a lifestyle of generous giving flows out of effective discipleship. The focus on biblical stewardship (how we manage God's resources), generous living (how we share God's resources) and kingdom focused giving (how we give God's financial resources) became a guiding principle after Cape Town 2010.

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Initiatives such as Generosity Path,<sup>10</sup> the 40 Acts Generosity Challenge,<sup>11</sup> the Christian Stewardship Network<sup>12</sup> and even secular initiatives such as Giving Tuesday<sup>13</sup> played a major role in encouraging generosity and giving as a lifestyle. Stewardship Theology became influential through people such as Dr. R. Scott Rodin.<sup>14</sup> Video stories like the one about Mizoram Christians in India showed how even poor Christians give sacrificially to mission.

Many theological institutions across the world teach courses on stewardship, generosity and giving. Pastors are equipped to encourage giving to their churches and ministries, including mission agencies.

### Increased fundraising focus, building trust and raising awareness

Western Christian non-profits already recognized fundraising as an important ministry in 2010. However, many mission organizations were suspicious about asking for money. It was seen as not trusting God enough for financial needs. That has changed during the last 10 years with many mission agencies now increasing their focus on fundraising and even employing specialist fundraisers. The Ministry Fundraising Network<sup>15</sup> launched as a support and training network for ministry fundraisers while books such as Rob Martin's *When Money Goes on Mission: Fundraising and Giving in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*<sup>16</sup> are improving the skills of mission fundraisers in especially the Global South.

With corruption in the Global Church estimated at US\$68 billion per year,<sup>17</sup> churches, ministries and organizations need to improve their financial management and governance practices to encourage more giving. Various national and regional initiatives developed since 2010 to build trust in giving. One example is NABLA<sup>18</sup> in Egypt that works with churches and ministries to unlock giving in the Egyptian Church to reach communities for Christ. These initiatives came together in Global Trust Partners.<sup>19</sup>

Two-thirds of US churches engage in disaster relief.<sup>20</sup> This suggests that urgency and emotion affect giving among churches. Good communication is clearly one of the major drivers to increased giving for Christian relief and development organizations. The focus on unreached people groups is much less prominent.<sup>21</sup> Without greater awareness and information, Christians will not give more to mission among unreached people groups. The Issachar Initiative<sup>22</sup> was an important catalyst for such awareness. It increased giving through its Summits and Count for

8 <https://joshuaproject.net/assets/js/ppt/FiveCelebrationsChallenges/index.html>

9 <https://givingreport.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2018-GivingReport-English.pdf>

10 <http://www.generositypath.org/>

11 <https://40acts.org.uk/>

12 <https://www.christianstewardshipnetwork.com/>

13 <https://www.givingtuesday.org.uk/>

14 <https://kingdomlifepublishing.com/>

15 <http://www.ministryfundraisingnetwork.org/>

16 <https://www.whenmoneygoesonmission.com/>

17 <https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/04/StatusofGlobalChristianity20191.pdf>

18 <http://www.nabla-initiative.org/>

19 <https://www.gtp.org/>

20 Olsen, Andrew 'Evangelicals and International Aid Insights from a landscape survey of U.S. churches' (Medford, MA: The Fletcher School, Tufts University, accessed 1 January 2020) [https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/04/USMissionsSurvey\\_FINALReport.pdf](https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/04/USMissionsSurvey_FINALReport.pdf)

21 <https://joshuaproject.net/assets/js/ppt/FiveCelebrationsChallenges/index.html>

22 <https://www.facebook.com/issacharinitiative/>

Zero curriculum, but the average pastor still knows very little about unreached people groups.

## Approaches to mission giving

- **Church facilitated giving:** Members of churches give financially to mission initiatives either related to the local church, denomination or that are known to the pastor or church members. A biblical understanding of giving, congregational relationships and exposure to international needs all are associated with church facilitated giving to global mission and international causes.<sup>23</sup>
- **Pooled giving and peer-to-peer fundraising:**<sup>24</sup> Donors pool their funds together to increase the amount available to give and the impact of their giving. They form giving circles or investment groups to distribute funds and encourage more giving. Such collaboration also connects donors with ministries. The European Great Commission Collaboration<sup>25</sup> is an example of donor-to-donor and donor-to-ministry collaboration to facilitate increased funding for strategic mission initiatives.
- **Business as Mission (BAM) giving and investing:** Business as mission has become very important in reaching unreached peoples. That requires investment in and funding of businesses. BAM Global wrote a report<sup>26</sup> on how this could best be done. A number of investment funds have been launched to facilitate more investment in BAM enterprises.
- **Technology giving:** Electronic giving and online giving platforms are increasingly important in mission giving as well. Giving via mobile phones is now one of the best ways to give in Africa, while Give.net<sup>27</sup> facilitates increased giving to ministries based in the UK. It has become essential to make it easy for people to donate online or with their mobile device. Crowdfunding and other forms of technology driven giving could also generate interest in giving to specific causes.


- **Personal fundraising and individual giving:** Personal support was always a pillar of mission giving with prospective missionaries needing to raise a certain amount. That caused serious problems with people who did not have the access to funding. In today's unequal global Christian world (Africa has 33.5% of global evangelical population but only 3% of evangelical income) this has serious implications for how personal and ministry funds are raised.

Global migration and interaction make it much easier for Christian workers in poorer countries to raise funds from friends, family or contacts in other parts of the world. Support raising has also become more innovative with sponsored events, asset giving (perhaps a car in the USA, or a cow in Africa!), selling products, church support, blogs and giving champions to name but a few.

## Conclusion

We praise God for the growing generosity and increased mission-giving among Christians worldwide since Tokyo 2010 and Cape Town 2010. However, challenges to see more mission giving to ministries among Unreached People Groups still remain.

Mission giving is a spiritual battle. Those involved in encouraging mission giving essentially aim to free Christians from the love of money, which is a root cause of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10), and then mobilize those people to engage in God's kingdom. Satan will do whatever he can to prevent that. People involved in mobilizing funds for mission face spiritual attacks. Leaders of global mission giving initiatives need more prayer and spiritual covering.

While biblical stewardship and generous giving improved in the last decade, kingdom focused giving, where the spiritual needs are greatest, has not necessarily seen the same increase. As we encourage more mission giving, we have to focus on the head (the biblical foundations for giving and mission), the heart (creating awareness so that people are emotionally connected to mission causes) and the hands (engaging people in practical action among Unreached People Groups). Mission agencies and Christian relief and development organizations must collaborate to build on each other's strengths and to facilitate more giving to ministry among Unreached People Groups. 

23 Allison Schnable. "Religion and Giving for International Aid: Evidence from a Survey of US Church Members." [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270814965\\_Religion\\_and\\_Giving\\_for\\_International\\_Aid\\_Evidence\\_from\\_a\\_Survey\\_of\\_US\\_Church\\_Members](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270814965_Religion_and_Giving_for_International_Aid_Evidence_from_a_Survey_of_US_Church_Members)

24 <https://churchfuel.com/4-out-of-the-box-church-fundraising-ideas/>

25 <https://egcc.eu/>

26 <https://bamglobal.org/report-funding/>

27 <https://www.give.net/>