

## Religious Giving Tops \$100 Billion in 2007

Last year giving to religious charities and congregations passed the \$100 billion mark for the first time, according to a recent report by the Giving USA Foundation. Giving to religious groups increased 4.7 percent, bringing the total to \$102.32 billion. Overall giving to charitable causes reached \$306.39 billion in 2007, a 3.9 percent increase from 2006.

The report shows that donations to religious causes accounted for half of all individual charitable giving. Three-quarters of all giving in the U.S. came from individual donations to charity, the report said.

Charitable giving consistently represents 2.3 percent of the average American's disposable income year-to-year, a figure that held up in 2007, according to the report.

The report, conducted by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, analyzed eight charity sub-sectors—arts/culture/humanities, education, environment/animals, health, human services, public-society benefit, international affairs, and religion. Each saw individual increases last year, according to inflation-adjusted estimates. Not considered public charities, community and private foundations saw a decrease in giving last year, the report noted. □