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# CONNECTED TO GIVE: FAITH COMMUNITIES

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL STUDY OF AMERICAN RELIGIOUS GIVING



## ABOUT CONNECTED TO GIVE

*Connected to Give* is a collaborative project of a consortium of independent foundations, family foundations, community foundations, and Jewish federations working in partnership with Jumpstart to map the landscape of charitable giving by Americans of different faith traditions. *Connected to Give: Faith Communities* is written by Melanie A. McKittrick, J. Shawn Landres, Mark Ottoni-Wilhelm, and Amir D. Hayat.

## CONNECTED TO GIVE REPORT SERIES

*Connected to Give: Faith Communities* is the third in a series of reports based upon the wealth of data drawn from the National Study of American Jewish Giving and the National Study of American Religious Giving. The first report, *Connected to Give: Key Findings* (September 2013), represents the top level of information gleaned from the National Study of American Jewish Giving. The second report, *Connected to Give: Jewish Legacies* (October 2013), discusses planned giving habits among those American Jews who are considered most likely to have made charitable bequests. Much more remains to be explored. In the months to come we will be publishing a number of reports that go deeper on specific topics. Subsequent publications include *Connected to Give: Synagogues and Movements* (December 2013). Additional reports, including a comparative study of religious and ethnic giving circles, are planned for early 2014.



For updates, please make sure you are registered at [connectedtogive.org](http://connectedtogive.org) so that you may be notified as new information becomes available.

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## WHAT COUNTS AS “GIVING”?

For the purposes of this report, giving consists of contributions made in cash, assets, or property/goods. The data reflect gifts made to religious or charitable organizations in calendar year 2012. The majority of this report focuses on the percentages of people who give to one type of organization or another. In most cases, the results we present about various religious characteristics control for a number of demographic and socio-economic differences. In certain cases, we also discuss the amounts given when so doing adds critical perspective to the results about the percentage of people who give.

**Congregations:** In this study, giving to congregations includes giving to religious congregations (such as churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples) and groups whose primary purpose is religious activity or spiritual development, including TV and radio ministries.

Aside from giving to congregations, much charitable giving goes to organizations whose primary purposes are to help people with basic necessities, deliver health care or medical research, education, youth and family services, arts and culture, to improve neighborhoods and communities, preserve the environment, provide international aid, or to carry out civic and social advocacy.

With respect to donations to nonprofits that are not congregations, we asked respondents how much, if any, of their giving went to religious organizations pursuing a given purpose. This generated two sub-types:

**Religiously identified organizations (RIOs):** Some organizations work toward these purposes within an explicitly religious identity or religious value frame. We refer to these organizations as “religiously identified organizations,” or RIOs.

**Not religiously identified organizations (NRIOs):** Some organizations work toward these purposes without any explicitly religious identity or religious value frame. We refer to the latter type of organizations as “not religiously identified organizations,” or NRIOs.



## PREFACE

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Americans lead the world in charitable giving, driven by values and motivations that are often animated by religious commitments. From congregations to charities serving a wide variety of purposes, the nonprofit sector in the United States has long had a complex relationship with religion. Until now, however, the connections between donors' orientations, the types of religious and charitable organizations support, and the ultimate purpose of their contributions have not been fully visible.

The consortium behind *Connected to Give* set out to explore these issues in order to understand the vitality of household philanthropy among American Jews—but it has been clear from the outset that understanding the giving of any single American group requires broader context and comprehensive data about giving from Americans of all backgrounds, religious and otherwise. This report, and the ethnographic research report on giving collectives that will appear in early 2014, reflects a commitment to that comparative approach.

*Connected to Give: Faith Communities* not only confirms that religious values and motivations are a major factor in why donors give, but also documents, for the first time, that most charitable dollars go to organizations with religious ties. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed in 1835, “Not only do the Americans follow their religion from interest, but they often place in this world the interest that makes them follow it.”

Previous research frequently examined only the purpose of a donation: was it for a “religious” purpose—to a congregation or for spiritual development—or was it for a “secular” purpose—virtually everything else, from basic needs to health to the environment and international aid. For example, gifts to the United Way, Catholic Charities, and Jewish federations, for example, often were viewed as functionally identical: after all, all three gifts are to combined-purpose organizations. Yet an important consideration—that two of these three organizations have religious ties—all too often has been lost.

Beyond congregational giving, *Connected to Give: Faith Communities* sharpens the focus to make a distinction between non-congregational charitable organizations that are not religiously identified, and those that are. This report not only distinguishes among organizations that are, or are not, religiously identified; it also documents that donors frequently give to both types of organizations rather than just to one or the other. This finer-tuned lens reveals a landscape of charitable giving that takes multiple dimensions into account: not just the purpose of the work, but the nature (religious or not) of the organization receiving donations, and the donor's religious or spiritual orientation and key motivations for giving.

This report offers an initial portrait of the interplay among these three important dimensions. To be sure, a focus on outcomes and impact—the what of the good work donors and nonprofits seek to do—are critical to sustaining and advancing our efforts. However, our findings are an important reminder that the *how* (organizational identities) and the *why* (donor motivations) play an important part in shaping that *what*. One thing is clear: Americans who see religious identity and religious values as an important factor in their decision-making are strongly connected to give.

*Lee Meyerhoff Hendler, Alicia Schuyler Oberman, and Douglas Bitonti Stewart*  
Baltimore, Chicago, and Detroit  
November 25, 2013

## WHAT'S IN A TERM?

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Academic and third sector literature reflects a variety of terms to describe religiously identified organizations, including faith-based organizations (FBOs), faith-based nonprofit organizations (FNOs), religious nongovernmental organizations (RNGOs and RINGOs), and noncongregational religious organizations. Definitions of these terms sometimes turn on whether the organization engages in explicitly religious activity as part of its mission or whether the organization is formally connected to a specific faith community.

There are fewer terms used to describe organizations that are not religiously identified. Some authors use “secular” or “non-sectarian” but these are imprecise, and “secular” has frequently been used to describe all organizations, religious or otherwise, that are not congregations. Others write of non-congregational non-religious organizations.

In *Connected to Give: Faith Communities*, we propose “religiously identified organizations” (RIOs) and “not religiously identified” organizations (NRIOs) for two main reasons. First, the terms reflect the donor’s perspective studied here. Second, the terms capture the wide range of relationships that religious identification can entail without privileging any of them. While we recognize that readers may choose to map RIOs onto FBOs, FNOs, RNGOs, RINGOs, and noncongregational religious organizations, and NRIOs onto their counterparts, we caution that the findings reported here are based entirely on respondents’ own reports of their contributions, without respect to whether or not the recipient organizations actually consider themselves to have religious orientations or ties.

## OVERVIEW

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Americans' religiosity is deeply connected with their charitable giving behavior. Beyond support for congregations, a substantial share of charitable giving goes to religiously identified organizations. Indeed, most dollars given go to organizations with religious ties, whether they are congregations or religiously identified nonprofit organizations pursuing a variety of charitable purposes. Unlike previous studies of faith and philanthropy, which have distinguished only between religious nonprofits (by which they mean congregations) and other nonprofits pursuing a variety of charitable purposes, this report separates out the latter into two distinct categories. This report differentiates giving to organizations that donors understand to have an explicit religious identity (but which are not congregations) and giving to organizations that pursue similar purposes but do not have a religious identity. Moreover, this report considers how various aspects of Americans' religious orientations may relate to religious and charitable giving. It examines giving rates across a number of religious dimensions beyond formal affiliation or non-affiliation with a religious tradition; these include self-identification as religious or spiritual, importance of religion in one's life, and attendance at religious services.

*Connected to Give: Faith Communities* is the third report in the *Connected to Give* series of publications based on nationally representative surveys, focus groups, and field research involving more than 5,000 Americans. The mission of *Connected to Give* is to provide a comprehensive examination of the charitable behavior of Americans across religious traditions. *Connected to Give: Faith Communities* presents the top-level findings and overall narrative that emerges from the National Study of American Religious Giving, which was conducted simultaneously with the National Study of American Jewish Giving. This report examines how Americans' religious identities relate to their charitable giving behavior, specifically:

- ▶ giving patterns across different types of organizations, including those with and without religious ties;
- ▶ formal and informal connections with religion and spirituality;
- ▶ key demographics; and
- ▶ motivations for giving by religious tradition.

This examination of giving is the first of its kind, offering practitioners and scholars a fresh look at how religious and non-affiliated Americans make choices about charitable giving. By considering the religious identifications of the organizations receiving donations, and not just the religious orientations of the donors providing the donations, we offer a deeper perspective on the relationship between religious identity and charitable giving in the United States.

# KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

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1



**The majority of American charitable giving goes to organizations with religious ties: congregations as well as religiously identified organizations pursuing a variety of charitable purposes.**

73% of American giving goes to organizations that are explicitly identified as religious: 41% to congregations and 32% to religiously identified organizations (RIOs).

2



**While most charitable dollars fund organizations with religious ties, more Americans give to organizations that are not religiously identified than to congregations or to religiously identified organizations.**

In 2012, 63% of all Americans contributed to congregations or charitable organizations. The median amount given was \$660. Donors gave the highest median amount to congregations and lower median amounts to charitable organizations.

3



**For most charitable purposes, donors make contributions both to religiously identified organizations and to organizations that are not religiously identified, rather than only to one type or the other.**

Whether they give to organizations with or without religious ties, Americans who make charitable donations are most likely to do so to basic needs or combined-purpose organizations, to health care organizations, or to educational organizations.

4



**Americans with religious or spiritual orientations give at higher rates primarily because they give more to organizations with religious ties.**

Differences between religiously affiliated and non-affiliated Americans in giving rates to organizations that are not religiously identified (NRIOs) are much smaller than differences in giving rates to congregations and RIOs.

5



**Americans affiliated with different religious traditions give at similar rates to one another.**

Among Americans affiliated with the five largest religious groups analyzed in this report—Black Protestants, Evangelical Protestants, Jews, Mainline Protestants, and Roman Catholics—there are no statistically significant differences in giving rates, except that Jews give at lower rates to congregations.



6



**When it comes to religious identity and giving, demographic categories like income and age resist generalization.**

While giving increases with age to congregations and NRIOs, income-related increases in giving are strongest primarily for NRIOs.

7



**Among Americans who give, more than half say their commitment to religion is an important or very important motivation for charitable giving; clear majorities give because they believe that they can achieve change or make an impact and that those who have more should help those with less.**

Fewer donors are motivated to give to meet social expectations, but motivations related to moral values are important to all groups.

# 1

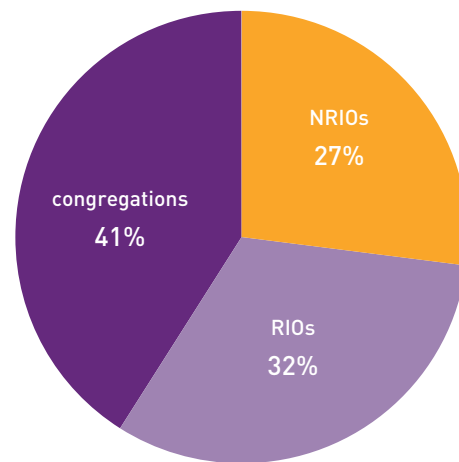


## KEY FINDING 1

### **The majority of Americans' charitable giving goes to organizations with religious ties: congregations as well as religiously identified organizations pursuing a variety of charitable purposes.**

Nearly three quarters of Americans' charitable giving—73%—goes to organizations with religious ties. These organizations fall into two types: congregations and religiously identified organizations (RIOs). Congregations and ministries pursuing specifically religious purposes receive 41% of contributions from American households, more than for any other single purpose. RIOs, along with organizations that are not religiously identified (NRIOs), pursue a wide variety of charitable purposes, from basic needs, health care, and education to civic and social advocacy. RIOs and NRIOs receive similar proportions of Americans' charitable funds: 32% goes to RIOs, while 27% goes to NRIOs.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Distribution of giving to congregations, RIOs, and NRIOs**



Perhaps not surprising, donors who make gifts to congregations, specifically, allocate the majority of their overall charitable dollars (80%) to organizations with religious ties (48% to congregations and 32% to RIOs). However, even among donors making gifts for non-religious purposes, the majority of their charitable dollars (69%) supports organizations with religious ties: congregations (39%) plus RIOs (30%).

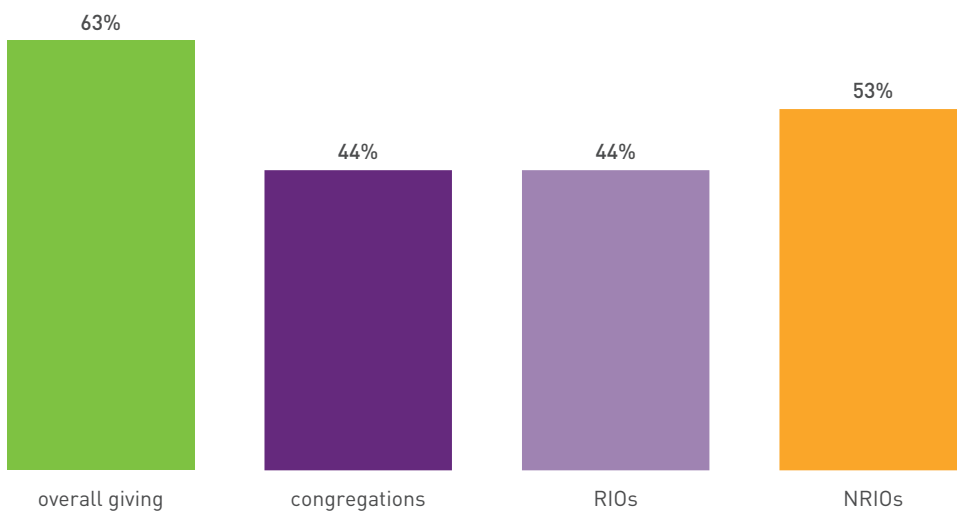
## KEY FINDING 2

**While most charitable dollars fund organizations with religious ties, more Americans give to organizations that are not religiously identified than to congregations or to religiously identified organizations.**

63% of all Americans contributed to congregations or charitable organizations in 2012, with a median gift amount of \$660. Americans contributed a median gift amount of \$375 to congregations, and \$150 to religiously identified organizations (RIOs). Among those giving to organizations that are not religiously identified (NRIOs), the median gift amount was \$250.<sup>2</sup>

Majorities of Americans give to organizations with and without religious ties. 55% give to some type of organization with religious ties—either a congregation or a RIO—and 33% give to both congregations and RIOs. 53% give to support NRIOs.

### Percentage of Americans who give to all types of organizations



# 3



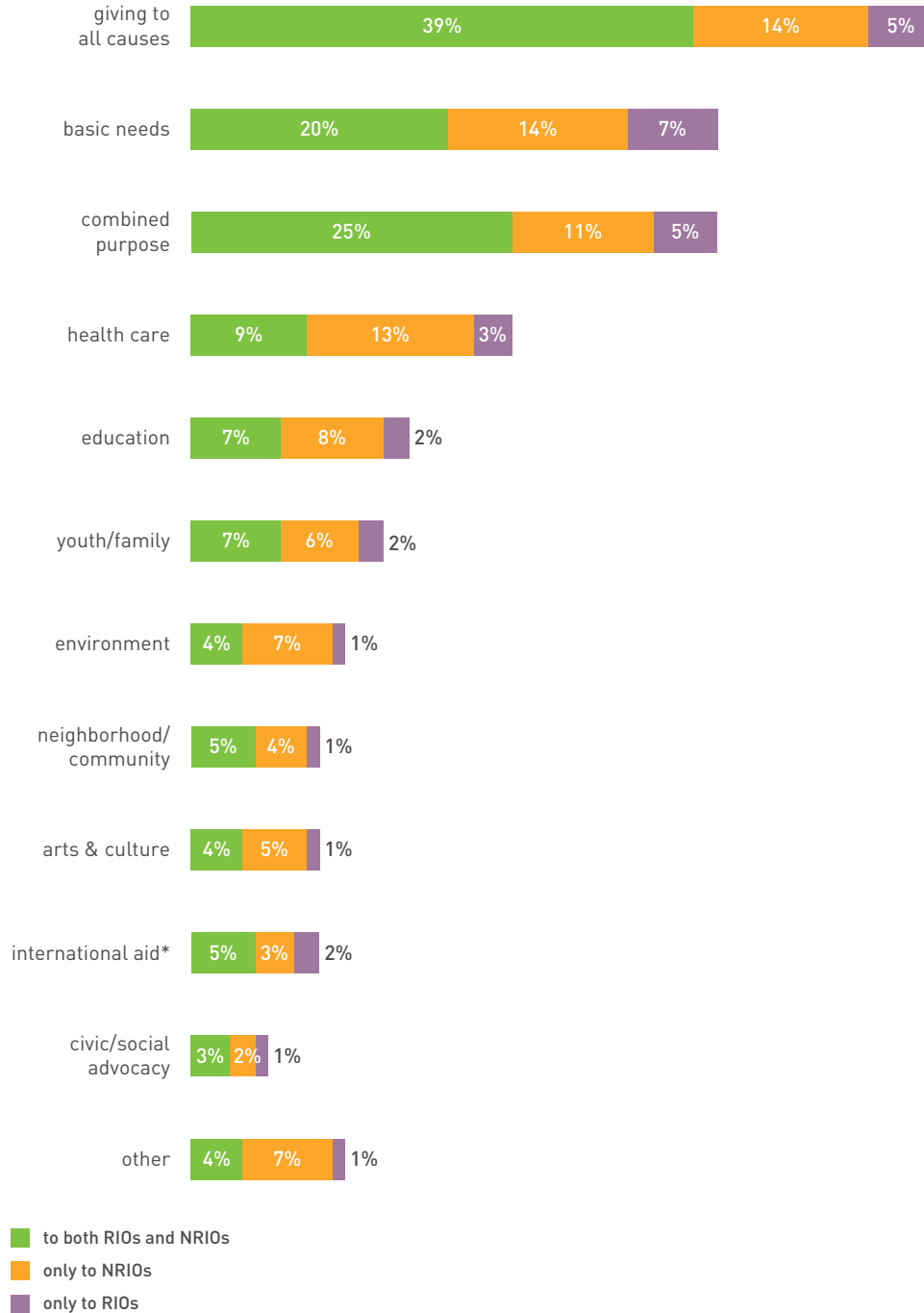
## KEY FINDING 3

**For most charitable purposes, donors make contributions to both religiously identified organizations and organizations that are not religiously identified, rather than only to one type or the other.**

Across all charitable purposes overall, Americans tend to choose to give to both RIOs and NRIOs (39%), rather than only to RIOs (5%) or to NRIOs (14%). Donors to combined purposes, international aid, basic needs, neighborhood/community, civic/social, and youth/family purposes give to both RIOs and NRIOs at higher rates than exclusively to either type of organization. Donors to health care, education, environment, and arts prefer to give to NRIOs.

More Americans give to support basic needs or combined-purpose organizations<sup>3</sup> (RIOs and NRIOs combined) than any other charitable purpose. Overall, 41% give to support basic needs, and the same proportion give to combined-purpose organizations. Following giving in support of basic needs and combined-purpose organizations, Americans give to health care and educational organizations at the highest rates (RIOs and NRIOs combined).

## Percentage of Americans who give to all types of organizations by cause



\* Does not include giving to Israel-related organizations (to which 11% of Americans give)

# 4



## KEY FINDING 4

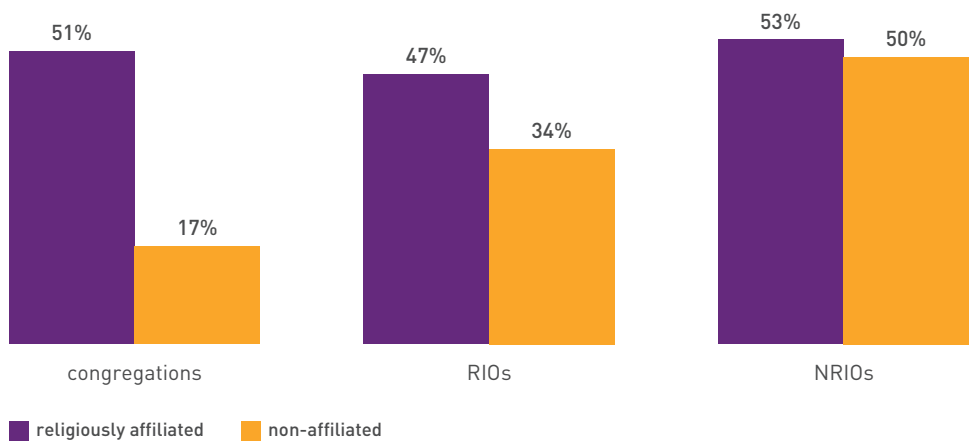
### Americans with religious or spiritual orientations give at higher rates primarily because they give more to organizations with religious ties.

Religious orientation—through affiliation, being religious or spiritual, or ascribing importance to religion—is statistically significantly associated with giving to congregations and religiously identified organizations (RIOs). Religious orientation, however, is not as strongly related to giving to organizations that are not religiously affiliated (NRIOs).

80% of Americans formally identify with a religious tradition (the “affiliated”).<sup>4</sup> Among these Americans, 65% make contributions to congregations or to charitable organizations. Among Americans who do not formally identify with a religion (the “non-affiliated”), 56% do so—a 9-percentage-point difference.<sup>5</sup>

This 9-percentage-point difference is due largely to contributions from affiliated Americans to organizations with religious ties. Affiliated Americans are statistically significantly more likely to contribute to organizations with religious ties—giving to congregations at an overall ratio of three to one to non-affiliated Americans. The affiliated also give to RIOs at a higher rate (47%) than do the non-affiliated (34%). Differences between religiously affiliated and non-affiliated Americans in giving rates to NRIOs are much smaller than differences in giving rates to congregations and RIOs.

### Percentage of religiously affiliated and non-affiliated Americans who give to all types of organizations



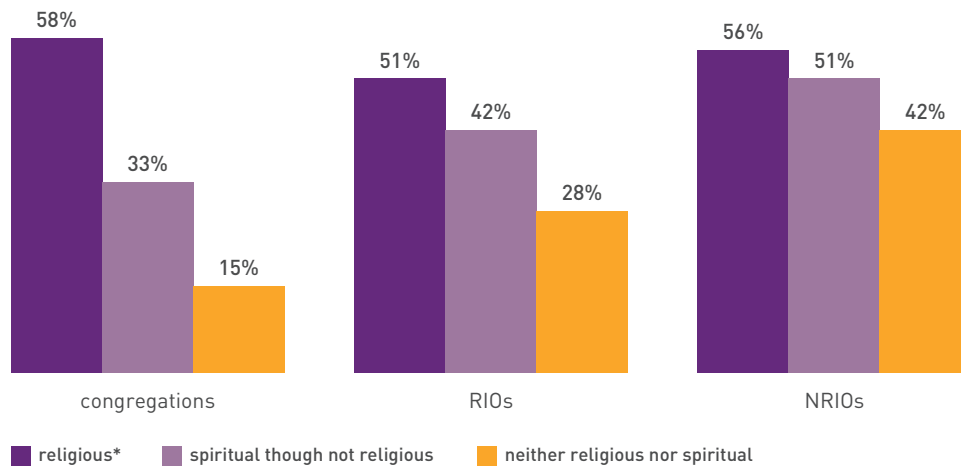
## Religiosity and spirituality

Regardless of whether they affiliate with a specific religious tradition, 60% percent of Americans think of themselves as religious, and 18% think of themselves as spiritual though not religious.<sup>6</sup> 22% of Americans think of themselves as neither religious nor spiritual. Giving rates are generally higher among those who think of themselves as religious and next highest among those who think of themselves as spiritual though not religious.

Americans who consider themselves religious give at higher rates to congregations and RIOs than do Americans who consider themselves spiritual though not religious. These two groups, however, give at similar rates to NRIOs.

Americans who think of themselves as either religious or spiritual give to congregations, RIOs, and NRIOs at higher rates than do Americans who report being neither religious nor spiritual.

### Percentage of Americans who give to all types of organizations by self-identified religiosity and spirituality

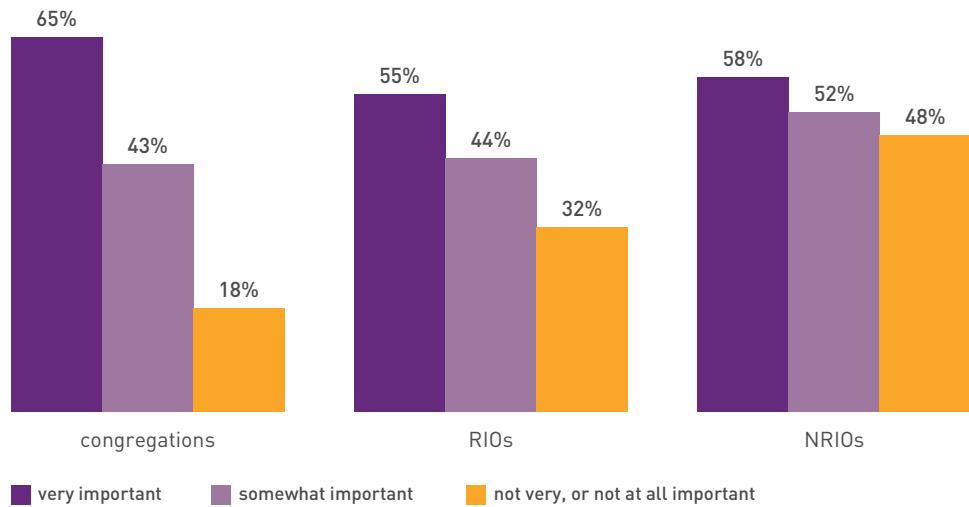


\* Includes the 4% who consider themselves religious though not spiritual

## Importance of religion

The level of importance Americans place on religion is connected to whether one gives. 41% of Americans report that religion is very important to them, while 25% report that religion is somewhat important to them. Among these groups, 74% and 60%, respectively, make contributions to congregations or charitable organizations. The giving rate among Americans for whom religion is not important is 52%.<sup>7</sup>

### Percentage of Americans who give to all types of organizations by importance of religion



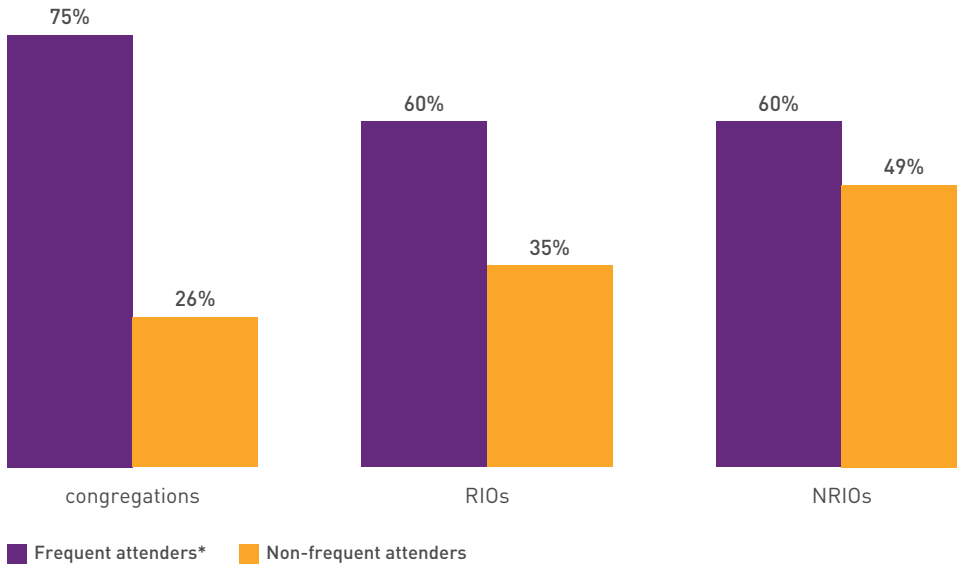
Americans who place at least some importance on religion give at a higher rate to congregations and RIOs than do Americans who report that religion is not important to them. The importance of religion, however, is not as strongly related to giving to NRIOs. Americans who report that religion is very important to them give to NRIOs at the highest rate, but that rate is not statistically significantly different from that of Americans who report that religion is somewhat important to them.

## Attendance at religious services

Frequency of attendance at religious services is positively associated with the likelihood of giving—especially to organizations with religious ties. Of the 36% of Americans who attend religious services at least once per month (“frequent attenders”), 79% make contributions to congregations or charitable organizations. The giving rate to congregations or charitable organizations drops to 55% among those who attend religious services less frequently or not at all (“infrequent attenders”).



## Percentage of Americans who give to congregations, RIOs, and NRIOs, by religious service attendance



\*Among married/partnered respondents, both respondent and spouse/partner are frequent attenders

The difference in giving rates to congregations and RIOs between frequent and infrequent attenders is large, while the difference in giving rates to NRIOs between these two groups is far smaller. Among frequent attenders, 75% make contributions to congregations and 60% make contributions to RIOs. Only 26% and 35% of infrequent attenders, respectively, make such contributions. Frequent attenders give at a statistically significantly higher rate to NRIOs than do infrequent attenders.

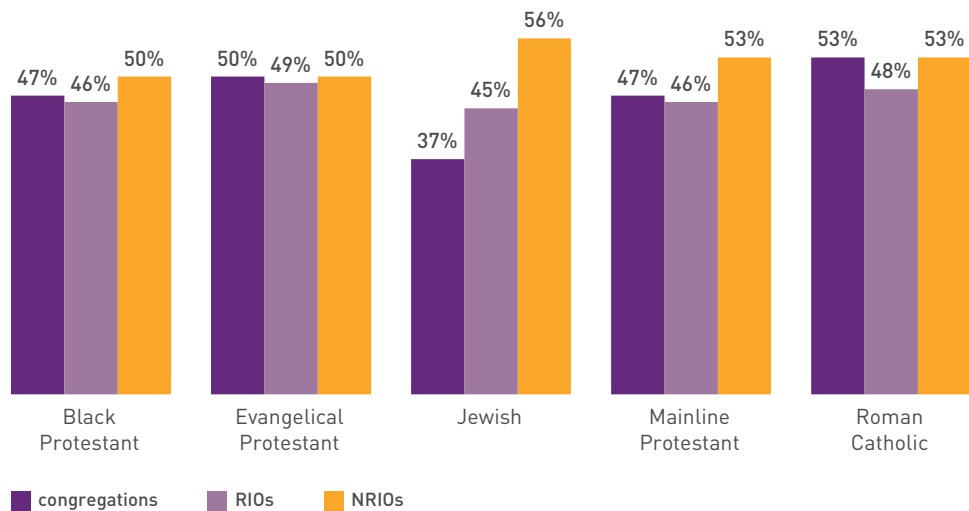
## KEY FINDING 5

### Americans affiliated with different religious traditions give at similar rates to one another.

There are important demographic and socio-economic differences among Americans affiliated with different religious groups.<sup>8</sup> Taking these into account, among affiliates of the five largest religious groups analyzed in this report—Black Protestants, Evangelical Protestants, Jews, Mainline Protestants, and Roman Catholics—there are no significant differences in giving rates to congregations and charitable organizations overall, except that Jews give at lower rates to congregations.<sup>9</sup>



### Percentage of Americans who give to all types of organizations by religious tradition



Because affiliated Americans give to RIOs at a higher rate than do non-affiliated Americans, as noted in Key Finding 4, they tend to give at higher overall rates to basic needs, international aid, and social advocacy organizations. There is some evidence, albeit a little weaker, that affiliated Americans give at higher rates to combined purpose organizations. There are no differences in giving rates to organizations pursuing other purposes.

Americans across different religious traditions give similarly across all charitable purposes, with a small number of exceptions where affiliates of certain religious traditions give at higher rates (relative to the non-affiliated):

basic needs	Evangelical Protestants, Jews
civic and social advocacy	Black Protestants, Jews, Mainline Protestants
combined purpose	Roman Catholics
environment	Jews
health	Jews
international aid*	Jews
neighborhood and community improvement	Black Protestants, Jews

\*does not include giving to Israel-related organizations

For other charitable purposes—arts and culture, education, and youth and family services—there are no statistically significant differences in giving rates between affiliates of these different religious traditions and those who are not religiously affiliated.

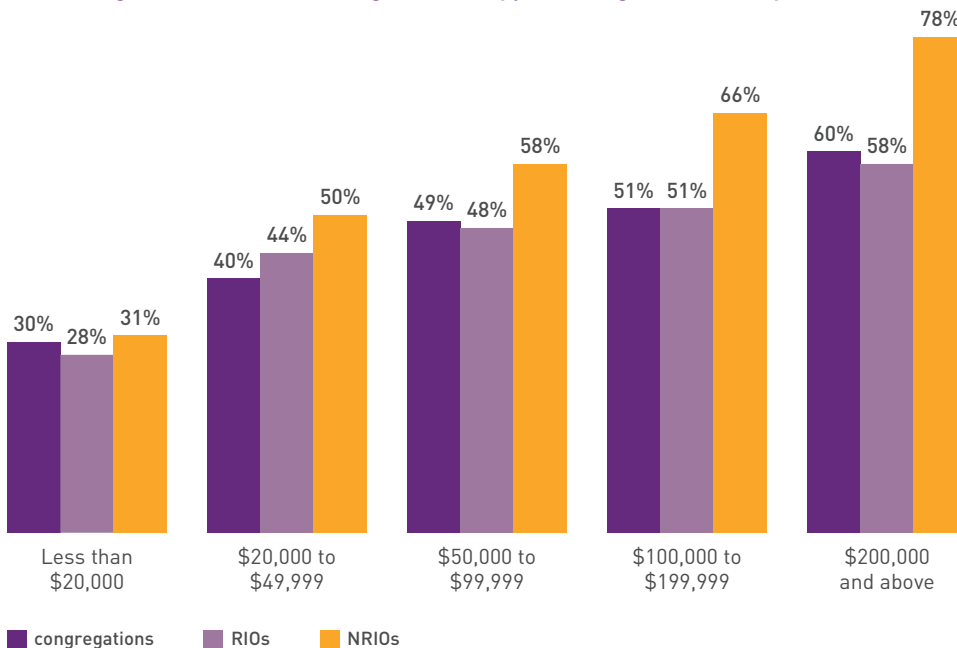
## KEY FINDING 6

### When it comes to religious identity and giving, demographic categories like income and age resist generalization.

Many studies have demonstrated that the likelihood of giving increases with income. However, these relationships differ when giving is separated by type of organization—congregations, RIOs, or NRIOs. As household income increases, the largest rises in giving rates are to NRIOs.

Lower-income Americans give to congregations, RIOs, and NRIOs at relatively consistent rates. Giving rates to congregations and to RIOs are similar between Americans with household incomes of \$50,000–\$100,000 and \$100,000 and above. Both of these groups are more likely to give to congregations and RIOs than are Americans with household incomes below \$50,000. Americans with household incomes above \$100,000 are more likely to give to NRIOs than are those with lower household incomes.

#### Percentage of Americans who give to all types of organizations by income

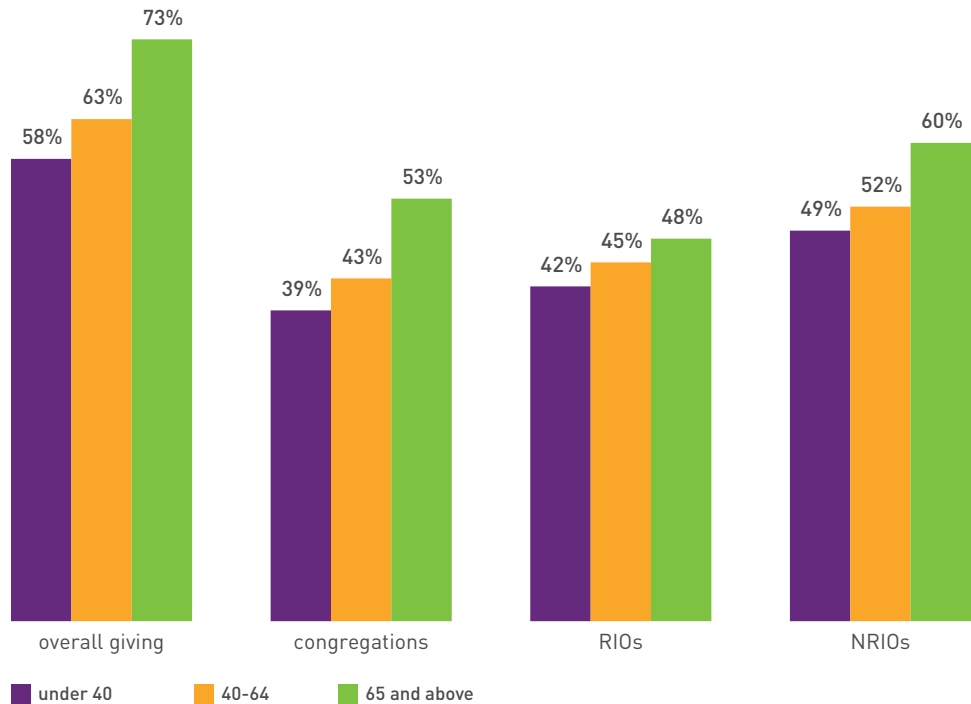


While household incomes generally increase as people advance at work and, in many cases, establish two-income households, there are some associations between income and giving independent of age. Among people less than 40 years old, higher incomes are associated with higher giving rates to congregations and to NRIOs. Among households with lower incomes, giving rates to congregations increase with age.



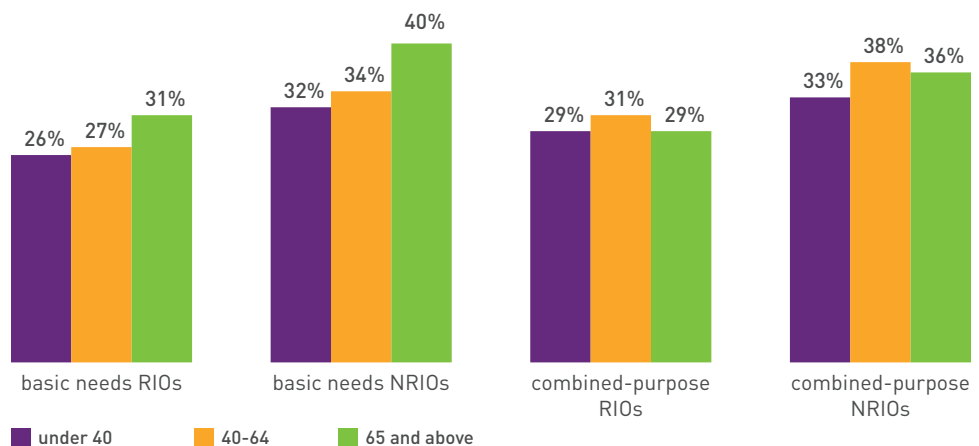
Americans' giving rates to RIOs are similar across age groups. However, giving to congregations and NRIOs increases with age. Americans 65 and older are more likely to give to congregations and to NRIOs than are those 64 and younger.

### Percentage of Americans who give to all types of organizations by age



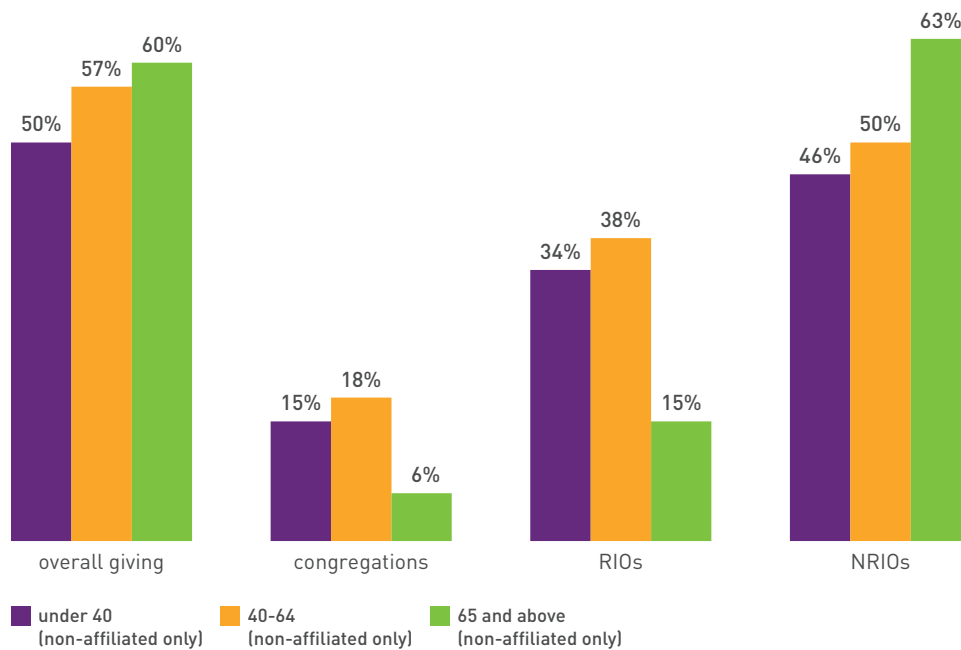
With respect to specific purposes, Americans of all age groups, especially those 65 and older, give at higher rates to congregations than to basic needs and combined-purpose RIOs—the two categories most popular among all Americans. However, there are no statistically significant age-related differences in giving to basic needs or combined-purpose RIOs, nor to combined-purpose NRIOs.

### Percentage of Americans, by age, who give to combined-purpose RIOs & NRIOs and basic needs RIOs & NRIOs



The relationship between age and giving appears to interact with religious affiliation.<sup>10</sup> Americans under 64 who are affiliated with a religious tradition are less likely than those over 64 to give to congregations and NRIOs. However, while non-affiliated Americans under 64 are also less likely than those over 64 to give to NRIOs, they are more than twice as likely to give to congregations and RIOs—indeed, 34% of non-affiliated Americans under 40 gave to a RIO in 2012, compared with 15% of those 65 and older. Non-affiliated Americans under 65 give to combined-purpose RIOs at more than twice the rate of those 65 and older. However, non-affiliated Americans 65 and older give to basic needs NRIOs at higher rates than those under 40 or 40-64.

**Percentage of non-affiliated Americans, by age, who give to congregations, RIOs, and NRIOs**



# 7



## KEY FINDING 7

**Among Americans who give, more than half say their commitment to religion is an important or very important motivation for charitable giving; clear majorities give because they believe that they can achieve change or make an impact and that those who have more should help those with less.**

Moral values, religious commitments, and social expectations all factor into motivations for giving. However, the relative importance of each varies within the different religious traditions. Overall, Americans are motivated to give because they feel they should help others who have less (55%) and that they can make change and impact through their giving (57%).<sup>11</sup> 55% of Americans are driven to give through their commitment to their religious affiliation. Far fewer are motivated to give because of work expectations, because they were asked by a friend or associate, or because it is an expectation within their social network.

The motivations for giving we asked about fall into three distinct, though still inter-correlated, groupings:

- ▶ moral values: make the world a better place; help those with less; give back; achieve change or impact; meet needs or support causes; respond to disaster
- ▶ social expectations: giving is expected in my social network; I was asked by a friend; giving helps in my work life
- ▶ religious: commitment to my religious affiliation; improve religious life and religious community

For non-affiliated Americans, moral values to give are much more important than social expectations. For affiliated Americans, all three types of motivations are apparent, but at different levels within different religious groups. Social expectations for giving are somewhat more important among Black Protestants, Jews, and Roman Catholics. Religious motivations are somewhat more important for Black Protestants and Evangelical Protestants. Moral values are important within each group.

When it comes to overall motivation patterns, the two religious groups most similar to one another overall are Jews and Roman Catholics. In general, Black Protestants are much more likely than other Americans to describe any particular motivation as important or very important, while Mainline Protestants are somewhat less likely to do so. Other key findings on motivations for giving by religious affiliation include the following:

- ▶ Black Protestants are motivated to give by making the world a better place, achieving change and impact, helping those with less, and religious affiliation.
- ▶ Evangelical Protestants are motivated by religious affiliation, helping those with less, giving back, making the world a better place, and achieving change and impact.

- ▶ Jews are motivated to give more by helping those with less, making the world a better place, giving back, and achieving change and impact.
- ▶ Mainline Protestants are motivated by achieving change and impact, making the world a better place, and giving back.
- ▶ Roman Catholics are motivated by helping those with less, giving back, and a desire to live up to values instilled in them by their parents and grandparents.
- ▶ Americans who are not affiliated with a formal religious tradition are motivated by achieving change and impact and helping those with less.<sup>12</sup>

**Affiliated and non-affiliated Americans saying “extremely important” or “very important” to the following:**

	all donors	non-affiliated	Black Protestant	Evangelical Protestant	Jewish	Mainline Protestant	Roman Catholic
feeling that those who have more should help those with less	55%	51%	73%	56%	58%	46%	61%
a belief that my charitable giving will help make the world a better place	52%	44%	78%	54%	58%	51%	54%
the feeling that I am fortunate and want to give back to society	53%	41%	68%	55%	57%	50%	60%
a belief that my charitable giving can achieve change or bring about a desired impact	57%	55%	75%	57%	56%	58%	54%
a desire to meet critical needs in the community and support worthwhile causes	48%	41%	63%	47%	54%	46%	53%
a desire to support an organization that benefitted me or someone close to me	43%	38%	56%	40%	52%	43%	48%
a desire to live up to values instilled in me by my parents or grandparents	46%	34%	58%	50%	50%	38%	57%
a spontaneous reaction to help people in an immediate disaster, such as an earthquake or hurricane	43%	32%	55%	44%	48%	39%	47%
a desire to set an example for children, future generations, my community, or my social network	48%	42%	63%	50%	48%	46%	49%
a commitment to support the same causes or organizations on a regular basis	41%	33%	44%	45%	45%	38%	45%
a commitment to being [religious affiliation]	55%	n/a	74%	67%	45%	46%	49%
a belief that my giving will help improve [religious affiliation] life and the [religious affiliation] community*	46%	n/a	65%	50%	43%	38%	46%
the desire to leave a lasting legacy	26%	18%	47%	20%	29%	23%	32%
the understanding that giving is expected within my social network	22%	13%	35%	20%	27%	18%	27%
being asked to give by a friend or associate	23%	18%	33%	20%	27%	22%	29%
charitable giving can help me in my work life	21%	15%	45%	18%	24%	20%	23%

\* Respondents saw the term corresponding to their stated religious affiliation.

## CONCLUSION

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The research presented here challenges widely held assumptions about the role of religion and religious identity in charitable giving. Despite the wide availability of research on faith-based organizations and religious nongovernmental organizations, until now there has been no research on whether such distinctions are relevant to charitable donors. The answer is clearly in the affirmative.

To be sure, the importance of religious orientation in giving to congregations long has been established. However, this report offers not only clear evidence of a powerful presence for religiously identified charitable organizations (RIOs), but also every indication of the importance of such organizations. Moreover, the religious identification of charitable organizations matters not just to religious donors, but to other donors as well. Even for organizations that consider themselves “secular” or “non-sectarian” (that is, NRIOs), religious motivations and meanings likely are important to two thirds of their donors.

While this is just the first foray into research of this kind, three implications are clear. First, NRIOs might consider how to diversify and segment their stakeholder base, explicitly making more room for those with religious motivations alongside people who do not consider themselves religious. Second, RIOs seeking support from non-religious donors might think about benchmarking their outcomes in the context of NRIOs in the same field, rather than within religious community frameworks. RIOs also might consider how they communicate with people who are not traditionally or conventionally religious. Third, the American nonprofit and philanthropic sector would benefit from greater attention and sensitivity to the connection between religious identity and charitable giving, especially in professional education and training.

In the coming months, the *Connected to Give* series will develop its exploration of findings from the National Study of American Religious Giving and the National Study of American Jewish Giving. As the very meanings of religious identity continue to transform, *Connected to Give* will highlight both tradition and innovation, autonomy and community, with the aim of offering promising new outlooks on charitable giving in America.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Giving USA Foundation™ (2013) estimates that 32% of all charitable giving (from foundations, corporations, individuals/households, and bequests combined) went to congregations in 2012. Our estimate of 41% refers only to household giving. Also, every estimate has a margin of error. The margin of error for this estimate is ±8%.

<sup>2</sup> These median dollar amounts reflect only those Americans who gave more than \$0 to these organizations.

<sup>3</sup> Combined-purpose organizations, such as United Ways, Catholic Charities, the Salvation Army, Jewish federations, and local community foundations, allocate donor contributions to a combination of different purposes. Much, though not all, of the work of combined-purpose organizations is to help people with basic needs and to provide youth and family services (see Rooney and Brown, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Respondents were asked to identify their religious tradition and/or denomination, or to note if they were “something else,” atheist, agnostic, or “nothing in particular.” We collapsed participants’ responses to this question into six categories: Black Protestant, Roman Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, Jewish, Mainline Protestant, and the non-affiliated. Jewish results reflect responses to the simultaneous National Study of American Jewish Giving. Non-affiliated Americans include those who identified as agnostic, atheist, or nothing in particular. Due to the small number of respondents within specific religious groups, findings regarding Buddhists, Hindus, Mormons, Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Sikhs, and members of many other smaller religious groups are not discussed here. However, they are included in results concerning Americans overall giving patterns. These religious and non-affiliated categories follow approaches used by academic scholars and the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life and capture the majority of Americans’ objective religious identities. See Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2007; Steensland *et al.*, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> When comparing giving rates between people with different characteristics—in this case affiliated or non-affiliated—we hold demographic and socio-economic characteristics constant. Therefore, the differences in giving rates we report are not due to confounding differences in age, marital status, family size, race, ethnicity, income, or education.

<sup>6</sup> Only 4% of Americans consider themselves to be religious though not spiritual. This group was combined with those who consider themselves as religious and spiritual to form the group we call “religious.” Questions on spirituality and religiosity were not asked of respondents in American Jewish households, who completed the separate National Study of American Jewish Giving. 12% of non-Jewish Americans indicated that they were not affiliated and neither religious nor spiritual.

<sup>7</sup> Non-affiliated NSARG respondents were not asked the question about the importance of religion.

<sup>8</sup> Demographic and socio-economic variations matter when considering simple differences between religious groups. As the table below demonstrates, without demographic and socio-economic controls, giving rates to religious and charitable organizations do vary by religious group:

**Percentage of Americans who give to religious and charitable organizations, by affiliation (without controls)**

Black Protestants	61%
Evangelical Protestants	64%
Jews	76%
Mainline Protestants	67%
Roman Catholics	68%
non-affiliated	46%
all Americans	63%

<sup>9</sup> Taking income, education, and other demographic variables into account, 37% of American Jews give to congregations. Even without controls, Jews give at lower rates to congregations: 39% give to Jewish congregations and 44% give to congregations of any kind.

<sup>10</sup> Interaction analyses necessarily produce estimates with larger margins of error.

<sup>11</sup> Results in this section are simple descriptions, without statistical controls.

<sup>12</sup> Non-affiliated respondents were not asked the questions about religious motivations to give.

## AFTERWORD

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*Connected to Give* clearly demonstrates that a donor's identification with any religious tradition increases charitable giving—and not just to the organizations identified with a donor's particular religious or spiritual orientation. While congregational giving remains a cornerstone of giving for religiously identified Americans, the more connected they are to their own faith community, the more likely they are to support a wide variety of charitable causes.

One key implication of these findings, for all types of charitable organizations, whether or not they have religious ties, is the potential importance of paying attention to the religious orientations of their donors. Religiously identified organizations may wish to find ways to connect with donors who may support the work that they do even if they do not share a particular religious orientation. And organizations that think of themselves as non-sectarian may find that acknowledging the faith-based commitments that motivate donors' financial support may engage and energize them even more.

As noted in the preface to the first report in this series, 21st-century philanthropy depends on “innovation, collaboration, and impact by both established institutions serving traditional core priorities and by new nonprofit startups advancing creative alternative paths to ...engagement and action.” It is clear from the findings described here that alongside congregations, religiously identified organizations of all traditions have an important role to play in making that happen. In doing so, they help ensure that all Americans are *connected to give*.

LHM, ASO, & DBS

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## METHODS

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*Note: please visit [connectedtogive.org](http://connectedtogive.org) for an expanded discussion of the Connected to Give research methods and a more complete reference list.*

The key findings for *Connected to Give: Faith Communities* were derived from analysis of two surveys: the National Study of American Religious Giving (NSARG) and the National Study of American Jewish Giving (NSAJG). Both surveys were conducted in winter 2013 and assessed respondents' 2012 giving behaviors. Analysis of the data was conducted jointly by researchers at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and Jumpstart.

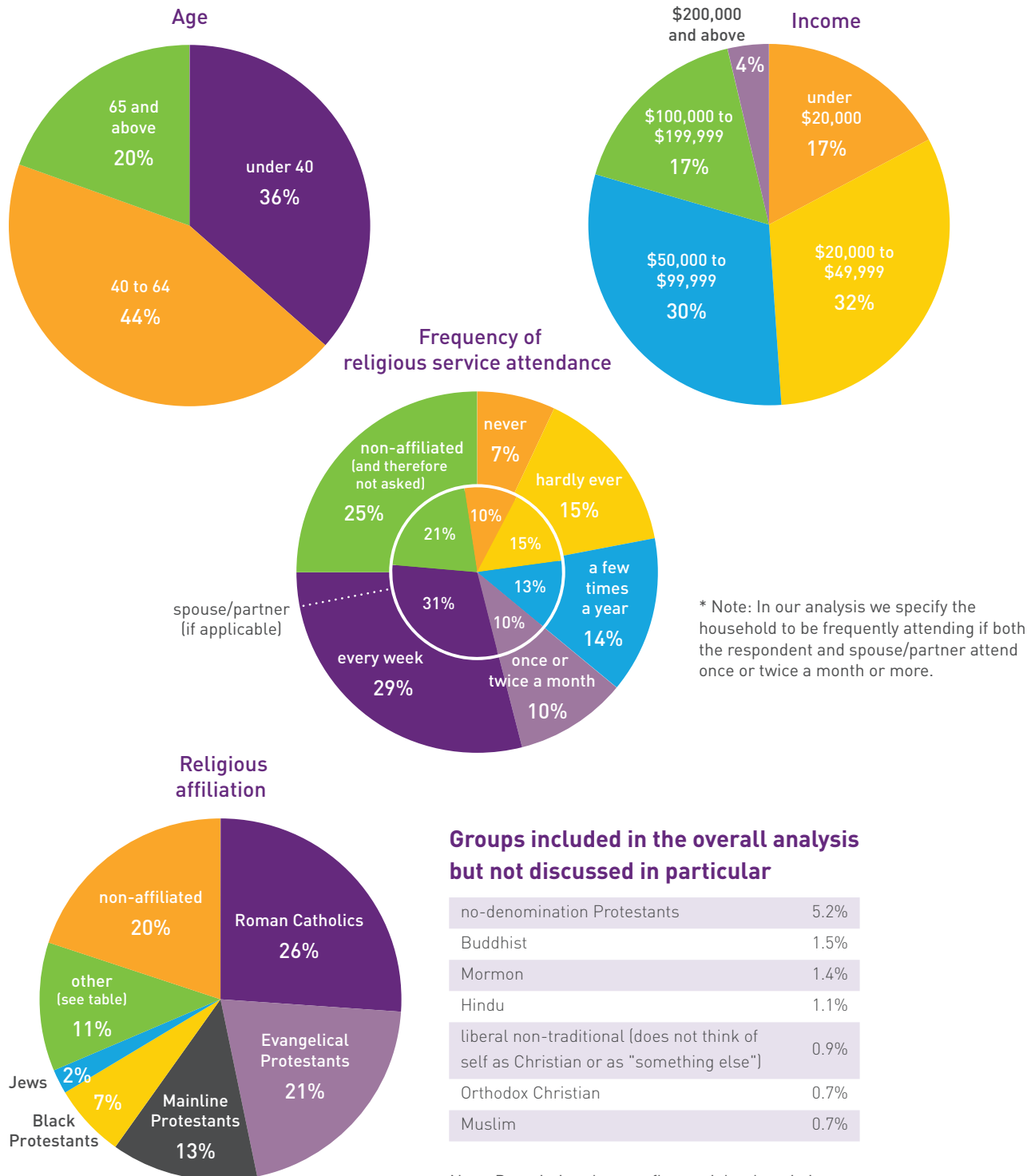
The NSARG and NSAJG surveys were administered by email invitation to web-based panels hosted by Mountain West Research Center, a division of Survey Sampling International. The panel, which is regularly updated and consists of nearly 900,000 Americans, has been compiled through a mixture of consumer databases, recruitment through random digit dialing, and internet advertising. The NSARG surveyed 1,951 non-Jews in non-Jewish households, including an oversample of households with incomes of \$100,000 and higher. The NSAJG surveyed 2,911 American Jewish households, including an oversample of households with incomes of \$100,000 and higher. Mixed households of Jews and non-Jews are included in the NSAJG; other mixed households not containing Jews are included in the NSARG.

The Jewish survey results were weighted using targets derived from the 2001 National Jewish Population Study (United States) and the 2011 New York Jewish Population Study (Westchester, New York City and Long Island). The NSARG results were weighted using U.S. Census targets. For the combined NSARG/NSAJG sample used in this report we scale the weights from the two surveys so that in the combined sample Jews account for 2.2% of the American adult population. This approach is consistent with recent estimates.

The survey instrument used to measure giving largely replicated Indiana University's biennial Philanthropy Panel Study (PPS) and the Bank of America Studies of High Net Worth Philanthropy. Indiana University's giving instrument, first fielded in 2001 as a module within the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, serves as the benchmark measure for American charitable giving. The instrument used to measure affiliation with religious traditions replicated the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2007).

The estimates of giving rates from the combined NSARG/NSAJG sample closely match rates estimated from the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy Panel Study (PPS). Estimates of the average amount given to congregations and charitable organizations combined are also close.

In the comparisons of giving rates between people with different characteristics reported in Key Findings 4, 5, and 6 (unless otherwise noted in this report), using multiple regression methods, we statistically control the demographic and socio-economic differences between people. Specifically, the comparisons of giving rates hold constant: age, marital status, the number of children living at home, race, ethnicity, region, education, 2012 total household income, and subjective financial situation.



Note: Descriptive charts reflect weighted statistics.

## CONNECTED TO GIVE CONSORTIUM

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## ABOUT JUMPSTART

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Jumpstart is a philanthropic research & design lab based in Los Angeles. Jumpstart's unique combination of research, convenings, and funding enables creative changemakers—philanthropists and institutional leaders alike—to realize their own visions and advance the common good. Funders turn to Jumpstart for analysis and forecasting based on original research reports such as *The Innovation Ecosystem* (2009), *Haskalah 2.0* (2010), *The 2010 Survey of New Jewish Initiatives in Europe: Key Findings* (2010), *The Jewish Innovation Economy* (2011), and the *Connected to Give* report series (2013). For funders seeking to achieve collective impact, Jumpstart designs and facilitates highly collaborative summits that connect, inform, and empower leaders with the capacity to create meaningful change in their communities. Through fiscal sponsorship and other funding vehicles, Jumpstart delivers resources to new initiatives that are reshaping community life around the world. For more information, please visit [jumpstartlabs.org](http://jumpstartlabs.org) or email [connect@jumpstartlabs.org](mailto:connect@jumpstartlabs.org).

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