

# THE FIRST MONDAY REPORT

## **Thoughts on Fund Raising for Campus Ministry**

April, 2006

### **“Cultural Dimensions of Fund Raising”**

We have talked in earlier First Monday Reports about the generational differences in dealing with money. We noted that those born during the Great Depression were more likely to save than to spend, and more likely to support larger causes than local ones. We also noted that Boomers liked to spend and enjoy, even if it ran up significant debt. And we observed that this particular generation of young adults is becoming more conservative again, perhaps learning from the mistakes of their elders, although they definitely prefer to give to personal, local causes.

Let's take this concept of money and culture in another important direction. It is generally understood that most philanthropic models are built on typical “white male” styles and preferences of giving. Obviously this is both inaccurate and unfair. Some of the most conscientious, generous, and faithful stewardship of God's good gifts have been at the center of non-white cultures for generations.

#### **AFRICAN AMERICAN**

For example, it is reported that when Marian Anderson and boxer Jack Johnson Armstrong visited the Twin Cities in the 1920s and 1930s, they contributed to and benefited from black philanthropy.<sup>1</sup> They were not allowed at that time to stay in many hotels or perform in white-only venues. They found accommodations in family homes and settlement houses and, in return, performed for the families that welcomed them. Archie Givens, a longtime Minnesota resident, remembers family stories about these performances in places like the Phyllis Wheatley House, a safe place for Blacks who were politically, economically, and socially segregated from mainstream society prior to the civil rights movement. He reminds his readers that the kind of charitable giving provided by performers and black settlement houses is a strong tradition in the Twin Cities black community. “It's not something we aspire to do, it's something we've always done,” he says.<sup>2</sup>

In the Black community, giving is a way of life, more than a special event. Giving of time, talents, and resources have literally kept family alive and communities vital. Generous giving to churches, generating funds to pass on through wills or larger planned

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Gray and Nora Hall, *Giving Forum*, Minnesota Council of Foundations, Summer 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

gifts, and gifts in kind are all ways of building and maintaining neighborhoods and families. It may be construed as “giving back,” a way of helping others out of an appreciation of being helped. A recent study in New York states that Blacks gave more annually than any other groups of color, with churches receiving more than two-thirds of all black charitable dollars.<sup>3</sup> Atum Assahir, director of the Powderhorn Wellness Center in Minneapolis said, “My mother staunchly supported the church. When she had \$2, she gave \$1 to the church.” In the Twin Cities alone, an estimated 50 black churches and more than 100 organizations have missions to serve Black communities. Black fraternities and sororities provide college scholarships. Organizations like the Urban League support educational and economic development.

Emmet Carson, CEO of the Minneapolis Foundation, has defined three stages of black philanthropy. (1) Church and organizational giving in the 1700s and 1800s helped develop education and social programs and Black-owned businesses. (2) The work of 1960s Black and civil rights organizations initiated payroll deductions previously limited to the United Way. (3) Giving through estates by wealthy Black entertainers, sports figures, and others became more popular in the 1960s.<sup>4</sup>

A significant study of how African Americans view philanthropy was compiled recently by Alice Green Burnette, principal of Advancement Solutions in Palm Coast, Florida. Titled, “The Privilege to Ask,” the study, co-funded by the Lily Endowment and the Ford Foundation, raised up four philanthropic strengths of the African American community.<sup>5</sup>

### 1. The Long Tradition of Philanthropy

This is reported as a community-based, personal approach that is supported by several cultural traditions that could work against professional solicitations, for example, the avoidance of talking about money. “We really are not comfortable talking about our money with people we don’t know. And we certainly do not discuss any money we have with strangers, such as professional advisors,” Burnett writes.

### 2. The Impact of Faith

The church is not only an important gathering place in the Black community, it is usually the center of fundraising efforts. The plate is passed often at worship, either for someone in need or to support a cause like the United Negro College Fund. “The Black church puts the force of authority and legitimacy behind its appeals to reach givers in the Black community,” she notes. It’s what Emmet Carson calls “philanthropy among friends.”

### 3. The Results of Exclusion

Traditionally Black givers are prone to give to organizations that benefit the African American community. Many of these organizations were founded in response to exclusion, the historically Black colleges, for example. This creates an environment of discomfort between the white and Black communities, she suggests. “In the same way

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> *Philanthropy Matters*, The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, 550 West North Street, Suite 301, Indianapolis, IN

African Americans know they have been excluded, white Americans know they have excluded us.”

#### 4. Growing Capacity

Education has come to the forefront these days as a primary concern for African American donors; neediness is not the primary premise for giving. “The growing capacity of the Black community means that we should no longer be viewed as needy recipients of charity,” Burnette writes. The fact that in some states 40 percent of doctors and 35 percent of teachers come from Black colleges makes a difference.

All of these philanthropic traditions need to be viewed not as impediments, but as strengths, Burnette says. We need to affirm these strengths to do a better job of encouraging gifts in the African American community.

### **AMERICAN INDIAN**

Philanthropy in the American Indian community takes some different directions. In the distant past, as now, Native communities have learned to be wary of “gifts.” The constitutions handed out to each tribe in the early 1900s (allotments, subsidies and food commodities) were intended to “civilize,” “assimilate,” and improve Native life. Any there were often disastrous consequences. The impact of the “gifts” was generally to make the Native population more mainstream and move them away from their own customs, traditions, and lands. While this practice may have made a small difference for a generation or two, it is now known that there were long-term negative effects. Everything from diet to land stewardship was shaped by these “gift exchanges.” Margaret Noori, PhD, writes, “Giving, receiving, knowing how to share is a part of tradition. What the global economy now calls ‘philanthropy’ has roots in an ancient way of understanding how to survive. From reverent stories of the gifts of the grandfathers to ‘give-aways’ at big contest pow-wows, the importance of giving to help others is a part of life.”<sup>6</sup>

Ronald Wells writes an excellent summary in an article titled, “Native American Philanthropy.”<sup>7</sup>

For Native people indigenous to North America, *philanthropy* means “the honor of giving.” It means respecting and honoring both the giver and the recipient as essential and equal in the transaction of gift exchange. Since in life all things are related, the gift promotes balance for both participants in the exchange process and works to create harmony in the world. Giving by individuals to the community contributes to social harmony, reinforcing the interconnectedness of the members of the tribe or community with one another and with the rest of the universe. Giving by one individual to another honors the recipient, and by receiving the gift with grace and gratitude, the recipient in turn honors the giver, since the act of receiving the gift helps restore balance in the life of the giver.

A profound sense of the spiritual foundations of human and social ecology informs Native American attitudes towards giving. While the ceremonies, rituals, and philosophy of giving vary from one tribal culture to another, there is always an understanding of the principle of sharing and a broadly conceived serial reciprocity that is ultimately grounded in gratitude to the Creator for the gift of life.

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret Noori, Phd. “A New Season of Strength,” *Giving Forum*, Winter 2006.

<sup>7</sup> [www.learningtogive.org](http://www.learningtogive.org)

According to a recent study by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development,<sup>8</sup> there are several necessary efforts underway that will have a more positive impact on Native communities:

- Embrace self-determination as the overarching theme of current and future efforts to strengthen Native American families and communities.
- Be flexible and consider inter-disciplinary models of grantmaking, recognizing the diversity of context and needs among Native communities.
- Institutionalize American Indian grantmaking, making long-term commitments and increasing Native participation on staff and boards within foundations.
- Develop strategies to support traditional knowledge—Native traditions, languages, spirituality, and homelands.

For example, The Fund of the Sacred Circle is a cooperative program of Headwaters Foundation for Justice and the Wisconsin Community Fund, directed by Headwaters. Its grantmaking is aimed at grassroots groups or projects in Minnesota or Wisconsin that are engaged in social-change organizing within the Native American community and have a majority American Indian leadership. Funding decisions for the Fund of the Sacred Circle are made by Native American community activists involved in social justice on a daily basis. Projects funded address the root causes of social, racial, political, environmental and economic injustice in our society, working for systems change and social justice.

Another example is The Minnesota Community Foundation, who in partnership with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and Prairie Island Indian Community, together created Minnesota Tribal Government Foundation. The name reflects the three principal donor tribes that are federally recognized tribal governments and their commitment to helping other tribal governments in Minnesota and people living on or near reservations. "This fund is an opportunity for us to further extend our hand to Indian People across Minnesota," said Shakopee Mdewakanton chairman Stanley Crooks. "This fund is in addition to what we already give." In 2004, the three tribes gave \$11.5 million to various causes, both Native and non-Native.

Valorie Johnson (Seneca/Cayuga/Cherokee), program director at the W.K Kellogg Foundation, stresses the importance of education and youth development. She notes the way in which tribal colleges have done a better job of educating the Native community. She echoes the need to stress funding positive models for change, rather than trying to patch up things that are broken or temporary. Foundations and funding sources need to help American Indian populations "stand in the present and look to the future." "on-natives have to stop seeing Indians as relics of the past or poverty cases, and Indians need to understand the fundamental definition of a sovereign nation and cultural community," says Cris Stainbrook (Lakota).<sup>9</sup> The article concludes with the important statement, "When Native communities are perceived as rich in leadership and potential for growth, they will be in a position to not only receive, but also to begin the cycle of giving back the dividend of that investment for generations to come."

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<sup>8</sup> *The Context and Meaning of Family Strengthening in Indian America: A Report to the Annie E. Casey Foundation*, Reported in *Giving Forum*, Minnesota Council on Foundations, winter, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

## ASIAN AMERICAN

In Asian American communities philanthropy is also a centuries-old tradition. Over the years they have tended to support work with families, especially elderly, and education for youth. They see giving as repayment for community debts. Much of their philanthropy is influenced by Neo-Confucian ethics that values a reverential attitude toward human life with respect for others and a sense of social responsibility. The growth of foundations is linked to successes in technology and real estate. Family associations are an important source of giving. Compared with mainstream America, giving patterns are more focused, ethnic specific, ritualistic and institutionalized.<sup>10</sup>

Jessica Chao states, "No single form of Asian American philanthropy exists. Within the Asian-American community, philanthropy is as richly diverse as the population itself, reflecting the specific social adaptation techniques of various ethnic groups, from a variety of economic strata and from various levels of acculturation and Americanization"<sup>11</sup>

## HISPANIC

Reports indicate that currently, the Hispanic population looks to solve the immediate problems in their communities and society. Long-range planning has not been a focus in the past, but many understand it to be necessary to move forward for increased impact. Long-range planning or an establishment of endowments is something that will take a great deal of education by foundations to successfully engage the Hispanic community.

It was found that almost 63 percent of Hispanic households gave to charity in 1998, about 46 percent of Hispanics volunteered, which increased from 40 percent in 1995. It was also found that Hispanic households give primarily to religious institutions and "informally" to individuals, such as family and friends, rather than to organized charities.

Many people in the Hispanic community still have strong ties to the communities where they were originally born, and/or where they still have family. It is very common to see the money that could potentially go to non-profit organizations or foundations sent back home to aid the rest of the family.<sup>12</sup>

## CONCLUSION

What I have attempted to do in this brief analysis, most of it provided by other writers more competent and in touch than I am, is to lay before you the necessity of re-thinking philanthropy in much wider, deeper ways than we traditionally do. Much of the philanthropic philosophy is driven by white, male, Euro-centric models and experiences. Obviously, from the above notations, giving is a part of every cultural tradition, and has been for hundreds of years. You can easily follow my lead and search out those articles and reports that will enhance your cultural understanding. Our campus ministries can and

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<sup>10</sup> [www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)

<sup>11</sup> Chao, Jessica. "Asian American Philanthropy: Expanding Circles of Participation." *Cultures of Caring Philanthropy in Diverse American Communities*. Washington D.C.: Council on Foundations, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Kari Pardoe, "Hispanic Philanthropy," [www.learningtogive.org](http://www.learningtogive.org)

should take the lead in helping a new generation of donors understand both the similarities and the differences among cultures when it comes to giving, supporting, and encouraging our communities. Giving doesn't divide us, it unites us, even though it may take different forms and styles from culture to culture. We all have a need to give and a need to respect the gifts of others.

**Office of Lutheran Campus Ministry Advancement**  
**1407 North Cleveland**  
**St. Paul, MN 55108**  
**Galen Hora**  
**Associate Director for Campus Ministry**