

21st Century Evangelicals

A snapshot of the beliefs and habits of
evangelical Christians in the UK - Autumn 2012

Does money matter?



Research by the Evangelical Alliance

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When Christians love each other with a passion.
When we pray, work and speak as one body - full of hope, living to change the world.

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Headlines

A snapshot of what we found out about evangelicals and money matters



25%

have an annual household income of over £50,000.



97%

at some point purchased Fairtrade or ethically sourced goods.



92%

agree that *It is every Christian's duty to help those in poverty.*

Income 10%



63%

believe in tithing, and so give around 10% (or more) of their income to church, Christian organisations and various charities.



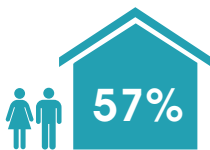
60%

had, on more than one occasion, heard a sermon or talk about a responsible Christian attitude to money and finance.



18%

have less than £1,000 in savings, 7% have no savings at all - and a few are millionaires.



57%

of respondents owed nothing on a mortgage or home loan and 58% had no other debts.



14.5%

the estimated percentage of their income (after tax) given away.

87%
giftaid it

try to make sure their giving to churches and charities is Gift Aided so that tax can be reclaimed.



45%

attend a church which has a fund or scheme that helps people in immediate need, and 42% a church that supports or runs a foodbank.

Incomings and outgoings



Evangelical incomes

Struggling	1 in 5	said their household income was under £20,000, and for 1 in 20 it was under £10,000
Comfortable	54%	put their income at between £20,000 and £50,000
Affluent	25%	said they had a household income of over £50,000

Household income shows some significant gender differences, with more women found in the lowest income groups and more men in the higher ones. Household income would also be higher where more than one person is earning, and as previous surveys have shown Christian men are more likely to be married than living as a lone adult.

State benefits

On the whole our respondents are not a great financial burden on the state welfare system. **43%** said they **receive no state benefits at all** and the rest for the most part only drew universal benefits such as the state old age pension (26%) and child benefit or tax credits (26%). Some 7% were in receipt of disability-related benefits and less than 5% drew other means-tested benefits.

According to the Institute of Fiscal studies 2010 approximately **30 million people in the UK** – around half the total population – **receive income from at least one social security benefit**. And 5.8 million people (just under 10% of the population) receive Council Tax benefit which is one of the most widely available means-tested benefits.

Feeling the pinch

Christians are not immune from the downturn in the economy, which has been seen in recent years. Around **24% felt their income was slightly lower and 15% considerably lower than three years ago**.

However, with inflation most are feeling the squeeze. Around 20% felt their income had fallen considerably below the cost of living and 50% a little below.

Despite this most of our respondents were not complaining. Around 37% felt they could *praise God for the wealth and prosperity He's given me* and a further 50% were able to say *to God I'm content with what I've got*. That left only 10% sometimes asking God for more money and only 2% asking Him why they were always struggling.

Wealth and saving

Not counting investment in housing and pensions

18% say they have less than £1,000 in savings, and 7% have no savings at all.

25% have between £1,000 and £9,999 in savings.

20% have over £100,000 in savings or investments - and a number are millionaires.

It seems that those under 35 years old are least likely to have any substantial savings, and those over 55 have the most. Also, more men than women report higher savings levels.

According to a report from the Halifax, the average value of financial assets per household has risen two and a half times (147%) from £59,781 in 1959 to £147,770 in 2009. However 28% of all UK households had no savings (accounts and investments) and a further 18% held savings of less than £1,500.

Where do evangelical Christians invest their money?



85%
have a savings account at a bank or building society.



77%
have an ISA.



32%
hold stocks or shares in public companies.



30%
have financial investments such as endowment policies, unit trusts etc.



18%
have second homes.

Overall, the survey suggests that the majority of evangelical Christians in the UK have been blessed with comfortable economic circumstances, and they are clearly thankful for this.

A small minority have considerable wealth but there is a large minority getting by on below average incomes and have little by way of savings to fall back on. Clearly, the recession is being felt to some extent by almost everybody, and has seriously impacted many of those with lower incomes.

This pattern of inequality in the Church mirrors wider society but seems a far cry from the economic pattern of the early Church described in Acts 4.



Church Partnership
CAP Debt Centres & CAP Money
WE'VE CHANGED,
WHY NOT TAKE ANOTHER LOOK?

CHRISTIANS
 AGAINST POVERTY UK

1. OPEN A CAP DEBT CENTRE

Partner with CAP to bring
good news
 to your
community



www.capuk.org/churchpartnership openacentre@capuk.org 01274 760580

Reach your community
 with budgeting skills

CAP Money

2. RUN CAP MONEY

The CAP Money Course will equip your church with a professional and relevant outreach tool.

CAP Money is a three-session course designed to teach people budgeting skills and a simple, cash-based system.

'A valuable course that helps people take control of their finances rather than being controlled by them. It also provides a simple and effective strategy to help individuals become wise stewards of their money.

A must for all churches!
Malcolm Lamb,
 Pastor of Bridge Street Church, Leeds



For regional training dates and a **FREE** info pack visit www.capmoney.org or call **01274 760567**

CAP Money is brought to you by the debt counselling charity Christians Against Poverty. Registered Office: Jubilee Mill, North Street, Bradford, BD1 4EW. Registered Charity No. 1097217. Charity Registered in Scotland No. SCO38776. Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 4655175.

Careful consumers

How do evangelical Christians spend the money God has given them?

It seems that, although to some extent we are swimming against the tide of our consumer culture, many of our attitudes to possessions and our lifestyles are not really very different from society at large.

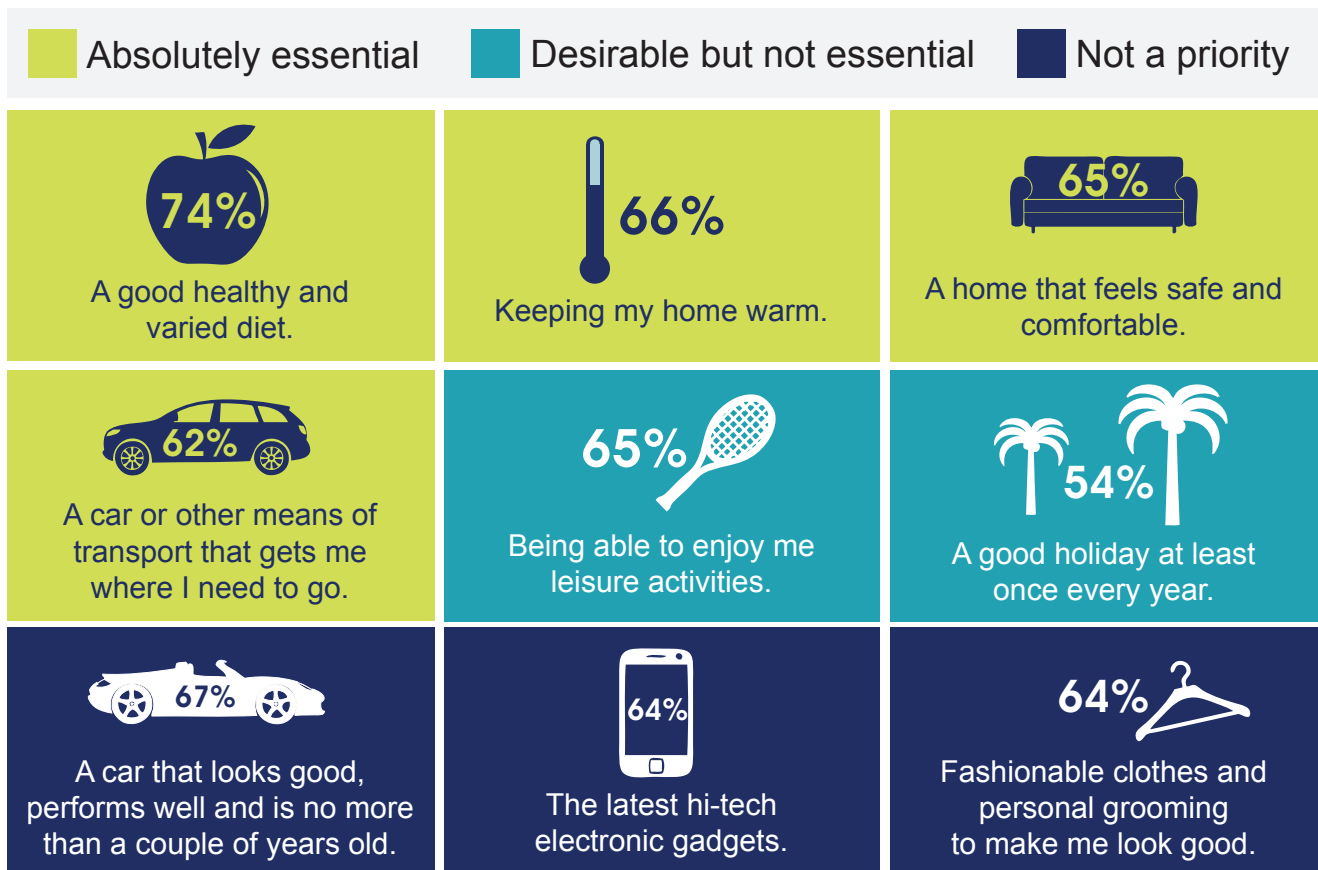
Our respondents were keen to seek out a bargain:



Purchasing decisions also had an ethical aspect for our panel -

- 97%** buy Fairtrade or ethically sourced goods.
- 85%** buy products for environmental reasons.
- 89%** choose to deal with companies they know are run by Christians.

What do Christians see as essential needs?



Evangelicals in debt?

Debt is now the norm, and it has been a turbulent few years for the global economy. Financial crises have brought down banks and financial institutions and nations have been shaken. How has this affected evangelical Christians? Are they, like everyone else, going broke?

On the whole they think of themselves as competent in managing money and well educated about finance.

Many evangelicals approve of or make use of intermediary charitable giving schemes.

To their credit, despite being surrounded by a culture of debt, many of those surveyed take seriously the guidance of Romans 13:8 to: "Let no debt remain outstanding."



Credit action say the **average personal debt** in May 2012 including mortgage was **£55,514**. 34.4% of households have a mortgage (ONS figures)

Average family debt from loans, credit cards and overdrafts is **£7,900**. (Precious Plastic 2012 report from Pricewaterhouse Cooper)

In the past

8%	have at least once taken a cash loan against the security of their home or car.
<2%	have ever taken out 'poverty' loans from organisations such as the Benefits Agency, payday loan or doorstep credit companies, loan sharks, pawn shops or credit unions.
11%	have been refused credit or a loan after a credit check.
1%	have been bankrupted or had items repossessed.
2%	have approached a Christians Against Poverty (CAP) centre (and 3% some other debt advice service).
2%	had been harassed or attacked because of a bad debt.
56%	have turned to family and friends to borrow money.
5%	have asked their church or minister for financial help.
25%	have received financial help from their church, minister or from another Christian.

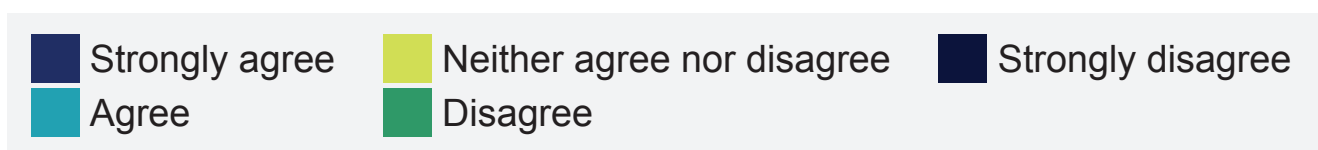
Currently

58%	have no debts.
57%	owe nothing on a mortgage or home loan.
25%	have mortgages of between £50,000 and £250,000.
24%	have an outstanding debt on a credit card.
19%	have a bank overdraft.
13%	owe money to store cards.
13%	have student loans.
11%	have car loans.
10%	owe more than £10,000 in debts that are not related to home purchase.
5%	have catalogue debts.

Very few (in all cases less than 3%) saw any debts they had as a cause for concern. Patterns of debt most clearly related to age or life-stage. Younger people were more likely never to have had a mortgage, while over-55s are more likely to have paid it off. In contrast most under-35s have a student loan, and higher proportions a bank overdraft. The majority of the

few people who are worried about debt are those with incomes below £20,000 a year.

Evangelical attitudes to borrowing and saving are reflected in a prudential attitude to money. The survey shows that over 80% try hard not to get into debt, while only 10% are at ease with borrowing for anything other than a home.



I try as hard as I can never to borrow money and get into debt



Christians should make sensible financial investments to provide for their families and their own old age



I am at ease with taking out a mortgage or loan in order to purchase my home



I am at ease with borrowing money whenever I need to buy something



Faith and finance

What do evangelicals believe about God and money?

Heart	92%	agree that <i>It is every Christian's duty to help those in poverty.</i>
Justice	89%	believe in advocacy for justice for the poor.
Trust	88%	agree that <i>Even if I lost all my savings and income I can trust that God would supply everything I need</i> (under-35s agree most).
Prudence	88%	agree that <i>Christians should make sensible financial investments to provide for their families and their own old age.</i>
	77%	think that <i>it is important to take out insurance to cover the risk of loss of the things I own</i> (over-55s agree most).
	74%	agree that <i>Christians should avoid all forms of gambling</i> (the over-55s, Pentecostals and Baptists are most hostile to gambling).

The theology of wealth and poverty

Jesus said:



50% agreed he meant it literally - not just spiritually (although a further 29% are uncertain - men are significantly more likely to agree)

36% agree that wealth is usually a real barrier to someone who seeks to follow Christ

36% agree that speculation and taking risks on the financial markets is morally wrong (25% have no issue with this. The implication being that many do not seem to define such behaviour as 'gambling')

21% agree that if a Christian is faithful and/or gives generously to God's work they will prosper economically



According to a Joseph Rowntree Foundation study in 2008, **41%** of the population believe there is very little poverty in Britain today and only 18% believe it stems from social injustice.



Evangelicals and economics

Agree or Strongly Agree

Some 'top' people are paid far too much



There is an unacceptable level of income inequality in the UK



Christians should make sensible financial investments to provide for their families and their own old age



The government should make sure that the richest people in the country pay higher levels of tax



over-55s and wealthiest income groups are more likely to disagree

People I know have lost their jobs as a result of the recent recessions and public sector cuts



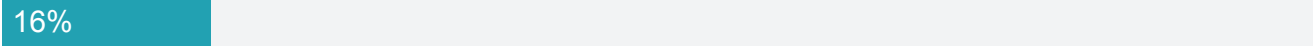
Too many people have become dependent on state benefits and could do more to help themselves



Cuts in public services at the present rate are causing too much hardship



No-one in the UK is really poor these days



least held by women and the under-35s

Generous givers?

We asked everyone to estimate the proportion of their income they gave away in the last year. i.e. for every £100 in their income after tax how many pounds are given away?

Our survey shows that on average evangelicals give away about 14% of their net income broken down as follows:

Percentage of income given

to own church	7.4%
to Christian charities	4.3%
to secular charities	1.2%
to individuals in need	1.1%



UK Giving 2011: **58%** of people **gave to charity each month** with a median amount of £132 per year.

The survey reveals a strong culture of giving among evangelicals, with the Church and Christian charities the main priority and secular causes less significant.

Interestingly, the survey found that people in lower income bands (under £20,000 - average 15%) report giving higher percentages of their income than those in higher incomes bands (over £50,000 - average 13%).

Why do evangelicals give?

63%	agreed that <i>I believe in tithing so I give around 10% (or more) of my income to various causes which include my church, Christian organisations and other charities.</i>
50%	<i>interpret tithing as giving primarily to their own church.</i>
18%	who do not believe in tithing (among whom men are significantly over-represented) still say they give away substantial amounts to their church and other causes.
2.5%	said <i>I prefer to keep almost all my income to myself.</i>

Generally, it is the over-55s who are the most committed to the principle of tithing. Denominationally, Pentecostals and Charismatics are the most committed to the principle of tithing for their own local church, while it is more common for tithers in other denominations to share their giving with other causes as well as their own church.

Patterns of giving

The survey shows that evangelicals prefer their giving to be efficient, well-organised and preferably distant from the individuals who need help.

Agree or Strongly Agree

I prefer to use automatic methods of giving (such as direct debits or standing orders) for regular giving

80%

I give a lot of items I no longer need to charity shops

78%

I intend in my will to make a substantial legacy to my church or to a Christian charity

34%

I give substantial amounts to individuals in need whom I know personally

31%

Most of my giving is now done online

30%

mostly under-35s with an income over £20,000

Most of my giving is in cash

19%

Most of my giving is quite spontaneous when I see a need

18%

I often give money to beggars in the street

13%

I have so little money I can't afford to give very much away

11%

women, under-35s and lower earners are more likely to say this

I give away so much of my money that I sometimes go without things that I need

9%

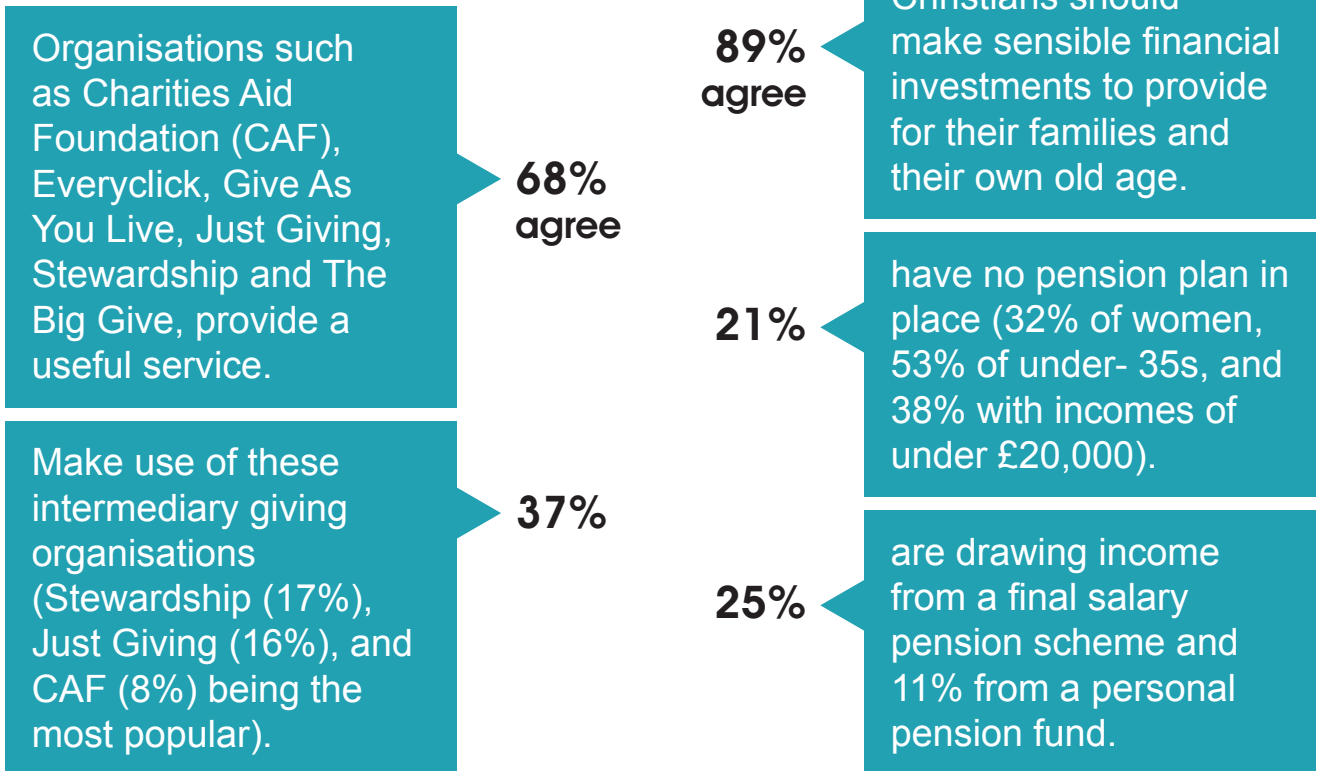
Prudence and providence



For evangelicals, it seems that consumption is carried out with care, debt is not entered into lightly, and very few risks are taken with gambling and speculation. Giving is managed and maximised through the use of standing orders and Gift Aid.

On the whole they think of themselves as competent in managing money and well-educated about finance.

Many evangelicals approve of or make use of intermediary charitable giving schemes.



Only **43%** of Britons **have pension savings**, according to website *This Is Money*. Of the survey's 5,200 respondents, **22%** said they **were not saving anything** for retirement. In short evangelicals are not very different here from the population at large.



charity: water // Stewardship recipient 20122503
Photo by Esther Havens. Property of charity: water



Soul Survivor // Stewardship recipient 20032886
Image courtesy of Soul Survivor 2009

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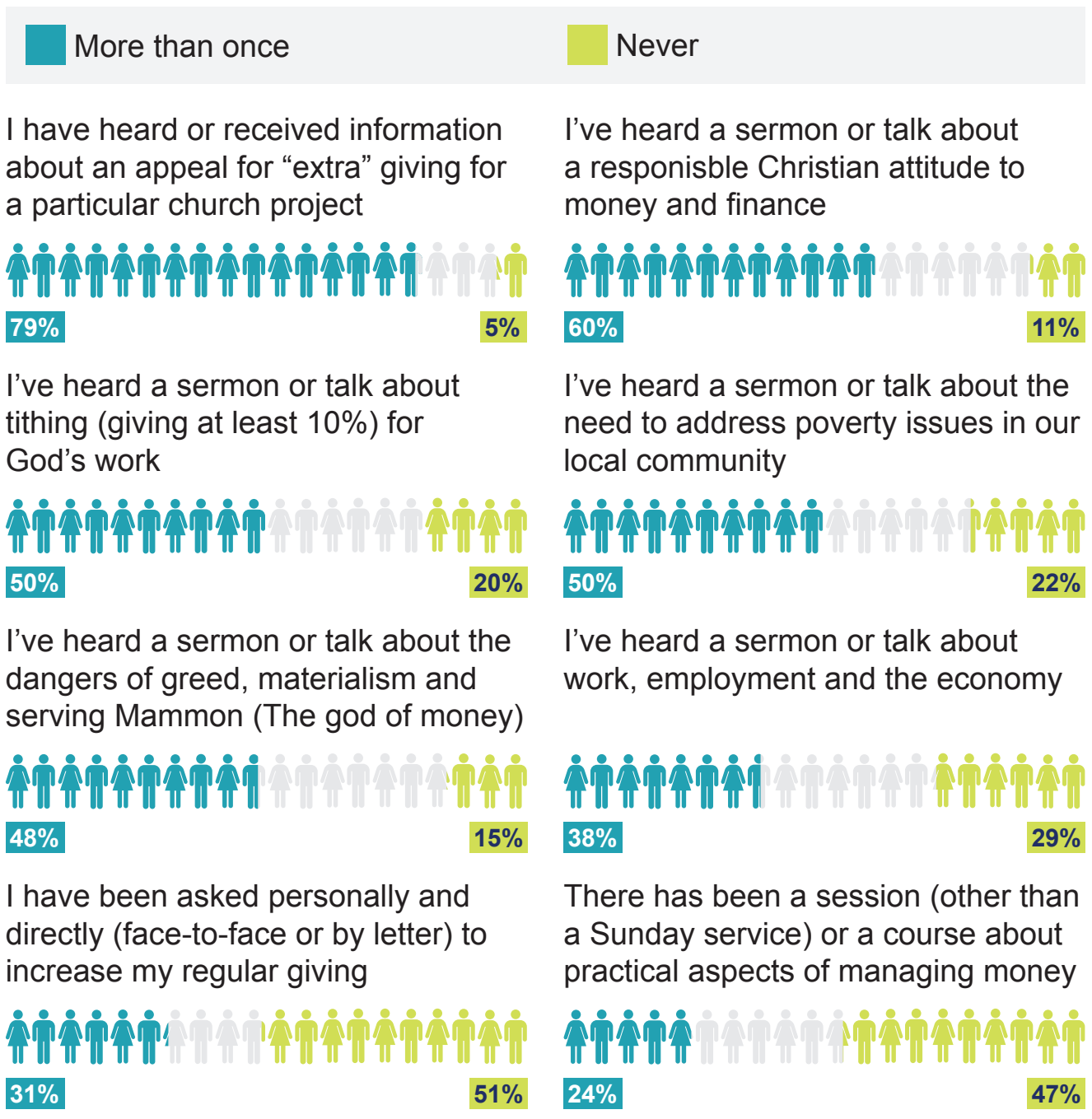
Churches, mission and money



What are churches saying and doing about money? Are they primarily focused on raising funds, or are they teaching a biblical attitude to the use of money, offering help to the most needy, or running ministries that will help people manage their finances better?



What churches tell their members about money



Practical action

How are churches getting involved in practical projects and activities to help people in poverty and debt?



attend a church which has a fund or scheme that helps people in immediate need.



attend a church that supports or runs a foodbank.



are in churches that offer help to asylum seekers.



are in churches that offer help to the unemployed.

This seems a poor response to the current rise in unemployment



attend churches where a CAP money course or CAP Debt Centre (or both) operates (a further 11% of respondents offer personal support to CAP)



had any personal or church involvement with the campaigning work of Church Action on Poverty on issues such as unscrupulous lenders or the living wage.

“It’s good to discover that nearly everyone accepts it is our Christian duty to help people in poverty. To find out one in five attend a church operating CAP Money or a debt centre is a real encouragement. It demonstrates the desire Christians have to transform the lives of people in our communities.

If I have concerns, it is for the quarter of respondents who have no significant savings, the quarter with outstanding credit card debt and those with more than £10,000 in personal debts.

These respondents are in a vulnerable situation where it would take very few setbacks to cause a financial crisis. Our best advice at CAP? Put your own house in order so you can give and save and help others.”

Matt Barlow, chief executive, CAP

“How is the Church passing on important, biblical values of generosity to future generations? Rising student debt, the easy availability of credit, an uncertain job market and many other factors can often crowd out giving. Churches and families: be encouraged to discuss and model giving with your children and young people, while taking time to understand and overcome the very different issues these generations are now facing.”

Michael O’Neill, chief executive, Stewardship

This survey was conducted during May 2012, 1237 people took part.

For more detailed information about this research please contact:

g.smith@eauk.org

So what?

Points for prayer and action:



Economic inequality

While the majority of evangelicals seem comfortable or even affluent, there are some who are experiencing financial difficulties. This situation shows how the Christian community can simply mirror the inequality of wider society.

Our challenge is to find ways to model a more equal community to the world. Jesus is good news to the poor, and his people are called to demonstrate a kingdom in which nobody is left behind.

Ethical consuming

Through initiatives such as Fairtrade, Christians are developing more appropriate, sustainable and simple lifestyles. However, it is difficult for some to avoid getting sucked into coveting the latest products that are promoted in the marketplace. The Fairtrade movement has made ground in the churches in recent years and that has been good news for many in the poorest communities of the world.

Our challenge is to find more ways to spend our money and invest our savings in line with kingdom values. This means church leaders have a responsibility to teach, and we all need to think and pray more about what it means to be an ethical Christian consumer.

Prudence and risk-taking

It seems that evangelicals are pretty good at managing their money. We have a tradition of having a safe pair of hands in financial dealings, and we are maintaining a reputation for diligence, honesty and integrity. The much vaunted 'protestant work ethic' appears to remain strong.

Our challenge is to preserve the evangelical reputation for financial prudence, while at the same time encouraging more entrepreneurial risk-taking for missional enterprises.

Generosity

It is encouraging to see that generally Christians give away far more than the average citizen, and that for many a tenth of their income is seen as a bare minimum for giving.

Our challenge is to continue to encourage a culture of sacrificial giving without becoming legalistic. This will require developing consciousness and lifestyles in which we really believe and act as if all our assets belong to God.

Debt

Despite living in a society in which it is easy to get credit, evangelical Christians seem to be remarkably free from the burdens of debt.

Our challenge is to retain and deepen the understanding of the biblical values that underlie debt-free living such as: hard work; honesty; generosity; the problems of usury; the virtue of contentment with what God has given; and the concept of jubilee and gospel principles of forgiveness of debts. We need to model and commend these values to our fellow citizens and the economists and politicians who are struggling to find solutions to the epidemic of debt.

Practical action

It's encouraging to see how evangelical Christians regard poverty and dire inequality as being unacceptable in a country as wealthy as the UK. This concern has produced a vast range of practical acts and initiatives that churches are taking to meet people's needs.

Our challenge is to foster an evangelical response to poverty that goes beyond the charitable response of pulling people out of the river. This means going upstream to address the causes of poverty, and will therefore require more strategic thinking about how to campaign for social and political change. Also, developing more support for the unemployed needs to become a priority.

The theology of wealth and poverty

Among evangelical Christians it's encouraging to see some basic biblical values around: trust in God the provider; prudence in financial dealings; contentment in an age of conspicuous consumption; generosity in giving; and concern for economic justice. However, the survey does identify some selectivity concerning the scriptural guidance about money and economics.

Our challenge is to work out and live out a well-grounded biblical worldview of money and economics – for the benefit of the Church and society as a whole.

“At a time when the media is full of bad news about the failure of banking and the crisis in our economy, it seems that most Christians are modelling a better way forward. Generally, evangelicals seem to manage their finances without getting into debt. They are generous in their giving to churches and charities. They know that life is more than the things money can buy, and when they spend their money, they try to choosing fairly-traded and ethically-sourced products. There is a culture of giving and generosity in our churches. Across the country, this concern for the poor is increasingly being translated into practical steps such as setting up Foodbanks and debt counselling services. Of course there is more that we could do - such as supporting the unemployed and job creation, but in seeking to be faithful to Christ in our troubled times, it is important to remember that we can model a different approach to money. This approach brings hope – and hope is the currency of faith.”

Steve Clifford, general director, Evangelical Alliance.

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