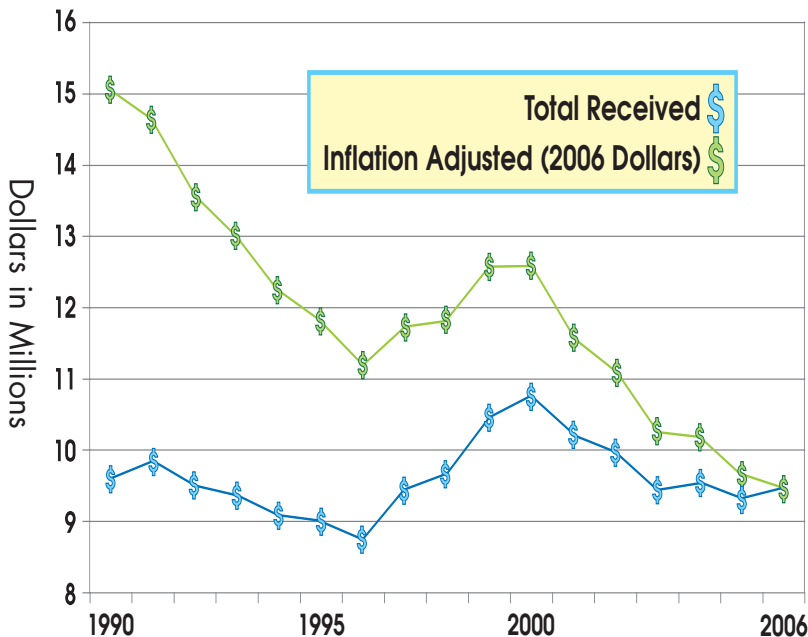


GO FIGURE

JACK MARCUM



Donations to One Great Hour of Sharing



GRAPHICS BY KATE ANYAN

What the research shows

The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) has many factors in its favor: support of causes widely viewed as deserving; collection during one of the high points of the church year (in both importance and attendance); and a history going back almost 60 years. Yet the amount given (in inflation-adjusted dollars) has been falling.

How might the church reverse that trend?

Getting more congregations to receive the offering is one obvious step. Yet it will not be an easy task, since research suggests that almost all non-participating congregations are aware of OGHS and many choose not to participate.

Another approach would involve convincing more worshipers in participating congregations to donate, and getting those who already do so to increase the amounts they give. Annual surveys of participating congregations have long been conducted to evaluate and improve OGHS materials, so much is already being done along these lines.

I believe the amounts given to OGHS are already at or the near the upper limit of what can be expected.

Given the need and the worthiness of the causes this offering supports, though, I hope I'm proved wrong. Won't you join me in making a generous donation this Eastertide to do just that? □

One offering, three beneficiaries

An integral part of Lent and Easter in most Presbyterian congregations is collection of the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. This churchwide special offering splits its donations among three denominational agencies: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (32 percent), the Presbyterian Hunger Program (36 percent), and Self-Development of People (32 percent).

Findings from surveys and other sources reveal that:

- **More than two in three congregations** receive this offering (69 percent).
- **About three in ten households** in participating congregations make a donation.
- **The median donation of contributing households** is \$25; the average is around \$50.
- **Annual donations in 2006** exceeded \$9 million.
- **In actual dollars**, annual donations have stayed about the same since 1990 but, **adjusted for inflation**, they have dropped by more than one-third (37 percent).

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