

Robert Wuthnow and D. Michael Lindsay "The Roles of Foundations in American Religion." *The Roles and Contributions of Foundations to Society*. In Press.

- Top 25 Foundations Ranked by Total Grants to Religion, 1999 – 2003
- There is a wide range in the percentage of total grant dollars each foundation spends on religion, from a low of 1 percent for the Ford Foundation to a high of 99 percent for the Eagle's Wing Foundation. The mean is 36.2 percent.
- There is also a wide range in the number of grants to religion that foundations make. The Koch Foundation, for instance, gave nearly 3,000 grants between 1999 and 2003, whereas the Florik Charitable Trust gave only 8. The mean number of grants to religion for these 25 foundations was 375, or an average of 75 annually.
- Most significantly, the dollar value of all grants to religion between 1999 and 2003 also varies dramatically, ranging from a high of \$305 million from the Lilly Endowment to just under \$16 million from the Stewardship Foundation. An indication of the skewness of these amounts is the fact that half of the \$1.2 billion given to religion by these 25 foundations came from only the top 5.
- Wuthnow and Lindsay also report on the volatility of grant making to religion:
 - One indication of this volatility is the fact that only 7 of these 25 foundations were among the top-ranked 25 in their respective years for all 5 of the years between 1999 and 2003. When examining the top 50 foundations for each of these years, Wuthnow and Lindsay found that 114 foundations had been among this number at least once.

- In 15 of the 25 comparisons, the amount granted in the lowest years was less than 50 percent of the amount given in the highest year.
 - Another measure of volatility is the average of the percentage by which the amount given each year differed from the amount given in the preceding year. In 14 of the 21 instances in which these calculations were possible, the average annual percent change was more than 25 percent (and in an equal number of cases the number of grants given also changed by this much).
 - After awarding 18 grants to various groups between 1999 and 2003, totaling more than \$33 million, the Eagle's Wing Foundation was dissolved in 2004. The Florik Charitable Trust, which was dissolved in 2005, followed a similar trajectory.
- However, Wuthnow and Lindsay also report that when looking at the organizations that received the most money for religion from foundations between 1999 and 2003, in nearly every case the top donor was the source of at least 85 percent of the recipient organization's grants from private foundations and in some cases provided all its grants. So, although volatility seems to be in play, there appears to be one major foundation to whom most recipient organizations can look as a somewhat stable source of support.
- Small foundations pay an important role in American religion. According to data from the National Center for Family Foundations, family foundations are consistently more likely to give to religious nonprofits than independent foundations in general. Smaller foundations, which have smaller staffs, often prefer to support local initiatives, and religious entities benefit from community ties. Building campaigns at local houses of worship, fundraising drives, and religious festivals in the community have all been supported with funds from small, local foundations.
- A survey of foundation philanthropy across the religious landscape reveals the prevalence of a "silo effect". Religious recipients of grants from a

single foundation tend to resemble one another as well as the granting foundation in terms of religious tradition. In an era of significant institutional differentiation (Friedland and Alford 1991), this kind of unifying principle is noteworthy: indeed, this “silo effect” is one of the distinctives of religious philanthropy.

- Wuthnow and Lindsay also inquired into what organizations receive money given for religion by the 25 foundations under study. The top 2 recipient organizations are Jewish, and 7 of the top 15 are Jewish. This fact underscores the importance of Jewish foundations and Jewish federations at the national and municipal level. However, it is important to realize that the presence of these organizations among the top recipients of foundation support is an artifact of the federated structure of these organizations as opposed to the more dispersed pattern among Protestant and Catholic organizations.
- The total foundation funding received by “Catholic” or “Archdiocese” organizations between 1999 and 2003 was: \$464 million. During the same period “Presbyterian” organizations received \$275 million; “Baptist” organizations, \$219 million; “Methodist” organizations, \$200 million; “Christian” organizations, \$199 million; “Episcopal” organizations, 149 million; and “Lutheran” organizations, \$144 million. The total for all these Christian organizations is \$1.6 billion – virtually identical to the foundation support received by Jewish organizations.
- The remaining recipients of major religious grants fall into three broad categories. The first involve specific projects such as DeMoss’ support for Power for Living and Templeton’s underwriting of the Center for Theology and Natural Sciences. Second among the remaining grants are those directed to large religious institutions. Roman Catholic Archdioceses such as those in Chicago and Los Angeles have benefited from private foundation grants in recent years. Also among this class of grants are those awarded to faith-oriented special purpose organizations (also called “parachurch” organizations). Campus Crusade for Christ, Prison

Fellowship Ministries, and Samaritan's Purse have all received large foundation grants. Indeed, with the world of evangelical foundation philanthropy, there appears to be a preference for funding large, existing organizations. The third category of religious grants includes those awarded to build and maintain institutions. Lilly's support of Union Theological Seminary, which as faced a serried of financial crises in recent years, is representative of this trend.

- Wuthnow and Lindsay tackle the problem of misclassification of grant categories which is particularly pernicious in the realm of religion. There are many activities that receive grant funding that have strong connections with religion, even though they don't qualify as "religion" according to NTEE categorization. For example, analysis of the grant making of "faith-friendly" foundations showed that few of them had formal restrictions against giving money to faith-based social service organizations and that several provided substantial funding to such organizations. The best example of such funding would be grants to the Salvation Army, which totaled \$306 million between 1999 and 2003, including sizeable grants from such "faith-friendly" foundations as the Lilly Endowment, Marcus Foundation, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.