

Report: Churches, charities not in competition for dollars

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(RNS) Houses of worship and other charities often aren't in competition for dollars but instead tend to reap donations from similar donors, a new study shows.

Slightly more than 50 percent of people who financially supported congregations also gave to at least one charitable organization in the last year, according to a study conducted by Phoenix-based Grey Matter Research Consulting.

Researchers also found that the more Americans give to a house of worship, the more they donate to other groups. And the trend continues with the generosity of the donor.

For example, donors who gave less than \$100 to a house of worship also donated an average of \$208 to other charities. Those who gave between \$100 and \$499 to a congregation gave an average of \$376 to others. Donors of between \$500 and \$999 to places of worship gave an average of \$916 to others.

"Americans who give to their church or place of worship are more likely to give, period -- including to charitable organizations," said Ron Sellers, president of the Phoenix-based research firm, formerly known as Ellison Research "Rather than be in competition for the donor dollar, it seems that giving fosters giving."

The study, which was commissioned by the nonprofit fundraising firm Russ Reid Co. of Pasadena, Calif., was conducted last May by telephone and online among a nationally representative sample of 2,005 American adults. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 2.2 percentage points.