

# THE GATHERING

VOLUME NINE • NUMBER THREE

## The Good Gift of Inheritance

*In selecting faculty for The Gathering conference it can be difficult to find someone who not only provides valuable insight on a particular topic, but also understands the issues of wealth more than just conceptually. Thayer Cheatham Willis, author of **Navigating the Dark Side of Wealth: A Life Guide for Inheritors**, not only works with wealthy families as her occupation, but she was raised in the family that formed the Georgia Pacific Corporation. She knows first hand the challenges of growing up with wealth and addresses them daily in her occupation as a licensed counselor, with her own children and in her own life.*

*Thayer will be joining us at the 2003 Gathering Annual Conference and leading a class on the issues of inheritors and inheritance. We sat down with her and asked her some questions to prime us for her class at the conference.*



### **Gathering:**

Give us a brief explanation of your background and what inspired you to write your book.

**Thayer:** I was born into the family that built Georgia Pacific Corporation and grew up in a wealthy neighborhood with other families of similar circumstances. Much of the building of Georgia Pacific had occurred before my birth. Shortly after my birth the company expanded out to the west coast. My father had a lot to do with the expansion of Georgia Pacific so we moved to Portland.

We lived in a beautiful neighborhood and I grew up thinking my circumstances were “normal.” When I got into young adulthood, many of my peers began experiencing times of great struggle. Some had problems with drugs and alcohol and over the years even a few lost their lives. At that point, I began thinking about the issues of wealth and how they had affected the people around me. So many people aspired to live in a neighborhood like mine and believed it would make them happy, yet I knew through my experiences that affluence didn’t ensure happiness. When I was in my twenties and thirties,

I drifted into some explorations which took me away from Christianity. Shortly after I came back to my spiritual roots I read Matthew 19:24-26, where Jesus tells the disciples that it’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. The disciples couldn’t understand what he meant, but Jesus repeated himself and then said “but with God all things are possible.” When I really thought about the idea of a “camel through the eye of a needle” it seemed impossible for me to enter the kingdom of God. I had been born into a wealthy family and needed to make sense of this verse. That is when I began to focus on the part that read “with God all things are possible.”

After the struggle and realization that with God even a wealthy person could enter His Kingdom, I then had a desire to help people who had wealth and who struggled to find meaning in their life. Most of my peers had tons of money, but many of them were lost. Out of this realization came my focus on counseling wealthy families. My book came to be over many years in my counseling practice where I collected information on the lives of inheritors.

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**“My goal is to help people find a way to live out their inheritance well.”**

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**Gathering:** Why is inheritance such a strong value in Scripture and such a negative experience for so many people in our culture?

**Thayer:** When scripture addresses inheritance it is mainly referring to our inheritance in Christ. It’s a spiritual inheritance. The Bible focuses on the spiritual aspects of inheritance, although, there is also a reference to material inheritance.

Many people in our culture focus their energy on money and material inheritance. The mainstream of our culture has drifted away from the spiritual values on which our country was founded. In scripture, Ephesians 1:11 says, “We are made Christ’s inheritance.”

**Gathering:** Why don’t parents prepare children for wealth? Is it any different than other areas of a child’s life?

**Thayer:** Money is the last taboo and wealth is even more so. Financial literacy is not taught in school and many parents

*Continued on page 2.*

### MISSION STATEMENT:

To serve individuals, families and foundations in expanding their vision and effectiveness in giving to Christian ministries.

carry emotional baggage associated with their wealth. Some parents use wealth as a weapon. Others aren't literate with their own wealth, so how can they possibly teach their children healthy attitudes toward wealth?

A step by step education of preparing children for wealth is necessary and should begin at a young age. Clearly, this should be done in age appropriate stages and include steps like an allowance, savings, etc.: it needs to be a building block process.

**Gathering:** What are some things I can do for my daughter that would help her to avoid the problems that money potentially brings?

**Thayer:**

- Raise her to love God. 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- Teach and model gratitude. The most powerful way to teach gratitude is to model it.
- Teach acceptance or contentment. I prefer the word acceptance because contentment can sometimes imply complacency. Acceptance means accepting what is true in the present and working with it.
- Help her understand the world by helping her develop discernment. You can't shelter a child and protect her from all the ways of the world. It's important to watch a little television and discuss the program. Discuss commercials and what they promote. Talk about things that happen in the local news and what happens with their peers.
- Fund achievement oriented endeavors and education. Help her to develop resilience and competencies.

**Gathering:** What has been the role of your Christian faith in dealing with the issues of wealth?

**Thayer:** My parents raised me in a Christian home, but I grew up with some inconsistencies and difficult relationships. I gained certain strengths from the way I was raised, yet I was very insecure. In my late teens and twenties I wanted to explore a variety of spiritual paths. At age 32 I invited Christ into my life and have been steady in my relationship with Christ since that day. I've often thought of Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child." Considering my own journey, it is a top priority for me to teach my children to love God.


**Gathering:** Why is wealth such a secret?

**Thayer:** Wealth is commonly used as a description of personal worth or a measuring stick. We use terms like "high net worth" to describe people. Our founding fathers set up a country to value the norm in society. The norm in America is still to work for an adequate living. Our forefathers didn't want an aristocracy. Inheritors are usually keenly aware that they didn't earn their worth. People tend to play down what is not consistent with the norm in their lives. Jeremiah 9:23-24: "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom." Humility is a lot different than secretiveness. Humility is not boasting, it's simply telling the truth. Secretiveness is technically lying. Getting someone to accept the blessing of wealth is a major step.

**Gathering:** How can a 20 year old open up the conversation about wealth and inheritance with her parents?

**Thayer:** Children of wealth can use a statement like this when addressing their parents about money: "Mom and Dad, I am very grateful for all you have provided for me. I am also blessed by your generosity to others. I hope one day to follow your example. Will you begin teaching me now, so that one day when I have to function without your example, I will be prepared?" What works here is that the child is starting out with gratitude to their parents. If the parent says "no" then I would wait 6 months to a year and then in a respectful way bring up the subject again and again if necessary. This will show the parents that the child wants to be responsible with financial matters.

**Gathering:** How can you be honest with your friends about your wealth without being used or creating dependency?

**Thayer:** You must define your values, set your priorities and decide on your actions. I would not bring up any reference to wealth in the beginning of a friendship. You need to have thought through how you will handle the financial differences between you and your friend. For instance, how is the restaurant chosen when you go out to dinner? Who will pay? What about the issue of a loan or a gift if this concern comes up in the friendship? The key is in thinking these questions through ahead of time. You have the unique responsibility of wealth and you must take the lead in how you will handle it in relationships in order to avoid destroying them. 

## THAYER CHEATHAM WILLIS, LCSW

Thayer Willis MA LCSW was born into a world which her father and his brother had already cushioned with the success of their lumber company. During the years before and after her birth they built their business into what is now Georgia-Pacific Corporation. The financial benefits of her father's efforts are now in the hands of Ms. Willis her brother sister and mother and their inherited wealth has influenced all of their lives tremendously.

Thayer Willis helps inheritors with the challenges of wealth. In the world it is a tiny niche; yet as an inheritor herself she sees a great need for expertise to be available. Handling financial wealth well is not the "Easy Street" that outsiders might imagine. It requires hard work discipline and focus. The rewards can be tremendously exciting and fulfilling. She loves facilitating the journey for her clients. Relationships and work are typically tough areas in life with certain surprising twists thrown in for inheritors. She helps her clients make their way through challenges and blocks in those endeavors. The work she does is best described as "wealth counseling." Often clients work with her on developing self-esteem empathy trust and communication skills. And there is so much more. Each of us has a vision of how our lives would be at their best. Many inheritors are not supported in fully articulating their vision because much of the world dismisses them as "having it all." By creating fuller awareness of that vision and practical steps to put it into action Thayer helps her clients make their lives better in ways that they have only experienced before as vague dreams.


Thayer Willis has a national reputation as an expert and caring presence in assisting people who are working through issues related to wealth. She has presented at conferences and professional associations across the country. Her book *Navigating the Dark Side of Wealth: A Life Guide for Inheritors* was published in January 2003.

# African Aids Fund

By Steve Beck

There is a growing awareness that AIDS represents a defining issue for the Church – not just in Africa, but worldwide. In response, The Gathering is holding a special session on HIV/AIDS at our annual conference September 25-28, 2003: “Turning the Tide against HIV/AIDS.” This session promises to be informative and challenging as we consider the crisis and our response to it.

Another group of Christian leaders with support from Geneva Global Inc. and National Christian Foundation is establishing a Fund on HIV/AIDS in Africa. The Fund will resource and highlight the distinctive responses of the local African Church to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As such, it is an opportunity to show how local church initiatives in Africa are at the forefront of the fight against HIV/AIDS. This Fund partners with Christians in Africa to extend compassionate care and the love of Christ starting this summer.

If you would like to view the African AIDS Fund prospectus, visit their website at <http://www.genevaglobal.com/aidsfund.shtml>. You can also contact Steve Beck with Geneva Global Inc. at 1-866-7-GENEVA or [sbeck@genevaglobal.com](mailto:sbeck@genevaglobal.com). 



## The Gathering 2003 annual conference

September 25–28, 2003  
Four Seasons Aviara ♦ Carlsbad, California

### **Bible Teacher:**

Rick Warren

### **General Session Speakers:**

Franklin Graham Joni Eareckson Tada Eugene Rivers

### **Luncheon Speakers:**

Lloyd Ogilvie and Kay Warren

### **Testimonies:**

Suzanne Broetje Darrell Green  
Jack McConnell and Michael W. Smith

Michael W. Smith will also be leading worship on Saturday evening.

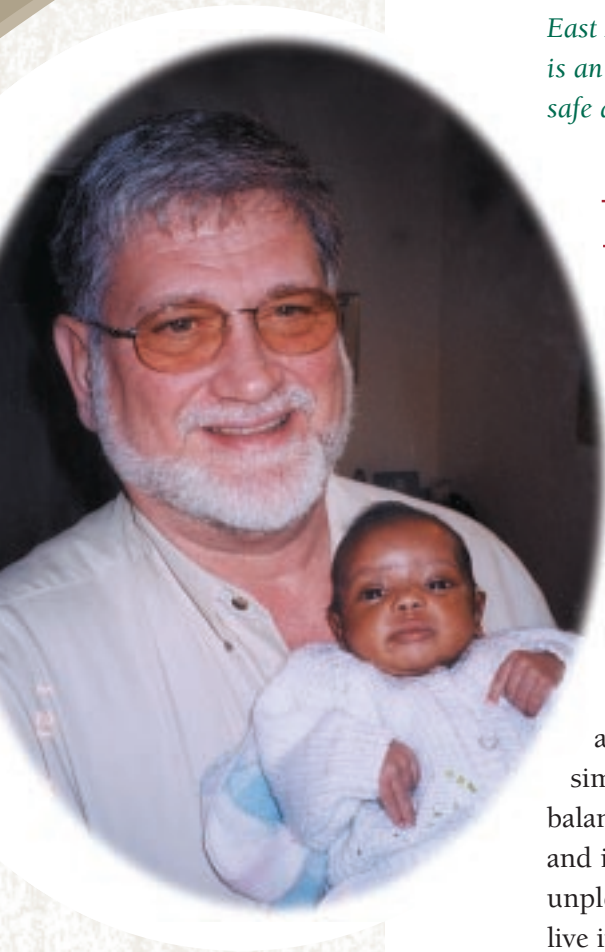


*If you would like to register, call Melea Edwards or Kelli Britton at 903-509-9911.*

# A **Thirst** for Change

By Joseph A. Aufman  
Sweet Mercies Foundation, Houston, Texas

*Joseph Aufman has been a part of The Gathering for many years. We asked Joe to write a brief report on his recent trip to Kenya, East Africa with Living Water International. Living Water International is an inter-denominational Christian ministry committed to providing safe drinking water to those in developing countries.*



***Water inadequacies pose a significant threat to Kenyan health.***

**B**efore my first trip to Kenya, East Africa, I read the travel books and had great expectations. I imagined exotic animals by the thousands, a photo safari on the Masai Mari National Reserve, large scenic mountains and neighboring Mt. Kilimanjaro, the beautiful Rift Valley (formed by a fault line that runs 3000 miles to Israel), large tea plantations, a variety of flora and fauna unparalleled in the U.S. I found all of this, as well as a country of unexpected contrasts.


Kenya is one of the more progressive countries in Africa. Its population, generally comfortable with English due to strong British influence, hovers around 30 million, 80% of whom are Christian. However, an alarming poverty rate and ignorance of simple health practices weighs heavily on the unpleasant side of the balance, with a population of thirty million BUT – the great poverty and ignorance of simple health practices weighs heavily on the unpleasant side of the balance. Consequently, over one million people live in Nairobi's Kibera slum without indoor plumbing, proper sanitation facilities, or safe water. In particular, water inadequacies pose a significant threat to Kenyan health. Nairobi's water plant is undersized and regularly runs out of water, allowing contaminants to flow into the empty pipes. In the arid Rift Valley, Masai Villages are without water completely. Natives dress in traditional red robes and tend animal herds while the women are drawing drinking water from the same ponds and streams where the animals stand. Water is scarce and located miles from the villages. Women and children suffer under a system that forces them to walk 6-8 hours each day to obtain water while the men work. A 5 gallon bucket of water weighs 42 pounds and must be carried home by these women and children.



People are dying from cholera, diarrhea, skin sores, worms, and numerous other water born diseases. The dehydrated sick and weakened people lose their ability to fight serious non-water based diseases, including AIDS, and simply give up to death. According to the World Health

Organization, 6,000 children die daily in Africa – four children every minute.

In the midst of this terrible situation stands Living Water International, providing water, at this moment to over one million people worldwide. With volunteer help, they drill wells, supply hand and electric pumps and biosand filters. They educate indigenous peoples in health and proper sanitary procedures. They operate well drilling schools for American volunteers and foreign nationals from the 16 countries they help. They keep people alive and healthy, while actively modeling American Christian mercy and empathy at a time when the world desperately needs to see Americans in helpful roles. They do all this while spreading God's Word to the world. Always, Living Water's wells flow, serving those in dire need of a fundamental element many take for granted – clean, disease-free water.

Incidentally, I came home with a severe amoebic infection picked up from eating something that had been washed with African water. I thank God that I live in a place where I get adequate medical care and, simultaneously, not be exposed to additional diseases and tainted water. I want to help Living Water rinse away the health atrocities that plague those without access to safe water sources. 



# Joy in Giving

By Ed Hearle

*Ed and Pat Hearle recently joined the board of The Gathering. Ed led an excellent devotional at the last board meeting and we hoped it might provoke some thought in you as it did in The Gathering board and staff.*

Recently, I read a 5-page paper written in 2001 by Fred Smith about The Gathering's vision: "In the end, I do not believe the Gathering is about wealth, but about joy." After reading the paper, I began to ponder the meaning of joy.

## So, what is joy?

The Bible has a lot to say about joy. If Alexander Cruden counted correctly, the word joy occurs 120 times in the Scriptures, more times than the words, riches, wealth, money, mercy, salvation, or love – to note a few other Biblical themes.

### Here's a sampling of verses about joy:

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10

"In (God's) presence is fullness of joy." Psalms 16:11

"For the person who pleases Him, God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy." Ecclesiastes 2:26

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy in believing." Romans 15:13

"The fruit of the Spirit is joy." Galatians 5:22

"Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy welled up in rich generosity." 2 Corinthians 8:2

Our Lord's earthly ministry began and ended with the expression of joy: at the beginning, "tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10), and at the end, "who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross." (Hebrews 12:2) So, what is joy – this theme that threads its way through Scripture and is at the center of The Gathering's vision?

For the Christian, joy is something beyond happiness, beyond elation – authentic and pleasant emotions, to be sure. Joy is a confidence that God will deliver on His promises. Substitute these words for the word joy in the previous verses and see what you think.

### The scriptures are full of God's promises. Here are just a few familiar ones:

"Come unto me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14

"(God) will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on (God)." Isaiah 26:3

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives." Matthew 7:7.

Would we not quickly agree that confidence in these promises – genuine certainty that God will fulfill them – should fill us with joy?

## What is the source of the Christian's joy?

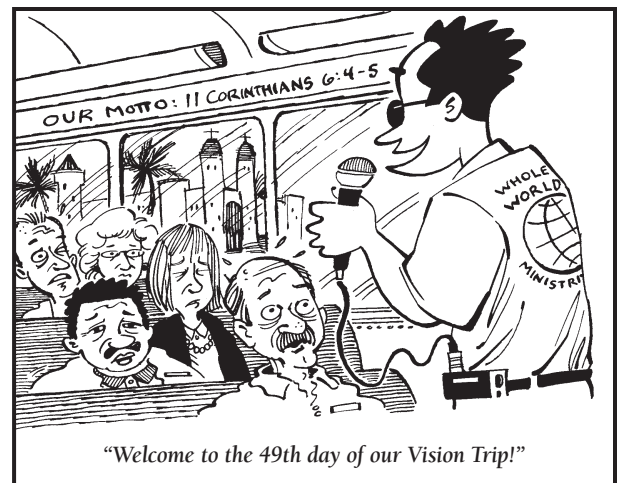
### First, joy is in direct relation to our obedience to God's commands.

"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." John 15:10-11. Obedience leads to joy. Perhaps a consequence of less obedience is less joy – less confidence that God will deliver on His promises.

### Second, joy is God's direct response to His people's requests.

"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." John 16:24. Joy is promised to those who ask in our Savior's name. Without being too quantitative, could we also conclude: fewer requests – fewer responses – less joy? Clearly, the Scriptures teach that joy is a fruit of obedience and prayer.

What should be the consequences of the Christian's joy (especially for The Gathering that places joy in the center of its vision)? How should we then live? Answer: we should place a continuing focus on God's promises and the evidence (manifestation) of how He delivers on His promises. Reliance on God's promises is the surest antidote for the corroding consequences of reliance on ourselves – our passions, our resources. While our programs focus on needs, ministries and giving techniques, let's take care also to provide the encouragement and the spiritual challenge that flow from a focus on the sources of the Christian's joy. 🌳





# Ask Terry

By Terry Parker

**“ I have a piece of property that I have owned for almost 20 years, that is worth probably ten times what it was when I purchased it. I’m told that if I sold it now, between the Federal and State governments, I would owe almost 27% in taxes. I would like to use this asset for Kingdom purposes – Is there a way I can do this? ”**

**R**eal estate is one of the most cost effective assets to use in your charitable giving. This is true whether the real estate is raw land, an income producing office building, a vacation property or a strip shopping center. You actually can experience multiple benefits when utilizing real estate in your gifting plan.

During the glory years of the '90's, there were usually stocks in our portfolio that had appreciated in value, and these stocks were “ripe” for use in making contributions to charitable organizations. Not only would we get the deduction for the full appreciated value of the stock, but the charity, upon selling the stock, did not have to pay any capital gains. However, now we have experienced a downturn in the stock market, and not many of us have appreciated stock left to give. However, the real estate market has remained strong. And many of us have pieces of real estate in which we have a low basis in relation to its appreciation. These are the assets we need to use when considering the next large gifts.

**Here are some of the characteristics of making such a real estate gift:**

- (1) If you give the real estate to a public charity, you will be able to deduct the full appreciated value of the real estate from your current income. (If you give it to your private foundation, your deduction will be limited to your cost basis.)
- (2) The charity, when it comes time to sell the real estate, will not pay any capital gains tax on the sale of such real estate.
- (3) Because the real estate may not sell quickly; or because you might want to delay your gifting from the proceeds


until God has made it clear to you the ministries he wants you to support from such gift, you may want to make your real estate gift to a Donor Advised Fund, rather than to a specific ministry. This will give you a good deal more flexibility once the real estate is converted to cash. However, you need to be careful that the Donor Advised Fund sponsor has experience in dealing with real estate; and can hold and manage the real estate until such time as it is marketable.

(4) While the real estate is being held in a Donor Advised Fund, and before it is sold, if it is income producing real estate, it will come into the Fund tax free, since real estate income is an exception to the “unrelated business income tax” rules of the IRS. Thus, the income from the real estate (if any) can be put into your Donor Advised Fund for current distribution to your favorite ministries.

(5) Because you will be giving the real estate to a public charity, you will be able to deduct it up to 30% of your adjusted gross income. Since real estate usually has a fairly high value, you may not be able to use all of the deduction in the first year. That won't matter, however, since you can carry this deduction forward for five additional years until it is used up.

(6) If you still need some or all of the income from the real estate for personal use, but are willing to surrender some or all of the principal value of the real estate ultimately to charity, you can actually set up a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) and contribute the desired real estate interest to your CRT. The CRT can be either an Annuity Trust (where a dollar amount fixed at the beginning will be

paid to you every year during the term of the Trust); or it can be a Unitrust (where you set a percentage of the value of the Trust, valued yearly, to be paid to you and which will enable you to receive increased amounts from year to year if the underlying asset increases in value). You can control the asset during your lifetime by controlling who serves as Trustee and who the charitable beneficiaries will be. While the real estate remains unsold, you may not be able to pay yourself the full percentage called for in the Trust Agreement. However, once it sells, there are distinct advantages in how you deal with the income for the first year of the sale; and for the following years wherein the specific percentage is then applied to the corpus. If you use a CRT, you will need to hire an attorney to create the document for you, and you will have annual filings of tax returns to the IRS. In addition, your deduction will not be a 100% deduction on the value of the property, but rather your deduction will depend upon your age, the number of beneficiaries of the Trust, the percentage you will pay out each year and several other factors. However, it still remains a very effective tool for charitable giving.

In summary, might I suggest that if you have high income this year; no longer have appreciated stock to use in your gifting program; have real estate that you have either purchased in the past or inherited that has appreciated in value; using the real estate as a means to reduce your taxes and continue your giving program can be not only very effective, but also a very satisfying use of the assets God has entrusted to you. 

# ALERT:

## House Proposal Could Significantly Change the Way You Give

By Jason Park

The Charitable Giving Act of 2003 (H.R. 7), the House companion to the Senate's CARE Act, could, if passed, significantly and fundamentally impact the way that many foundations operate. Intended to boost charitable giving during the current economic slowdown, the bill is spearheaded by House Majority Whip Roy Blunt (Mo.) and Congressman Harold Ford, Jr. (D-Tenn.) and proposes, among others, the following provisions<sup>1</sup>:

1. Tax-free distributions to charities from IRAs would be allowed.
2. Private foundations would be allowed to directly hold 5% of a public company's stock, a rise from the current 2%. For foundations that avail themselves of the new 5% rule, the payout rate would be increased from 5 to 6 percent.
3. The maximum for corporate charitable contributions would be raised from 10% to 20%.
4. The current two-tiered excise tax (2%/1%) on private foundation net investment income would be reduced to a flat 1%.
5. Administrative expenses would no longer be considered as qualifying distributions toward a foundation's required distribution minimum of 5%.

Among these provisions, the elimination of administrative expenses as a means of meeting the 5% minimum is the most controversial. According to the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, foundations counted \$2 billion in administrative costs toward the 5% spending requirement.<sup>2</sup> Many argue that these costs are largely frivolous, encompassing "executive salaries, rent, catered lunches, retreats at corporate conference centers, etc." and would be put to better use as actual "charitable giving."<sup>3</sup> However, others emphasize that many activities that fall under the umbrella of administrative costs are vital components to responsible and effective grantmaking. These activities, which include research, technical assistance, coaching, and other non-monetary forms of aid, could be endangered if H.R. 7 passes with this provision.<sup>4</sup>

Please visit the Government Relations section of the Council on Foundations' website at <http://www.cof.org> for more information. Your giving will be affected by the passage of H.R. 7. 



- 1 "Summary of House and Senate Bills," The Council on Foundations; available from <http://www.cof.org>; Internet; accessed 10 Jul. 2003.
- 2 Daniel Gross, "The 5.4 Percent Solution," MSN Slate Magazine (3 Jul. 2003); available from <http://slate.msn.com/id/2085197/>; Internet; accessed 10 Jul. 2003.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 "Member Update," Independent Sector (20 Jun. 2003); available from <http://www.washingtongrantmakers.org/wg/pdf/IndependentSector.pdf>; Internet; accessed 10 Jul. 2003.