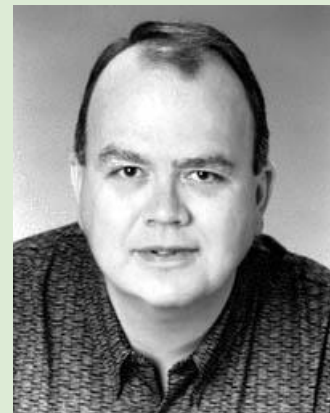


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## The Least of These

by Tom Wilkinson, Vice President, Development

In the wake of public outcry over large Wall Street bonuses, the New York Times reported that the investment bank Goldman Sachs is "considering expanding a program that would require executives and top managers to give a certain percentage of their earnings to charity." Speculation is that four percent will be the required charitable gift. I was hoping for a tithe, but I guess Wall Street bankers don't read Leviticus, Numbers or Deuteronomy.



That story stood in sharp contrast to a recent study reported in the same newspaper in December. According to Michael Tomasello, a developmental psychologist and co-director of the Max Planck Institute in Germany, "babies are innately sociable and helpful to others. The helping behavior seems to be innate because it appears so early and before many parents start teaching children the rules of polite behavior." He concludes, "Helping is a natural inclination, not something imposed by parents or culture."

That's encouraging, but not really news to anyone who's read the first chapter of Genesis. We claim to be made in the image of God, the ultimate helper and giver of all that we are and all that we have. Giving is one of God's defining characteristics, so it follows that all of us, made in God's image, are naturally generous and helpful too.

And now is the time to activate that spirit of helping and giving. Our brothers and sisters in Haiti, devastated by the catastrophic earthquake and its aftermath, need our help. Our United Methodist Committee on Relief, UMCOR, is on the scene in Port-au-Prince and will stay as long as there is need. You can help their efforts by giving through your local United Methodist church or directly to UMCOR online at [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org). Visit [www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org) to learn more about the Florida Conference's response to the emergency.

Jesus tells us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, help the

sick. He reminds us, "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

Our family in Haiti needs our help. Little kids intuitively want to do that. May we all be like little children, especially like the one born in the poverty of a manger, and help.

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As the stewardship voice of the Florida Conference, the Foundation is ready to help you, your family and your church with anything related to comprehensive Christian stewardship. For more information please call, click or write us at 1-866-363-9673 toll-free; [www.fumf.org](http://www.fumf.org); or PO Box 3549, Lakeland, FL 33802.