



## Charity is more than a figurative pet puppy dog

By Rodney Pitzer

A number of noteworthy giving related articles have recently been in the news. Many are indications of the need of a more robust charity marketplace where donors and charities can meet with confidence that will lead to increased giving.

- The latest charitable statistics by Giving USA indicate that Americans increased their giving in 2005 by more than six percent. The new report states that during 2005 Americans gave \$260.28 billion to charitable causes. This being the highest amount ever.
- Bill Gates announced that he would be working full time at his charitable organization, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Warren Buffet said that he would begin unloading his multi-billion dollar fortune **for others to give away**, with the lion's share going to the Gates Foundation to figure out how to best use the gift. The gift far exceeds the sums given by Bill Gates, Andrew Carnegie or John D. Rockefeller, according to The Chronicle of Philanthropy.
- "Billions of dollars with nowhere to go" (CNN title) - referring to money ear marked for New Orleans.
- A Business man driving through a busy down town, literally throwing money out the car window declaring "free money!"

People give to their favorite charities for many reasons - some because they have a heart for the mission, some because they have been helped by the charity, others because they know the people and like the organization - whatever the reason, in every instance a bond of trust develops between donor and charity; however, charity for some, is a figurative pet puppy dog to be patted on the head occasionally, so they or others can feel good.

Many Americans as a whole are temporally focused and short-sighted as if the dollar is the driving force in life, except when they blindly give money away in a "feel good", emotional manner for what they perceive as a good cause, but not really knowing if it is actually the best use of their money, if at all. Nonprofit missions have a unique purpose that should be run in a professional manner, and should be expected to do so. But this is difficult when many nonprofits are treated as a dog that is fed table scraps, an extension of a for-profit business, or as a mechanism to hide and conceal other activity so a few may by slight-of-hand get rich.

Donors could not be faulted if they took a "No Donations without Representation" stand at some point in the future if progress is not forthcoming. In essence, MinistryWatch.com believes this is already quietly happening, as we are certain giving would be significantly greater in a more open, transparent and functional charitable marketplace.

Access to information plays an important role in promoting giving. Information, however, must be timely, relevant, accurate and complete for it to be used effectively. Who produces what information, and for what purpose, become key issues when competing interests converge for donors and charities.

There is a very basic and rudimentary framework for donors in giving; however, much work needs to be done to improve the lot of donors and to raise the standards in the charitable marketplace. As matters currently stand, donors to public charities must sit in the back of the bus compared to the protections afforded investors in public corporations. This is not only wrong but also foolish as it deprives charities significant financial and relational benefits that a more balanced and vibrant relationship with donors would bring.

To read more about this marketplace see the related Reflection article link at [http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/pdf/Reflections\\_Marketplace.pdf](http://www.ministrywatch.com/mw2.1/pdf/Reflections_Marketplace.pdf)

### Prudent Advice

The mind of the **prudent** acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. (Prov. 18:15, NAS)

Seek information about charities before you give.

The naive believes everything, but the **prudent** man considers his steps. (Prov. 14:15, NAS)

Give your money away in a careful manner.

Without **consultation**, plans are frustrated, but with many **counselors** they succeed. (Prov. 15:22, NAS)

Seek charity specific knowledge from an information provider like MinistryWatch.com.

It is a snare for a man to say rashly, "It is holy!" and **after** the vows to make inquiry. (Prov. 20:25, NAS)  
Understand all the facts about a ministry before you give and not after.

"O naive ones, discern **prudence**; And, O fools, **discern** wisdom. (Prov. 8:5, NAS)

As a donor, are you giving as one naive or discerning?

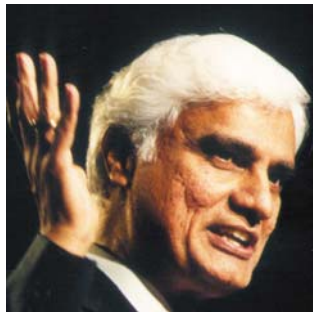
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## Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM)

By Michael Spicher & Rodney Pitzer

### Evangelism and Apologetics to a Postmodern Culture

Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM) exists "to support, expand, and enhance the preaching, teaching, and vision of Ravi Zacharias. Distinctive in its strong evangelistic and apologetic foundation, it is intended to touch both the heart and the intellect of the thinkers and opinion-makers of society with the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." RZIM is unique because it stands in the gap between the church and the rest of the world to reach the minds of men and



women with the credibility of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. RZIM attempts to recapture the ground that has been lost to skepticism and secularism. RZIM has four main areas that they focus on which are summed up in their vision statement. First, they focus on EVANGELISM, and they especially focus on the skeptics, cultural influencers, and critical thinkers. Second, they approach APOLOGETICS with ideas that confront current issues and the perceived needs of society. Third, they honor SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES that help individuals to center

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### RZIM

Transparency Grade

A

RZIM demonstrates a great deal of openness and transparency.

5 Star Financial Efficiency Ratings

☆☆

RZIM seems to require a greater investment in fundraising to carry out its mission.

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their minds and hearts on the glory of God. Finally, they offer TRAINING, in order to assist alongside of local churches in fulfilling the mandate in 1 Peter 3:15: "to set apart Christ in our hearts as Lord and always be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is within us, to do this with gentleness and respect, all for the glory of God."

### Ravi Zacharias the Man

Ravi Zacharias has been speaking all over the world for about 33 years, and he has spoken in some of the most prestigious universities on the planet, including Harvard, Princeton, and Oxford. He has also had the privilege to speak to military and government officials in South Africa, Peru, and Moscow. And he has had the honor to speak at the National Day of Prayer in Washington, D. C. Furthermore, he has spoken twice at the Annual Prayer Breakfast at the United Nations in New York, which is what begins the UN session each year. As can clearly be seen, Zacharias is one of the most sought and prolific speakers of our generation. His voice can truly be heard by most people throughout the entire world. He has the keen ability to speak to political leaders, philosophy professors, other types of intellectuals, and yet he can also speak compassionately to those suffering from a major crisis like the shootings in Columbine. Zacharias is arguably a man who can speak anyone's language.

It all began when he was born in India in 1946, and he moved to Canada with his family about 20 years later. He originally intended to pursue a career in business, but instead developed a strong interest in theology. He began to delve into theology while he was working on his bachelor's degree. This led him to go for his Master of Divinity degree from Trinity International University in Deerfield, Ill. Having become very knowledgeable in the areas of comparative religions, cults, and philosophy, he held the chair of Evangelism and Contemporary Thought at Alliance Theological Seminary for more than three years. He has received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Houghton College and Tyndale College and Seminary, and a Doctor of Laws from Asbury College.

Along with his speaking, Zacharias has authored many books. His first book, "A Shattered Visage: The Real Face of Atheism" (Baker Book House, 1994), has already been updated and republished by Baker in 2004 under the name "The Real Face of Atheism." His second book, "Can Man Live without God" (Word Publishing), also came out in 1994, and it won the Gold Medallion for best book in the category of doctrine and theology.

"Deliver us from Evil" (Word, 1996) came out next, and this one was later developed into a video series. "Cries of the Heart" (Word, 1998) was his fourth book. Zacharias also put out two children's books, "The Merchant and the Thief" (Chariot Victor, 1999) and "The Broken Promise" (Chariot Victor, 2000). "Jesus Among Other Gods" (Word, 2000) came out next, and it was nominated for the Gold Medallion. Then, Zacharias began a series of imaginary conversations between Jesus and famous people. "The Lotus and the Cross: Jesus Talks with Buddha" was published by Multnomah in 2001, and the second one, "Sense and Sensuality: Jesus Talks with Oscar Wilde," appeared in 2002. "Light in the Shadow of Jihad" (Multnomah, 2002) was his personal reaction to the September 11th tragedy. "Recapture the Wonder" was published by Integrity in 2003, and "I, Isaac take Thee, Rebekah," a book on marriage, was published by W Publishing Group in 2004. Some of his books have been translated into other languages, such as Russian, Korean, and Thai.

He is the president of RZIM, which has headquarters in Atlanta, Ga. They also have bases in Canada, India, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates. Zacharias has two radio broadcasts. One is called "Let My People Think," which goes out weekly to over 1500 nations worldwide. The other one is called "Just Thinking," and this one goes out on weekdays. Zacharias and his wife, Margie, have their home in Atlanta. They have three children, Sarah, who is married to Jeremy, Naomi, and Nathan. They live in Atlanta as well.

### The Four-fold Emphasis Expounded


**Evangelism** - One of the main things that RZIM does to be effective in evangelism is that they go present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people on their own territory. They lecture, debate, and teach people on their own territory, whether it is a school, a radio program, or a TV show. The leadership of RZIM confront the leaders, thinkers, and decision-makers of society up close and personal, rather than merely from a distance through books, TV, radio, and the Internet (though they utilize these things as well).

**Apologetics** - Ravi Zacharias and his team are on the cutting edge of thinkers and movements in our culture. They defend the Christian faith with information that is current and relevant. They are well-educated in order to handle the task that they have in apologetics. Zacharias gets to speak in some very prestigious places because he has gained their respect as a thinker and intellectual. Zacharias has proven his ability to talk with the most educated in our society again and again. "With a team of people based in six countries, RZIM is committed to reaching this generation around the world - in the university, the arts, politics, business, and the church. Through open forums, community outreach, and various media, we seek to remove the barriers to the cross for the skeptic and we prepare Christians to give a reason for the hope within us" (from RZIM.org).

**Spiritual Disciplines** - In all of his teachings to the church, Ravi Zacharias always emphasizes the importance of prayer, bible reading, and other spiritual disciplines in the life of the believer. Knowledge is not enough. It certainly seems that the main way that RZIM helps Christians develop their spiritual disciplines is through their printed materials. Zacharias' books and all of the literature that are available through RZIM.

**Training** - Through Wycliffe Hall/Zacharias Trust, one can earn a certificate of evangelism and apologetics. This program attempts to meet the following objectives: (1) give students a basic grasp of theology; (2) help students present the gospel more effectively in contemporary societies; (3) prepare them to answer questions posed to Christians from other worldviews; (4) help the student develop a spiritual lifestyle that will sustain them in ministry and in lifestyle; (5) provide opportunities for supervised practical training and experience in evangelism and apologetics. The good thing is that anyone can do this program; you do not have to have any prior degrees in theology or philosophy. The program lasts only one academic year.

### Getting Involved with RZIM

On its website, RZIM outlines three main ways for people to get involved in the ministry. **First**, RZIM asks for prayer. The opportunities they have for ministry continue to grow, and they ask for prayer in discerning God's direction and wisdom. **Second**, they seek people's involvement as serious students of God's Word. They have many resources available to help guide in the study of the Bible and things pertaining to Christianity. **Third** RZIM needs financial assistance in order to keep going. 

## RZIM

**Supporters Might Say**

- Ravi Zacharias is able to speak on current topics in a given culture, yet integrate a timeless biblical message with it.
- Ravi Zacharias' speaking style is able to grab the attention of believers and non-believers alike. He is able to speak on a level or in a way that pertains to any audience that is presented before him.
- Ravi Zacharias is highly respected within the Christian community as evidenced by his being sought for highly visible speaking platforms and across denominational lines.
- Zacharias is also a very prolific writer, and his books are often the cause of his reputation preceding him. Hence, his books have gained him much respect in the culture.

**Critics Might Say**

- Sometimes Zacharias' sermons and lectures are too intellectual, and they go over people's heads because he uses too many big words.
- Ravi sometimes goes off into too many "rabbit trails" in his talks that it becomes difficult for some people to follow the point of the lecture.
- No clear and public disclosures about the royalties and ownership rights to Ravi Zacharias' books.
- RZIM spends too much time focusing on the man, Ravi Zacharias.

Organizational Details	
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Federal Law	EIN: 13-3200719 Tax-Exempt Tax Deductible

### Worldview Considerations

- RZIM is non-denominational.
- All staff must affirm their statement of faith, yearly.
- The ministry seems to use existential apologetics (a synthesis between psychology and philosophy), although Zacharias does discuss various traditional arguments for the existence of God, including the cosmological, teleological, and moral arguments.
- No attempt to engage in "political activism," but by discussing what is right and wrong from a Christian worldview.
- RZIM adheres to fairly standard evangelical theology.



### Contact Us

MinistryWatch Direct aims to spur donors to examine ministries and make discerning giving decisions.

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