

Retreating to our Refuge

In the months of economic crisis that followed September 11, retailers reported a retreat from and a shift in consumer spending—to purchases related to home nesting, security, and comfort. (*Literally, sales of comforters and comfort foods went up.*)

It is in our nature to seek shelter from a storm, whether atmospheric or economic. We read many instances in the Old Testament in which famines drove people to turn back to God. And even today, in the midst of our current economic crisis, we read reports of increasing attendance at many congregations.

Times of trouble also cause people to shift their spending. Vain, extravagant, designer-brand luxuries give way to inexpensive, generic items—the simple basics. That shift in spending reminds us of Jesus' words, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6: 19–21)

Economic crisis can lead people to reassess their values, changing their focus to family, friends, and a more meaningful purpose for life. A nationwide retreat back to the basics is often accompanied by more attention to the needs of heart and spirit.

As people retreat back to the basics of the soul, we stand ready to provide the aid and comfort of those basic spiritual resources for people seeking refuge along the Christian journey.

For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm, and a shade from the heat. —Isaiah 25:4