

Christian Charities Look for Cyber Monday Donations

It's Cyber Monday. That means millions of consumers will flood the Internet looking for online bargains in what has become the busiest Internet shopping day of the year. By some estimates, Cyber Monday revenue will top \$1 billion again in 2011.

But virtual shoppers can give back while cashing in on Christmas deals—and Christian charities are hoping they do.

The charitable giving trend is expected to continue despite another holiday season faced with a struggling economy, according to a Harris Interactive study. Of survey participants, 51 percent say they're now more likely to give a charitable gift as a holiday present this year. And 80 percent of adults say they'd prefer to receive a "meaningful gift" that would help someone else instead of a traditional holiday gift like clothing or electronics.

International Christian humanitarian organization World Vision is proving this study out. More than half of the \$32 million contributed through the organization's annual holiday Gift Catalog were funds raised through its online catalog.

The virtual store features more than 250 untraditional holiday gifts including cows, chickens, mosquito nets and microloans that are purchased on behalf of families living in impoverished communities.

"This year, World Vision is issuing a challenge to all Cyber Monday shoppers to consider items in the Gift Catalog," says Traci Coker, national director of the World Vision Gift Catalog. "We know times are tough but we also know shoppers are looking for gifts that are impactful. As long as you're going to be doing some shopping online, why not include a

meaningful gift?"

Givers can make the purchase in the name of a friend, family member or business associate. World Vision sends special cards to those individuals, describing the gifts and their impact on people in areas where extreme poverty is a reality.

Last year alone, the World Vision U.S. Gift Catalog helped provide assistance to more than 800,000 people around the world. Since launching the catalog in 1996, World Vision has raised more than \$162 million.