

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering Information
from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey

Phillip B. Jones

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Memorandum

To: Marty King
From: Phil Jones
Date: May 15, 2002
Re: Annie Armstrong Easter Offering Information from the US Congregational Life Survey

We have received the US Congregational Life database for Southern Baptists and are now beginning to analyze it. In the database we have information on nearly 20,000 Southern Baptist worship service attendees. Out of this 20,000 nearly 2,000 answered a unique set of questions designed for Southern Baptists. Two of these questions dealt with the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Note that these 2,000 attendees were surveyed on the last Sunday in April 2001 and statistically represent 5.2 million worship service attendees in Southern Baptist Churches.

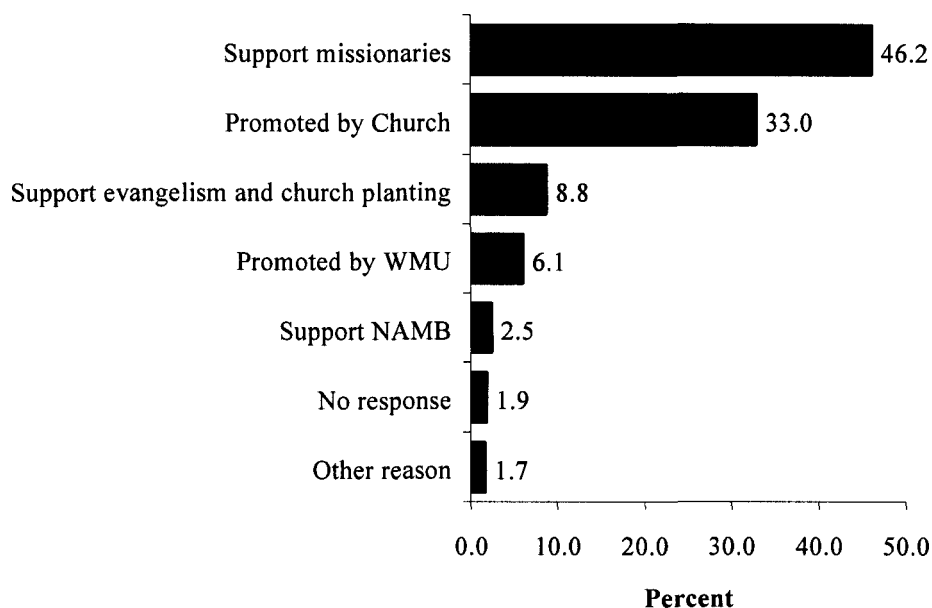
Based on responses to the survey, 81.7 percent of worship service attendees in Southern Baptist Churches on Sunday morning were members of the church (where they were being surveyed). Another 7.4 percent indicated that while they were not members, they did regularly participate at the church and another 2.2 percent indicated they were in the process of becoming a member. Thus, 91.4 percent of worship service attendees should be regular participants in the congregation where they were enumerated and should have some familiarity with Southern Baptist life and potentially aware of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. The remaining 8.6 percent either responded that they were not members of the congregation (without providing additional information, 5.1%) or did not respond to the question at all (3.1%). Whether these people are familiar with Southern Baptist life is uncertain.

Respondents were asked whether they had made a financial contribution to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions during the past two years. Of the regular participants as defined above, 6 of 10 (63.0%) indicated they had contributed to the offering. Another 31.9 percent indicated they had not contributed to the offering in the past two years. The remaining 5.1 percent did not respond to this question. The 31.9 percent that did not contribute can be further divided into the 27.7 percent who simply indicated they had not given to the offering and 4.2 percent who indicated they had never heard of the offering. The implication is that the overwhelming majority of regular participants are familiar with the special missions offering (9 of 10) and the majority (6 of 10) contribute to it.

Using the sample data to infer back to the original population of Southern Baptist Sunday morning worship service attendees, it is estimated that 3.5 million people have contributed to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering within the last two years.

A follow-up question was asked of all persons who contributed to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering concerning their primary motivation for giving. Almost half indicated that supporting missionaries was their primary motivation for contributing to the special offering. The second most important reason was simply because their church promoted it. Apparently a third of contributors give because they trust the leadership of their local congregation to validate the worthiness of the offering. Less than 1 of 10 report church planting and evangelism as the primary motivation for their offering. Only very small percentages of contributors give in order to support an agency or give just because WMU asks them to do so. (See the figure below.)

If [you have contributed to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering in the past two years], what was your primary motivation for contributing to this special offering?



The major implication of these finding is that the offering should be promoted to the “person-in-the-pew” as a way to support missionaries. A second implication is that NAMB should promote the importance of conducting the offering to churches because a significant number of persons contribute simply because their church promotes it.