

# RESEARCH REPORT

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*Promotion of Special Missions Offerings  
Among Southern Baptist Churches*

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There has been concern in recent years about the lack of promotion of the traditional Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) missions offerings—the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions. Some churches promote only one special missions offering each year and divide it among all mission concerns including non-Baptist sponsored mission activities.

As part of the evaluation of the 1994 Season of Home Missions promotional efforts, a question concerning promotion of the missions offerings was asked of pastors. There were two samples of pastors in the study. The first sample was selected to represent all SBC churches with pastors. An initial sample of 1,500 pastors was chosen. Out of these, 635 pastors responded to the survey—a 43.3 percent response rate. A second sample of 300 pastors of large churches with more than 2,000 total members was chosen. Out of these, 194 pastors responded to the survey—a 64.7 percent response rate. This second sample was chosen because earlier research conducted by the Foreign Mission Board indicated that promotion of one missions offering was primarily a large church phenomenon.

The following question was asked of both pastors samples:

*“Which of the following statements best reflects your church’s promotion of special missions offerings?”*

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>Large Church Pastors</u>
Our church promotes both the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions during the Christmas season and The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions during the Easter season.	93.6%	77.7%
Our church promotes only one special missions offering during the year and divides it between the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board	0.6	4.7
Our church promotes only one special missions offering during the year and divides it among all mission causes (such as home missions, foreign missions, state missions, associational missions, specific missionaries, non Southern Baptist missions agencies, etc. )	2.4	8.8
We do not promote any special missions offerings	1.1	0.5
Other, please specify	2.3	8.3

As previously concluded by the Foreign Mission Board’s sponsored research, promoting one missions offering and dividing it among all missions causes is primarily a large church phenomenon. Only 3.0 percent of all SBC churches promote only one special missions offering and divide it among various causes—this is inclusive of large churches. Another 2.3 percent promote missions in a nontraditional manner such as promoting through Cooperative Baptist Fellowship’s Global Missions Offering, budgeting a portion of regular tithes and offerings, or promoting only the Lottie Moon offering. The remaining 1.1 percent do not promote any special missions offerings. Based on these percentages, an estimated 1,750 SBC churches with pastors promote the offering in some manner other than the traditional promotion of both the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Only 13.5 percent of large churches promote one offering and divide it in some fashion. The best estimate is that 110 large churches with more than 2,000 members promote only one missions offering and then divide it among mission causes. Another 8.3 percent, an estimated 70 churches, promote the offering in some “other” manner.