

**ABSTRACTS OF HOME MISSION STUDY INFORMATION
FROM RECENT SURVEYS**

by

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This document abstracts information pertaining to the Home Mission Study that has been collected in surveys during the past thirteen years. In some instances additional comments, emphases or interpretations have been added that were not part of the source documents.

I. *Home Missions Emphasis Survey, 1988* by Phillip B. Jones and Richie C. Stanley

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to collect information that assists in the evaluation of efforts used in the promotion of Home Missions emphases—Home Mission Teleconference, Home Missions Study, Week of Prayer for Home Missions, and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions—and to suggest new approaches in their promotion. A systematic sample of 984 pastors was chosen from the list of pastors maintained by the Sunday School Board. The questionnaire was mailed to the sample of pastors during the third week of April, 1988. A second mailing followed in May. As a result of both mailings, 556 questionnaires were returned of which 548 were useable. The adjusted response rate was 56 percent.

Participation

Half of the pastors reported that their church participated in the 1988 Home Missions Study. This also means that about half of the churches did not participate. There was a multitude of reasons given for not participating, however, some of the major identifiable categories of response were “too much else going on,” “lack of or problems with WMU or Brotherhood,” “did something different for Home Missions emphasis,” “lack of interest,” “lack of information,” and “lack of planning or promotion in the local church.”

Of the 272 churches that had a Home Missions Study, the study was churchwide in 56 percent. Only the WMU organizations participated in the study in one-third of these same churches. Adults were involved in the missions study in 85 percent of the participating churches, youth in 53 percent, and children in 46 percent.

A typical church devoted about three hours to the missions study, in fact, 7 of 10 pastors reported three or less hours spent in missions study. One of 10 pastors reported more than five hours were devoted to this special event in his church.

Promotion

Seven of 10 pastors whose churches had the Home Missions Study were directly involved in promoting the study in their church. Wednesday night was the most likely time for the study to be substituted for a regularly scheduled church service, 45 percent of the churches used this time period as opposed to 23 percent of churches on Sunday evening and only 6 percent on Sunday morning. Pastors in 36 percent of participating churches reported that their churches did not substitute the Home Missions Study for any regularly scheduled church service.

The following list outlines the personal use of promotional materials for pastors in churches participating in the study:

Poster	77%
Clip art for Bulletins and Newsletters	60
Missions Map "Come Home to Missions"	35
Video Tape "A Church for Everyone"	33
Complete Planning Kit	29
Sermon Outline "A Church Starter's Story"	15
Filmstrip "A Church for Everyone"	13
Invitation Postcard	3
Lapel Buttons	1

Each promotional item was rated favorably by those pastors who used it. For example, 61 of the 63 pastors (97%) who used the video tape rated it at least somewhat helpful in planning and promoting the 1988 Home Missions Study. Each of the other promotional tools were at least somewhat helpful to more than 4 of 5 pastors who used them. The video magazine scored highest in helpfulness based on comparing "very helpful" scores among promotional materials used.

Impact of Church Characteristics

Home Missions Studies were held in 61.8 percent of churches with a WMU, compared to 6.1 percent with no WMU.

A comparison of participation in the Home Missions Study shows 59.2 percent and 40.2 percent respectively for churches with and without a Brotherhood.

Only 30.0 percent of small churches had a Home Missions Study, compared to 55.8 percent of medium size churches and 76.4 percent of large churches.

Implications

A Home Missions Emphasis program includes the teleconference, Week of Prayer, Home Missions Study, and the AAEO. The presence of a WMU organization seems to impact all four of these components positively. Smaller membership churches are less likely to have WMU organizations and less likely to participate in the emphases.

Any strategy to improve participation in the Home Missions Emphasis cannot ignore the WMU organization in the local church. Creating new WMU units, especially in smaller membership churches, and strengthening existing units in all churches will most likely have the greatest impact on church participation in the four major emphases.

II. Evaluation Of The "Good News, Bad News" Promotional Packet For Pastors, 1990 by Phillip B. Jones

Introduction

In January 1990 a promotional packet was mailed to all SBC pastors containing a cassette tape of a sermon prepared by Dr. Joel Gregory entitled "Good News, Bad News." The purpose of the mailing was to encourage pastors to preach a sermon related to the special offering and to otherwise promote the offering in their churches.

In order to evaluate this mailing and collect information on participation of churches in Season of Home Missions events, a sample of approximately 1,000 pastors was surveyed beginning just shortly after Easter, 1990. The response rate for this survey was 41.2 percent. There appears to be a small bias in sample respondents in that churches that promote the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering are overrepresented.

Home Mission Study

In order to discover participation in all Seasons of Home Missions events, pastors were asked if their churches participated in the 1990 Home Mission Study, "So the Lost May Hear." **Less than half, (42.2 percent) participated in the mission study. Participation in the mission study was a function of church size.** Only 9.2 percent of churches with fewer than 100 members participated. This percentage consistently increased for every size category up to the 67.6 participation rate for churches from 500 to 999 members then dropped to 55.6 percent for churches with more than 1,000 members. The percentage for each size category is as follows:

<u>Membership</u>	<u>Percentage of Churches with the Home Mission Study</u>
Fewer than 100	9.2%
100-199	30.2
200-299	40.8
300-499	65.0
500-599	67.6
1000 and up	55.6
	(n=393)

This relationship between church size and participation in the study holds even when controlling for WMU.

About half of the churches with WMU (51.9 percent) reported participating in the Home Mission Study. Only 4.2 percent of churches without WMU participated in the study in 1990. Thus presence of a WMU organization is practically a prerequisite for the study.

III. Evaluation of the "There is No Hope" Promotional Packet For Pastors, 1991 by Phillip B. Jones

Introduction

In January 1991 a promotional packet containing a cassette tape of a sermon prepared by Dr. Frank Pollard entitled "THERE IS NO HOPE," was mailed to all SBC pastors. In order to evaluate this mailing and collect information on participation of churches in Season of Home Missions events, a sample of approximately 1,000 pastors was surveyed beginning Easter, 1991. The response rate for this survey was 44.9 percent. There appears to be a some bias in the sample of respondents due to overrepresentation of churches that promote the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and contribute to the offering.

Home Mission Study

In order to discover participation in all Season of Home Missions events, pastors were asked if their churches participated in the 1991 Home Mission Study, "People With A Mission," and the 1991 Home Missions Teleconference. **Less than half, (39.5%) participated in the**

mission study. Participation in the mission study was a function of church size. Only 22.4 percent of churches with fewer than 100 members participated. However, this was up considerably from the 9.2 percent of churches in this category in the 1990 survey. This percentage increases for every size category up to 500 members then drops slightly for churches with more than 500 members. The percentage for each size category is as follows:

<u>Membership</u>	<u>Percentage of Churches with the Home Mission Study</u>
Fewer than 100	22.4%
100-199	36.7
200-299	37.1
300-499	53.9
500-599	45.3
1,000 and up	44.8
	(n=419)

Participation rates are up for small churches and down for large churches since 1990.

Nearly half of the churches with WMU (48.0%) reported participating in the Home Mission Study. Only 2.6 percent of churches without WMU participated in the study in 1991. **Therefore presence of a WMU organization is practically a prerequisite for the study.**

Five additional opinion questions were asked concerning promotion and observance of events related to the Season of Home Missions. It was asked if the Home Mission Study and the Week of Prayer should be combined and scheduled during the same week. The majority response was “Yes, combine them.”—62.2 percent of pastors. The next most frequent response was “No opinion.” Only 16.5 percent of pastors thought these two events should be left separate events.

IV. Evaluation of the 1991 Master Planning Guide For a Season of Home Missions by Phillip B. Jones

Introduction

In December of 1990 and January of 1991 copies of a sixteen page booklet entitled *1991 Master Planning Guide for A Season Of Home Missions* were distributed through state convention offices to pastors, WMU directors, and Brotherhood Directors in the eight state conventions of Alabama, California, Georgia, New England, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and Wyoming. This document promoted the four major home missions emphases for 1991—(1) the Home Missions Teleconference, (2) the Home Mission Study, (3) the Week of Prayer for Home Missions, and (4) the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions—using the “A Season of Home Missions” concept.

A survey was conducted after Easter in 1991 to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot project in these eight state conventions and to gather additional information on the participation of churches in Season of Home Missions events and opinions concerning home missions promotion.

A total sample of almost 3,500 pastors, WMU directors and Brotherhood directors was selected from the eight pilot project states. Overall, there was a response rate of 36.4 percent for pastors, 54.5 percent for WMU directors and 21.0 percent for Brotherhood directors.

Promotion of the Home Mission Study

In 1991, 49.4 percent of pastors, 65.5 percent of WMU directors and 27.5 percent of Brotherhood directors in the pilot project states indicated that their church participated in the Home Mission Study, "People With a Mission." In the national survey of pastors only 39.5 percent indicated their churches participated in the study. The difference between the two percentages for pastors is not easily explained. The best explanation is that the large numbers of churches in Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina that participated in the Home Missions Study correctly weights the sample data upward, but the resultant percentage is not representative of the entire Southern Baptist Convention.

There does seem to be some regional differences in participation in the Home Mission Study. The following table lists the percentage of each target group by state convention that participated in the Home Mission Study during the scheduled week or at some other time.

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>WMU</u>	<u>Brotherhood</u>
Alabama	53.3%	78.8%	36.9%
California	44.1	54.0	...
Georgia	69.5	63.6	...
New England	14.9	34.2	0.0
North Carolina	59.3	72.0	...
Ohio	34.6	35.1	20.0
Texas	28.8	58.3	21.7
Wyoming	26.1	63.6	42.9

The highest participation rates, considering responses for pastors and WMU directors, are for the "Old South" states of Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina. While pastors in Texas and Wyoming report low participation rates, WMU directors report considerably higher participation rates. As noted in the national survey of pastors, presence of WMU is practically a prerequisite for participation in the Home Missions Study.

The following table lists the detailed responses for the target audiences of the pilot project.¹

	<u>Pastors</u>	<u>WMU</u>	<u>Brotherhood</u>
Yes, during the scheduled week of February 17-20	30.0%	33.2%	16.7%
Yes, but during a different week	19.4	32.3	10.8
No	50.6	34.5	58.3
I don't know	14.3

Note that WMU directors are more likely to be in churches that have the mission study and that half of those churches scheduled it for a different week than scheduled by the denomination.

¹Only Brotherhood directors were given the option of responding "I don't know."

WMU directors were specifically queried about who in their churches has primary responsibility for planning and promoting the Home Mission Study in their churches. The following are their responses.²

	<u>WMU</u>
Pastors	21.7%
WMU directors	81.0
Brotherhood directors	4.3
Minister of Education	1.5
Other paid church staff	0.6
Other (Please specify)	18.9

The responses concerning planning and promotion of the mission study are very similar to those for planning and promotion of the Week of Prayer. **The WMU director is the primary person with responsibility.**

Brotherhood directors were asked about their involvement in the planning and promotion of the Home Mission Study. Overall, 39.1 percent of Brotherhood directors in churches with a mission study indicated they were involved in planning and/or promoting it. Detailed responses are as follows:

	<u>Brotherhood</u>
Yes, planning	4.7%
Yes, promoting	17.2
Yes, planning and promoting	17.2
No	56.7
No response	4.2

Opinions of Season of Home Missions Events

One question asked about combining the Home Mission Study and the Week of Prayer for Home Missions and scheduling them during the same week. This question was asked of only WMU directors and Brotherhood directors in the pilot project states but was asked of all pastors in the national survey. Responses are as follows:

	Pastors (National <u>Survey</u>)	<u>WMU</u>	<u>Brotherhood</u>
Yes, combine them	62.2%	49.5%	49.2%
No opinion	21.3	12.3	22.5
No, leave them separate events	16.5	38.2	28.4

The most frequent response from each of the three groups is to combine the two events. However, there is considerable opposition to this idea from WMU directors. A substantial 38.2 percent indicated that the two events should not be combined. The strength of opposition of this 38.2 percent might need to be studied before any significant change is implemented.

²A comparable question was not asked of pastors in the national survey in 1991.

V. Uniform Church Letter Data

On at least three occasions the Sunday School Board has asked about participation in the Home Mission Study on the Uniform Church Letter—in 1978, 1986 and 1991.

In 1978 the question was worded, “Did your church conduct a churchwide study of the Home Mission Graded Series books? A ‘yes’ means your church provided mission study classes for all adults, youth, and children.” There were 6,590 churches that answered “yes” to this question. **They comprised 18.8 percent of currently reporting churches in 1978.**

In 1986 the question was worded “Did church conduct a churchwide study of the annual home mission study book? A ‘yes’ means your church provided mission study classes for adults, youth, children, and preschoolers.” There were 8,382 churches that responded “yes” to this question. **This is 22.9 percent of currently reporting churches in 1986.**

In 1991 the question was worded, “Did church have a church-wide study of the annual home mission study book? A ‘yes’ means your church provided mission study classes for adults, youth, children, and preschoolers.” The data is preliminary at this time and may be subject to slight adjustments. **There were 8,647 churches that responded “yes” to this question, which translates into 23.1 percent of currently reporting churches.**

Note that these questions emphasized (1) that the event was churchwide and (2) that study classes were provided for all age groups. Given the stringent requirements for answering “yes” to this question, there were most certainly additional churches that participated in the study but the study was not churchwide nor were classes provided for all age groups. In the *Home Missions Emphasis Survey, 1988* only 56 percent of pastors responded that the study was churchwide and 46 percent said that children were included in the study. Thus, the true numbers and percentages of churches participating in the study, in any fashion, might possibly be double those derived from Uniform Church Letter data.

VI. Unpublished analysis of the 1986 UCL data regarding participation in the Home Mission Study by Charles Doggett, Discipleship Training, BSSB

Charles Doggett developed statistical tables comparing and contrasting Southern Baptist churches with and without the Home Mission Study. Note that the criteria used was the stringent definition of churchwide study and study for all age groups as referenced in the previous section. Doggett developed the tables but the observations that follow are those of the author of this abstract.

The following median profile was developed comparing and contrasting these two groups:

**Median Profile of a Southern Baptist Church With
and Without a Home Mission Study, 1986**

Uniform Church Letter Item	With Home Mission Study	Without Home Mission Study
Total Members	441	199
Resident Members	326	140
Baptisms	9	4
Age of Church (years)	73	60
Other Additions	11	5
Pastoral Tenure (years)	4	3
Sunday School Enrollment	234	91
Average Weekly Sunday School Attendance	121	54
Church Training Enrollment	67	17
WMU Enrollment	54	11
Brotherhood Enrollment	24	0
Music Enrollment	53	21
Total Receipts	\$103,875	\$35,785
Tithes and Offerings	\$101,615	\$34,765
Undesignated Gifts	\$85,170	\$30,005
Total Local Expenditures	\$78,795	\$28,165
Total Mission Expenditures	\$17,256	\$4,238
Cooperative Program	\$8,563	\$1,731
Associational Missions Gifts	\$2,078	\$661
Annie Armstrong Easter Offering	\$880	\$151
Percentage of Undesignated Gifts to Cooperative Program	10.1	6.8
Percentage of Undesignated Gifts to Association	2.4	2.2

The main conclusions from this table is that church size is an important factor in participation in churchwide home mission study including all age groups. The median church with the study is at least double the membership of the median church without the study. This is also true of Sunday School enrollment and average weekly Sunday School attendance. Financial resources as evidenced by total receipts and total tithes and offerings are three times higher for the median church with the study.

Missions interest and support as evidenced by missions organizations enrollment and missions giving are much higher for churches with the study. WMU enrollment for the median church with the study is five times higher than for the median church without the study. The median Brotherhood enrollment is 24 for churches with the study and 0 for churches without. Cooperative program giving is 5 times higher, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is almost 6 times higher, and total mission expenditures is 4 times higher in churches participating in the study. Missions interest and support and the presence of the Home Mission Study most likely involve a reciprocal relationship. Mission interest and support affect whether a church conducts a mission study and the mission study in turn affects missions interest and support.

The table that follows shows more clearly the relationship between size of church and presence of the churchwide Home Mission Study:

Size of Churches With A Churchwide Home Mission Study, 1986

Church Membership	Total Churches Reporting	Churches With Study	Percent With Study
Under 50	2,169	103	4.7 %
50-99	4,709	322	6.8
100-149	4,725	488	10.3
150-199	4,103	536	13.1
200-249	3,417	616	18.0
250-299	2,775	618	22.3
300-399	3,909	1,080	27.6
400-499	2,692	936	34.8
500-749	3,459	1,431	41.4
750-999	1,721	812	47.2
1000-1499	1,544	796	51.6
1500-1999	610	311	51.0
2000-2999	435	212	48.7
3000-up	268	121	45.1
Total	36,536	8,382	22.9

The percentage of churches conducting a churchwide study for all age groups increases for every size category listed up to churches with 1,000 or more members. Beyond 1,000 members the participation percentage decreases slightly.

Of churches with a WMU organization, 32.3 percent had a churchwide Home Missions study. Of those churches without WMU, only 1.6 percent conducted a churchwide study.

Of churches with a Brotherhood organization, 36.9 percent conducted a churchwide study while only 8.4 percent of churches without Brotherhood conducted a study.

Churches in the older established Southern Baptist state conventions are slightly more likely to have a churchwide study than those in newer or pioneer state conventions—24.6 percent versus 20.6 percent.

Presence of WMU and participation in a churchwide Home Mission Study jointly affect AAEO giving. In churches with both the percapita giving (resident member) to AAEO was \$3.55 while in churches without both it was \$1.14. WMU was the more important variable. Churches with WMU but without a study gave \$2.47 per capita, while churches without WMU but with a study gave \$1.43 per capita. A similar relationship was found for per capita giving to the cooperative program.

VII. Baptist ViewPoll Data

A couple of questions indirectly relating to the Home Mission study have been asked during the past ten years of pastors, ministers of education and directors of missions through the Baptist ViewPoll.

In May 1982 all three groups were asked if they read/studied the adult mission study book for 1982 and if they could recall the title. There were 256 pastors, 203 ministers of education and 129 directors of missions who responded to this survey. **Overall, 36.0 percent of the panel members indicated they had read/studied the adult mission study book.** This breaks down into 56 percent of directors of missions, 31 percent of ministers of education and 29 percent of pastors.

Overall, of those who said they had read/studied the book, only 50 percent could correctly recall the book title and 57 percent could correctly recall the subject matter.

Cross-tabulation data for this item reveals a significant difference between pastors in that 38 percent of those who serve east of the Mississippi River report having read/studied the Mission study book, while only 13 percent of those who serve west of the River have read/studied the book. Also, 60 percent of the directors of missions who serve in "old" SBC States have read/studied the book, while only 40 percent of those who serve in "new" SBC states have read/studied the book.

In the June, 1984 ViewPoll the following question was asked of pastors and ministers of education. "For the 1984 Week of Prayer for Home Missions what ways did your church use to promote member's awareness of the needs and work of the Home Mission Board?" Fifteen possible responses were provided to respondents. There were 177 pastors and 111 ministers of education that responded to this question.

Of those that responded to this question, 36 percent of pastors and 54 percent of ministers of education said that mission books were taught in the mission organization(s). Twelve percent of pastors and 16 percent of ministers of education indicated a churchwide study of the mission book on Sunday and Wednesday nights. Four percent of pastors and 4 percent of ministers of education indicated a churchwide study of the mission book occurred on two or more evenings (presumably other than Sunday and Wednesday evenings). Only 1 percent of pastors and 3 percent of ministers of education indicated the a churchwide study of the mission book on two or more mornings. Interestingly, 23 percent of pastors and 24 percent of ministers of education indicated the mission book circulated for individual home study. Note that the question encouraged multiple responses and thus some of these categories of mission study probably overlap. Therefore, these percentages cannot be totaled to get overall participation rates for the Home Mission study in 1984.

VIII Summary

Surveys of pastors probably result in a slightly inflated participation rate for the Home Mission study because these surveys do not include churches without pastors—most of which are probably smaller churches without WMU and without the study. At the same time the participation rates provided by UCL data are too low because they only include churches with churchwide studies with classes for all age groups. A rough estimate is that 35 to 40 percent of Southern Baptist churches participate in the Home Mission study in some fashion.

Participation of the Home Mission study is a function of church size. Small churches are unlikely to participate in the study. Participation rates increase for every size category up to 1,000 members. Participation declines slightly for very large churches.

Presence of WMU is the most important factor for participation in the study—in fact a WMU organization is almost a prerequisite for the study.

Most churches devote three or less hours to the study.

The WMU director is the primary person responsible for planning the Home Mission study.

There is considerable feeling that the Home Mission study be combined with the Week of Prayer for Home Missions.