**Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research**

**Request for Proposals**

**Research on Mission Offerings in the North American Division**

July 2014

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) requests proposals for undertaking research on mission offerings in the North-American Division (NAD).

Although members of the Seventh-day Adventist church have been historically and continue to be mission oriented, there is widespread anecdotal evidence that few Adventists have a good sense of how their mission offerings are used and that, for example, few know their mission offerings support about 1,000 missionaries in different countries around the world.[[1]](#footnote-1) Official church statistics show that over the last four decades there “has been a decrease both in the numbers of cross-cultural missionaries in long-term service and in the annual giving to world-wide missions by church members.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Recent research reveals that “the divisions of the world church show a positive trend [in mission giving] while it is flat in the North American Division. It appears that this NAD trend is due to members giving offerings directly to a number of overseas projects such as the One-Day-Church projects, ShareHim, various mission trips, and other mission endeavors.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

The General Conference Officers desire data on attitudes to mission-offerings giving, and use of material prepared by GC (Adventist Mission) in relation to its impact and usage in the local churches. For this project, “mission offerings” include regular Sabbath School and Church offerings when directed to “World Budget”: this includes Thirteenth Sabbath offerings; local mission trip offerings; and the birthday-thank offering, etc.[[4]](#footnote-4) The aim of this research project is (a) to enable improvements in DVDs, TV programs and other materials prepared for mission offerings, and (b) to identify ways to rectify the decline and to stimulate the increase of mission offerings in NAD. By this Request for Proposals, ASTR invites researchers to submit proposals for this project.

1. **Organizations to be surveyed**

The research should encompass randomly selected representative membership samples in each union of NAD. If it proves necessary to conduct surveys in local churches, the random sample should reflect the distribution of churches of different sizes.

1. **Research outcomes**

Development and implementation of, and analysis of results from, a survey of North American church members, investigating:

* What motivates Adventist members in NAD to give mission offerings to the Seventh-day Adventist Church
* What motivates Adventist members in NAD to donate to other agencies of cross-cultural mission
* General attitudes to mission offering giving
* The impact and effectiveness of the materials designed for mission awareness and mission offering in Sabbath School, including:
* *Mission Quarterly*
* *Mission 360° Adventist Mission* DVDs
* *Mission 360°* magazine
* *Mission 360°* TV programs on Hope Channel
* *Global Mission Spotlight* TV programs on 3ABN
* Factors that contribute to a decrease of mission offerings in NAD
* Factors that could help to increase mission offerings in NAD

Personal or telephone interviews would be preferred as a research methodology but proposals for paper or online surveys will be considered. Only church members aged 18 and over should be surveyed.

1. **Scope and target audiences**

Seventh-day Adventist church members in the North American Division.

1. **Indicative list of potential questions for research instrument**:
* How aware are they of individual missionaries?
* Do they give more to independent ministries than to the official church (including in fund raising for individuals)?
* What are church members’ attitudes to mission-offerings giving?
* Are they always aware to what division or world territory mission offerings are going each quarter? If so, what is the source of their knowledge?
* What material is regularly used in their local congregation in Sabbath School to promote giving to projects in a particular territory?
* What means are especially interesting and inspiring to them in relation to mission offerings?
* What in particular motivates them to contribute to worldwide church projects?
* Does their Sabbath School class or congregation have additional missionary projects to which they donate?
* Where do they prefer to give their mission offerings or donations—to SDA global church projects promoted in Sabbath School or to other projects?
* How frequently, in their local congregation, do they hear mission stories from *Mission Quarterly* or watch *Mission 360° Adventist Mission* DVDs?
* Do they watch regularly *Mission 360°* TV programs on Hope Channel or *Global Mission Spotlight* on 3ABN?
* Why (in their opinion) is the SDA church gathering money through mission offerings?
* How regularly do they give for cross-cultural missions?
* How aware are they of self-supporting and independent mission agencies (Adventist Frontier Mission, etc.)?
* How often do they personally give to Thirteenth Sabbath offerings, the Sabbath School investment offering, or the birthday-thank offering?
* How often do they give to support local church or educational institution mission trips?
* How often to they give to supporting or other independent Adventist agencies for cross-cultural mission?
1. **List of data**

The following can be made use of by research teams:

Information needed for research/survey from NAD, its unions and conferences

1. **Limitations and requirements**

There are some limitations and requirements:

1. Names of respondents and participants in the study as well as their locations should not be exposed to any outside parties.
2. Data should be analysed/compared on the basis of NAD unions and include a union-by-union breakdown.
3. All the findings of the research will be confidential and should be submitted directly to ASTR. Researchers will require prior written permission from ASTR to publish any results or share them with any other organization.
4. **Time frame and budget**
* An outline proposal should be submitted to ASTR by September 1, 2014.
* Successful proposal will be selected September 15, 2014.
* Draft research instrument should be submitted by October 15, 2015.
* The research should be completed and a report submitted by March 1, 2015.

 **VIII. Proposal**

Your proposal should include the following:

1. Title of your institutional home, with full address and contact details (these should be on a cover sheet).
2. A brief statement of methodology: how will you achieve the objectives and investigate the target audience, stated in II and III above?
3. Necessary documents/data you need to receive from ASTR or other organizations.
4. Foreseen problems and challenges.
5. Skills/expertise of the researchers – CVs should be included.
6. Time frame, including different stages of the research.
7. Research budget.
8. Key Performance Indicators associated with nos. 6 and 7.

**Please email copies of outline proposals to Galina Stele at** **research@gc.adventist.org** **– for any queries or more information, please contact her or David Trim at** **TrimD@gc.adventist.org**

1. Gary Krause, “Where Do My Mission Offerings Go?” *Mission 360°,* Volume 2, number 1, 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. D. J. B. Trim, “Adventist Church Growth and Mission Since 1863: An Historical—Statistical Analysis,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies,* 2012, no. 2, 52*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. G. Thomas Evans, “The Mission Offerings,” *Dynamic Steward,* April-June, 2013, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)