

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES  
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST



# THE COMBINED OFFERING PLAN



Marcos Faiock Bomfim, GC Stewardship Ministries  
(Based on Mario Niño's article [DS Jul/Sep 2017] and  
Maria Ovando-Gibson and Jean-Luc Lézeau's presentation)



# Three systems of offerings



Personal  
Giving Plan



Calendar  
of Offerings



Combined  
Offering Plan

# In each system of offerings:

The donor's designated offering is respected.



# Challenges

- How many offerings do we have in the Adventist Church?
- Where do they go?
- How are they spent?



# Challenges

- The profusion of offerings may lead to confusion.
- There is increased competition between church entities/services/the local church
- A decline in the support of the local church
- Increase on pressure for congregationalism



# Importance of the local church

- It is the most basic administrative unit of the SDA church.
- It is where new members are generated.
- It is from where all the church's financial and personal resources come from.



# If there is a decline in the support of the local church...

- We may weaken all the SDA Church's administrative structure.
- Local churches will not have enough resources to generate and nurture new members.



# If there is a decline in the support of the local church...



- An increased pressure for tithe diversion.
- An increased pressure for congregationalism.



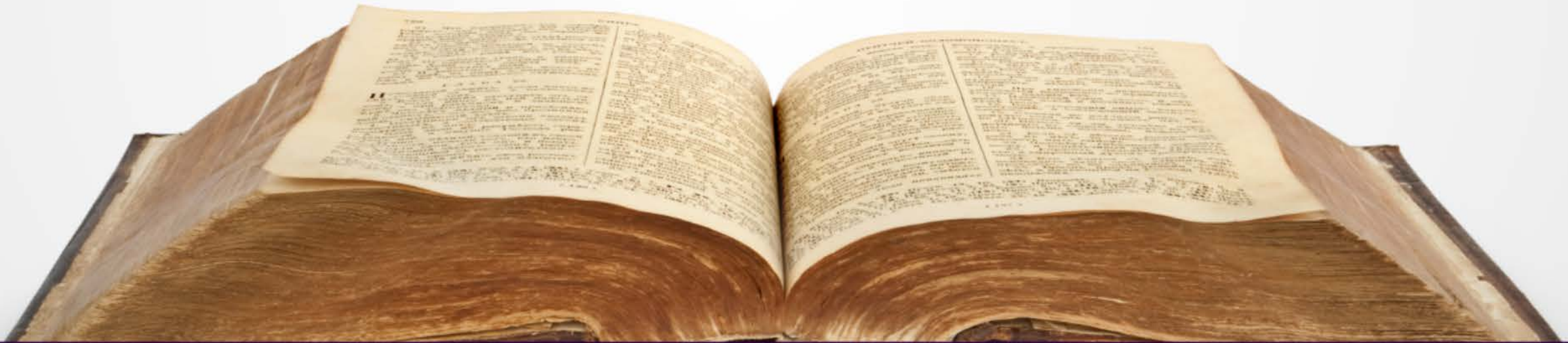
# If there is a decline in the support of missions...

“... Never can the **unity** for which Christ prayed exist until  
[1] spirituality is brought into missionary service, and  
[2] until the church becomes an agency for the support of missions....” CS, 47.



# What can we do?

- To simplify the system (to make it more user friendly)
- Return to the basic Biblical Offering System



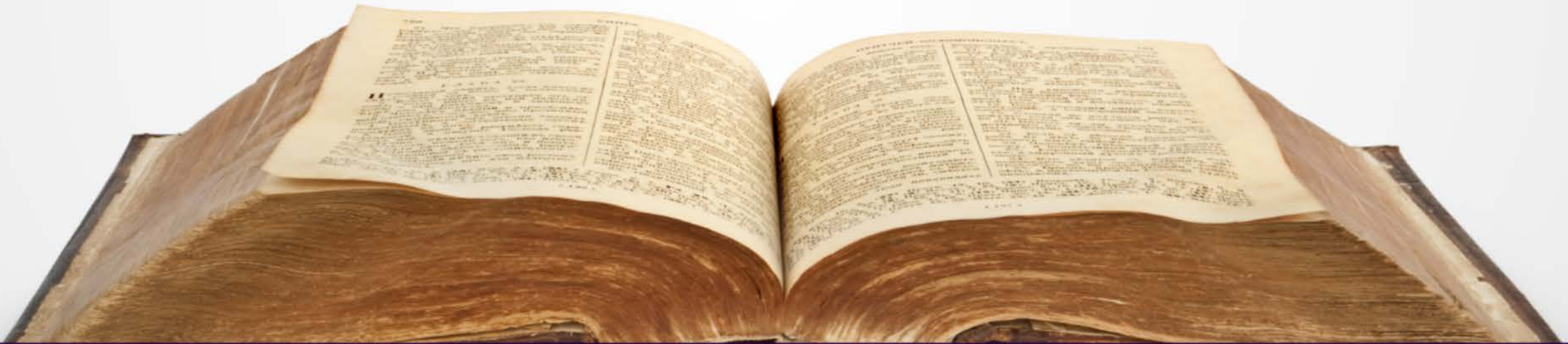
# “Storehouse”: Basic Biblical Offering System

- All resources going to one bucket and being equally distributed
- Decisions, budgets and strategies taken collectively, through the representative method.
- There is mutual submission, accountability and transparency



# The Storehouse principle applied to offerings

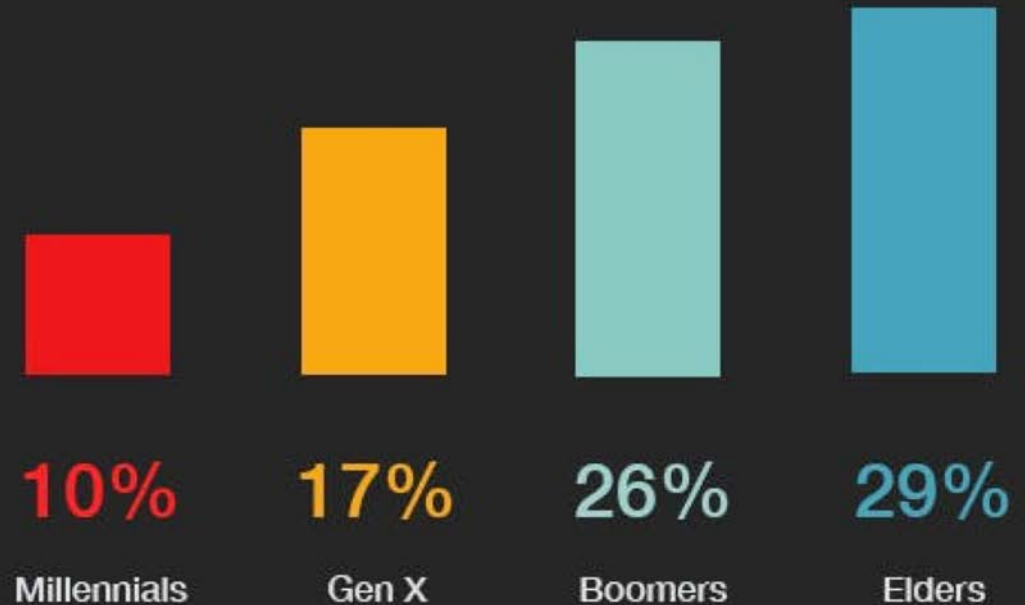
- Easier for us to fulfill the Apostolic Missionary commission:
  - Matt. 28:19 – “... Go therefore and make disciples of **all nations**...”



# The Great Commission Principle



Churchgoers who have heard of/remember the Great Commission (by generation).



Barna

[www.barna.com](http://www.barna.com)

# The Great Commission Principle

More than half of churchgoers have  
never heard of the Great Commission.



51%



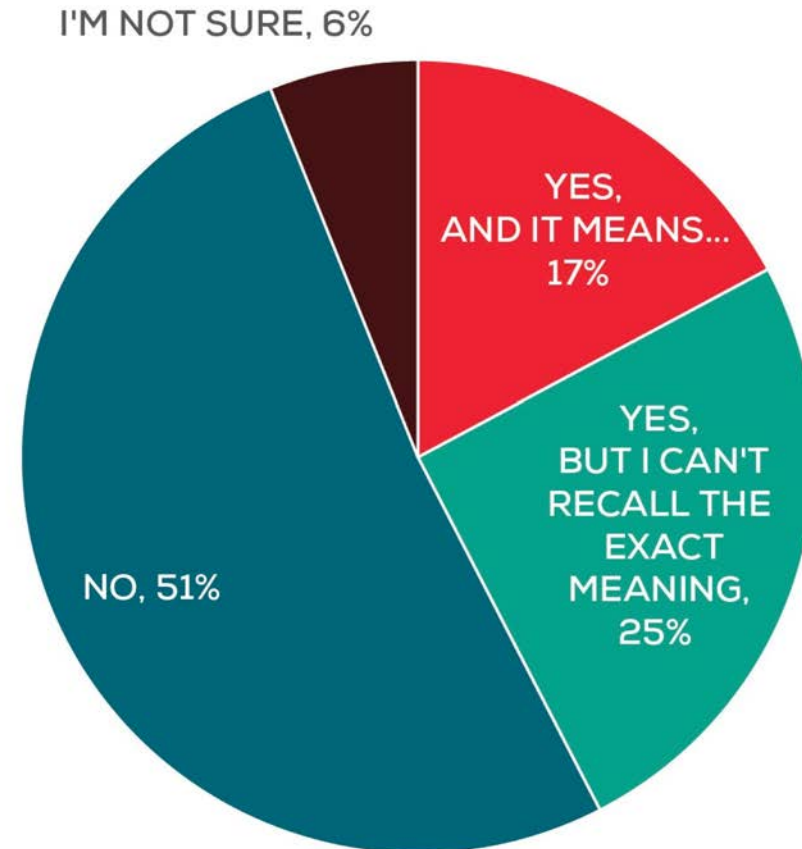
Barna

[www.barna.com](http://www.barna.com)

## CHURCHGOERS: HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE GREAT COMMISSION?

Barna

# The Great Commission Principle



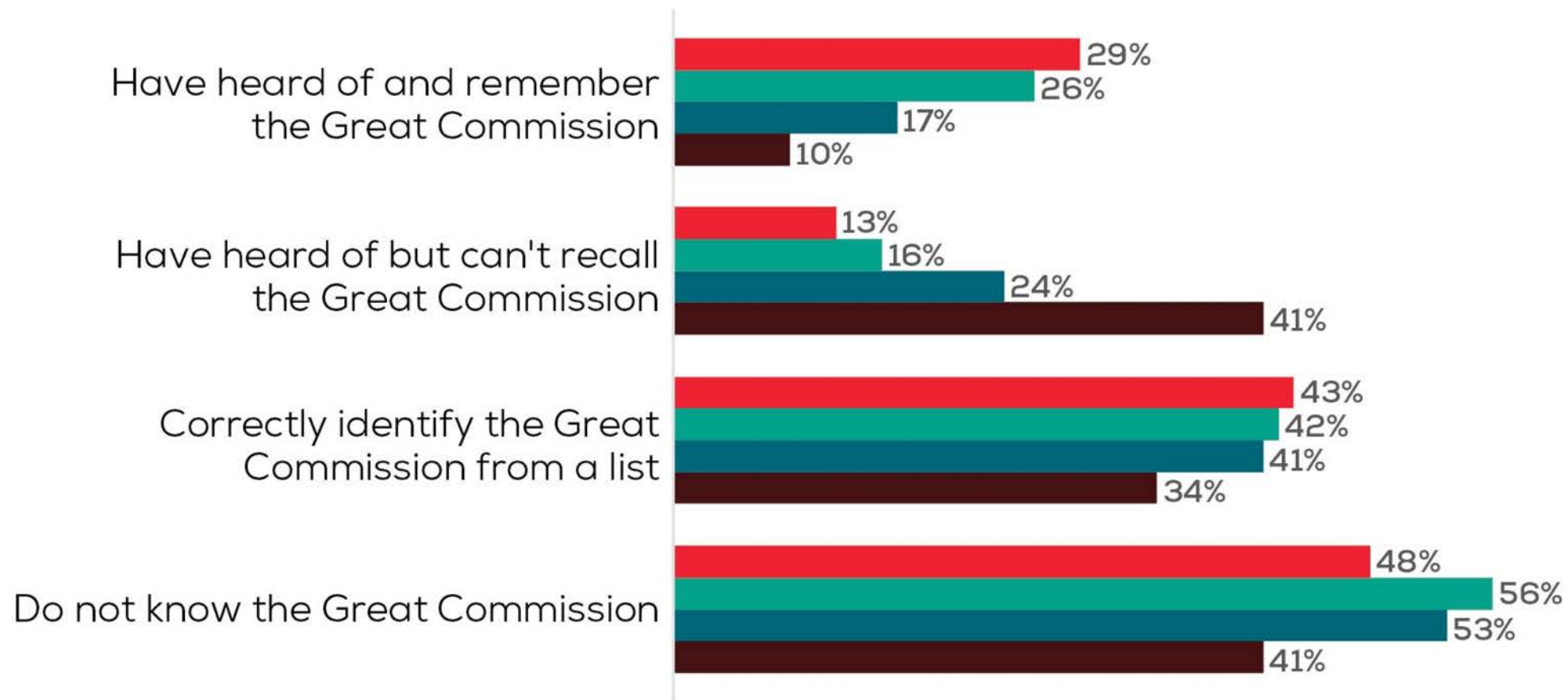
October 2017, n=1,004 U.S. churchgoers.

© 2018 | barna.com

# KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION, BY GENERATION

Barna

● Elders ● Boomers ● Generation X ● Millennials



Totals do not equal 100% as these responses cover more than one metric and question.



# The Storehouse principle applied to offerings

- Easier for us to fulfill the Apostolic Missionary commission:
  - Acts 1:8 – “... Witnesses... in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
  - All equally reached!



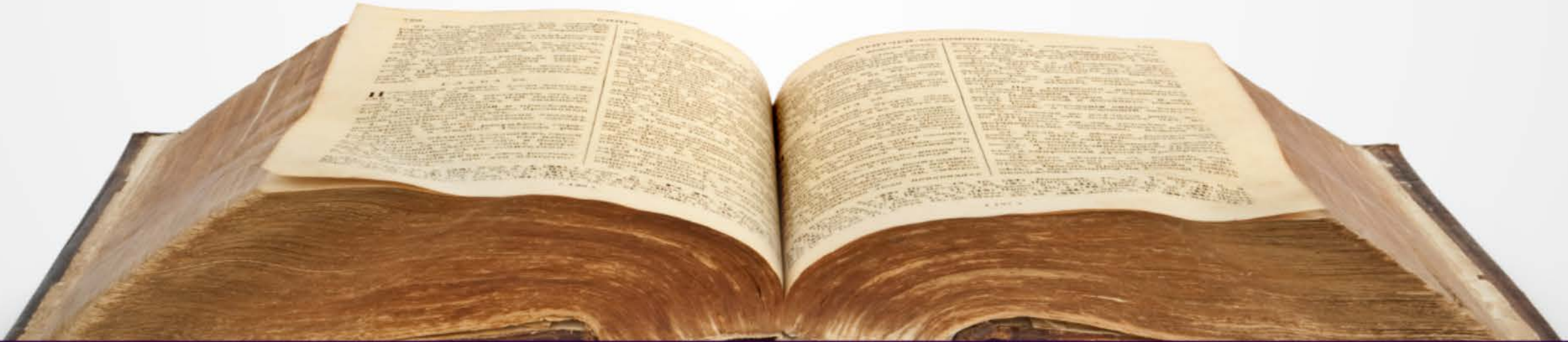
# The worshiper on the Storehouse system

- Gives regular/system. offerings as the result of a decision of the heart (2 Cor. 9:7)
- Gives in a percentage base, not amount based (1 Cor. 16:2; Deut. 16:17)



# The worshiper on the Storehouse system

- Gives regularly, based on income/increase, and not on appeals (Prov. 3:9)
- Brings the regular/system. offering to the Storehouse (1 Cor. 9:7-14).
- Develops a missionary unselfish mindset!



# God's solution

“God has devised a plan by which all may give **as He has prospered them**, and which will make giving a **habit** without waiting for special calls....

“Until all shall carry out the plan of **systematic benevolence**, there will be a failure in coming up to the apostolic rule” (3T p. 411, *emphasis supplied*).



# Proposed solution

- 1- Systematic Benevolence** – the answer to the actual proliferation of offerings.
- 2- Combined Offering Plan** – all reg./syst. offerings to ONE fund.



# The 2002 Spring Meeting voted:

“To approve the term ‘Combined Offering’ as the name for the simplified offering system.”

That “the Combined Offering shall be considered the giving system recommended and promoted by the General Conference.”



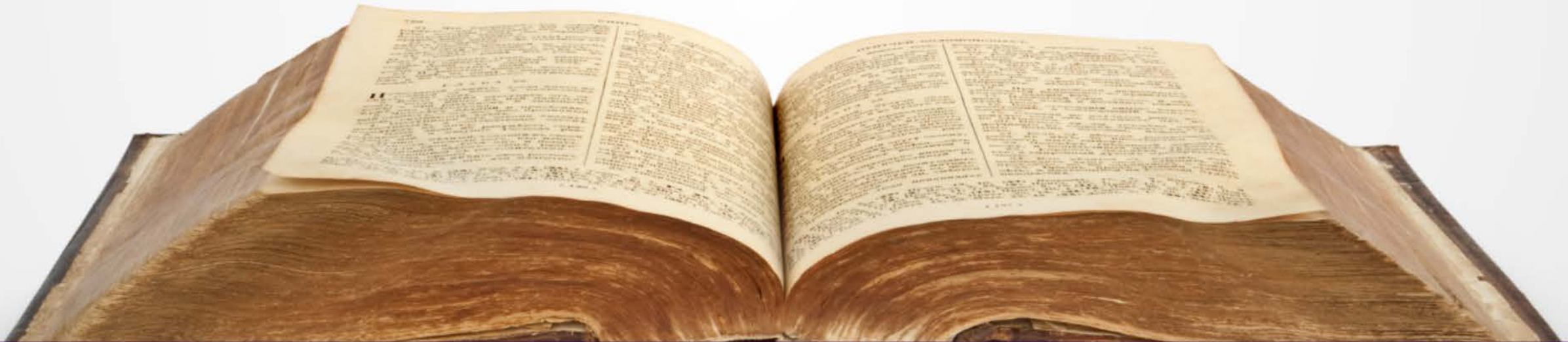
# What is the Combined Offering Plan?

- A system of distribution applied to the Offerings
- Uses the same principle already applied in the distribution of tithe to the distribution of offerings.
- It supports all levels of the church that are sustained by regular and special offerings.



# How many divisions already are under the COP?

- IAD, SAD, WAD, ECD, SID, SSD, ESD and SUD
- EUD – Spain and Portugal Unions
- SPD – Papua New-Guinea and islands
- NSD will implement that plan in January 2019
- **More than 90% of the church's membership is already under the COP**





# How are the funds distributed?

- All resources collected go to one fund
- Funds are distributed to various
  - Departments
  - Services
  - Institutions
  - Activities
- Funds are distributed according to a predetermined percentage
- The percentage is revised as needed at least every five years

# Funds' distribution

(Working Policy 2016-2017, pages 610-611)

- **Local Church: 50-60%**
- Local Conference/Mission/Field: 20-30%
- General Conference: 20%



# Funds' distribution (SID)

- Local Church: 50%
- Local Conference/Mission/Field: 20%
- Union: 5%
- Division: 5%
- General Conference: 20%



# Funds' distribution (ESD)

- Local Church: 60%
- Local Conference/Mission/Field: 7%
- Union: 7%
- Division: 6%
- General Conference: 20%



# Funds' distribution (SAD)

- Local Church: 60%
- Local Conference/Mission/Field: 14%
- Union: 3.6%
- Division: 2.4%
- General Conference: 20%



# COP main benefit: great emphasis on Systematic Giving

Regular/Systematic Giving is **NOT**:

- Emotional
- Influenced by who is running the program
- Influenced by the type of program
- Controlled by the donor

# Systematic Giving is:

- Empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Intentional – based on a habit
- Comes from a joyful heart
- Triggered by the blessings - income



# Benefits of the Combined Offering Plan

- Members are free to choose their own percentage of income to be given as offerings.
- It is not incumbent upon the member to determine what percentage of their offerings goes to which destination.





# Benefits of the Combined Offering Plan

- Eliminates calls for funds for projects.
- There is more time to promote worship.
- Worshipers are educated to give more out of their relationship with God.
- Easier to develop gratitude for blessings received.



# Benefits of the Combined Offering Plan

- The regular worshiper is not “helping” any specific project.
- The worshiper gives because he/she was already “helped” (blessings).
- The worshiper gives even when there is no project promotion.
- It is a painful, but growing experience, to loose the control of “my” offering.



# Benefits of the Combined Offering Plan

- Facilitates balanced support to all levels of the church.
- Promotes unselfish giving.
- Discourages institutional selfishness.
- Easy for new members to understand.



# Benefits of the Combined Offering Plan on the Mission

- Promotes worldwide unity (“I am part of a worldwide missionary movement”).
- It helps to promote a missionary mindset.
- Uses the apostolic missionary model: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.
- Together, we can do more and go farther!



# If I encourage church members to give primarily to “my ministry”...

- May generate a “holy war” for funds between ministries, institutions and the local church.
- It will develop an institutional selfishness - against Christ’s principles.
- The local church will be the most negatively affected.
- There will be a pressure for congregationalism.



# If I encourage church members to give primarily to “my ministry”...

- There will be tithe diversion.
- The local church may weaken or even close its doors.
- Then “my ministry” would finally also be destroyed.



# What to do if I believe that “my ministry” needs to receive more?

## I need to work to have:

- More members giving to “all”, with an unselfish missionary mindset.
- Members increasing the percentage they give of their income.
- In that way, all church entities, projects and ministries, all around the world, will equally grow.



# How can I help?

## 1. By promoting the Combined Offering Plan, a plan that promotes:

- Mission
- A broad, unselfish vision
- Equity





# How can I help?

## 2. By promoting “Promise” as a:

- A percentage based regular and systematic offering giving.
- An act of worship, not as a “donation”.
- Equity



# What about Project Giving or Special Offerings?

“A conscientious few made returns to God of about **one third** of all their income for the benefit of religious interests and for the poor. These exactions were not from a particular class of the people, but from all, the requirement being proportioned according to the amount possessed. Besides all these **systematic and regular donations** there were special objects calling for **freewill offerings**, such as the tabernacle built in the wilderness and the temple erected at Jerusalem. These drafts were made by God upon the people for their own good, as well as to sustain His service.” 1 TT 546.

# What about Project Giving or Special Offerings?

- Must be seriously restricted and used in a very responsible and thoughtful way.
- The body of members will chose very few projects or ministries that will be helped.
- They may be suggested after the regular and systematic offering is practiced.

# Are we not removing the freedom of decision from the personal giver?

- Designated offerings will be ever respected.
- Our very system (representative) requires corporate decisions.
- Advantages of the representative system:
  - Wiser corporate decisions x limited personal vision.
  - Together we go farther and faster.
  - It fulfills one of the reasons for the church's existence – “agency for the support of missions (CS, 47)”.
  - It is the only viable way to fulfill the Great Commission.

# Where are the prophetic voices?

“We desperately need prophetic voices in our churches decrying our self-centered affluence and indifference to global needs and calling us to a joyful generosity that exalts Christ, helps the hurting and fills our souls to overflowing.” Randy Alcorn, *How Pastors Can Model and Teach What God’s Word Says About Financial Stewardship*.



# How can a church inspire its members to give?

“One way church leaders can inspire giving is by committing the church to give away a higher percentage of its [church’s] own income.” Randy Alcorn, *How Pastors Can Model and Teach What God’s Word Says About Financial Stewardship*.



# Why should churches give?

“For the same reason that churches wanting to discourage their people from incurring debt should not incur debt, churches wanting to encourage giving should give.” Randy Alcorn, *How Pastors Can Model and Teach What God’s Word Says About Financial Stewardship*.



# Why should churches stretch themselves in giving?

“If we want people to stretch themselves in their stewardship of the resources God has entrusted to them, the best way to model this is for the church to stretch itself in its giving.”  
Randy Alcorn.





# How can a church inspire our members to give?

“Individuals, families and churches can establish beachheads of strategic lifestyle, disciplined spending and generous, globally-minded giving. By infectious example, and joyful voluntary distribution of God’s wealth, we can claim more territory for Christ than we ever dreamed possible.” Randy Alcorn.



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES  
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST



# THE COMBINED OFFERING PLAN



Based on Mario Niño's article (DS Jul/Sep 2017)  
Maria Ovando-Gibson and Jean-Luc Lézeau's presentation

