

Case
Study
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 **INTERNATIONAL**
Research Department

Tom Horn
Spring 1991
Singapore

Toward an Understanding of the Missions Movement in Singapore Churches

One of a series of practical missions research case studies

Key Words: Survey, local church, denominational comparison, missions activities, institutional research.

Abstract: The purpose of this survey was to assess the current status of the missions movement within the churches of Singapore. The survey had to be brief enough to obtain a large response yet comprehensive enough to cover the essential elements of a missions active church.

Purpose: The research department of OC Asia undertook this project for three primary reasons:

- 1. To provide a basis for evaluating the national goals set at the Singapore National Missions Consultation (NMC).** In May, 1990, nine goals were adopted by the participants at the NMC. Research was necessary to establish the existing conditions of the missions movement in Singapore churches so that the goals could be monitored. The Singapore Centre for Evangelism & Missions (SCEM) was commissioned to follow-up and monitor the NMC goals and OC Asia agreed to conduct the initial research.
- 2. To provide the Singapore Church with a current evaluation of the missions movement.** Such a project, if conducted in the past, has never been presented to the church in a report form. The results of this project should prove helpful for churches in recognizing areas of need, planning future ministries, and cooperating with like-minded churches to see effectiveness in missions maximized in and from Singapore.
- 3. To identify the areas of felt needs concerning missions within the churches of Singapore.** Organizations which seek to assist local churches with their missions emphasis need a current evaluation of what areas are perceived as needing the greatest attention. Future seminars, workshops, and direct partnering with churches will be more strategic once felt needs are identified.

Procedure:

- 1. Determination of the research method (July 1991):** In order to provide a good basis for evaluating the NMC goals, it was decided that 75% of the churches of Singapore should be researched. Such a high percentage is not normal for most research projects; however, the goal of this project was to be as comprehensive as possible. It was assumed that approximately 25% of the churches would be unwilling to assist with the survey or be very difficult to contact. The plan was to use a mail survey followed up with a direct interview as time allowed.
- 2. Formulation of the survey (July - August 1991):** In July, the research department of OC Asia produced the first draft of a questionnaire. This survey was reviewed by a few researchers to obtain their perspective on its usefulness in accomplishing the goals. After revision of content and question structure, the survey was pilot tested with 10 randomly selected churches. The people filling out these pilot surveys evaluated the clarity of the questions and the time required to complete the survey. After one more set of revisions, the survey was ready for mailing.
- 3. Data Gathering (September - December 1991):** The survey was mailed to pastors of 393 congregations on August 23,

1991. These churches were chosen from the complete list available in the 1991/92 Every Home Crusade Church Directory. We requested that the pastor direct the survey to the person most qualified to complete it if it were someone other than him or herself. We also requested for the survey to be returned by mid-September. By the end of September, we had only received 45 surveys (11%). We began a process to secure a better response. Phone contact was made and new surveys were mailed as needed. Some surveys were completed by a phone interview when a pastor preferred this format. Some surveys were completed by a personal interview. Certain denominational leaders assisted by encouraging their churches to complete the survey. This proved to be very helpful in obtaining more responses.

NOTE: In December it was concluded that the English survey was not conducive for completion by the Chinese-speaking churches. Consequently, the survey was translated into Mandarin and mailed to 150 Chinese-speaking churches in January. A report on the missions movement in these churches will be released at a later time.

4. Data Entering (December 1991 - January 1992): Using a simple program in dBASEIII+, the data from the surveys were entered in the computer for analysis.

5. Analysis (February - March 1992): The data was printed into lists, charts and graphs to help identify noteworthy results and significant correlations. Besides the staff at OC Asia, other researchers assisted in reviewing the report before printing. The report analyzed five areas of mission activity in the local church.

Administrating of Missions in Churches Four questions in the survey addressed the area of administration. The three main topics included a functioning missions committee, a written missions policy and a missions strategy. These areas lay the foundation upon which growing missions programs develop.

Motivating for Missions in Churches Six questions in the survey addressed the area of motivation. The two main topics here included the missions conference and an ongoing missions education program. These two areas serve to inform the congregation about missions and move individuals to personal responsibility /conviction about world evangelization.

Supporting of Missions in Churches (The topic highlighted in this CaseStudy) Under the area of support for missions, we included one question about

prayer and one on finances. (The area of support not assessed in this survey was the degree of care provided for missionaries by the church.) Although both areas are hard to assess and often strike a sensitive chord, they nevertheless are the most basic essentials for effective missions work.

Training for Missions in Churches Six questions addressed the issue of training. The two categories of training were short-term trips (some churches consider short-term trips more as direct ministry than training for future ministry) and church-based candidate preparation for missionary service. The former is common among many churches while the latter is unique to those churches that are currently or aspiring to be missionary-sending churches.

6. Reporting (April 1992): The results were published in a pamphlet. For the purpose of this case study, some of the report is included here.

General Information Of the 393 congregations in Singapore, 243 were English-speaking and 150 were Chinese-speaking. Of the 243 English-speaking churches in Singapore, 167 completed the survey. Therefore, 69% of the English churches are reflected in this report. The denominations surveyed were; Anglican, Assemblies of God (A/G), Baptist, Bible Presbyterian (B-P), Brethren (Bre), Evangelical Free (EFC), Lutheran (Lut), Methodist (Met), Presbyterian (Pres) and Independent (Ind).

1. General data on churches surveyed:

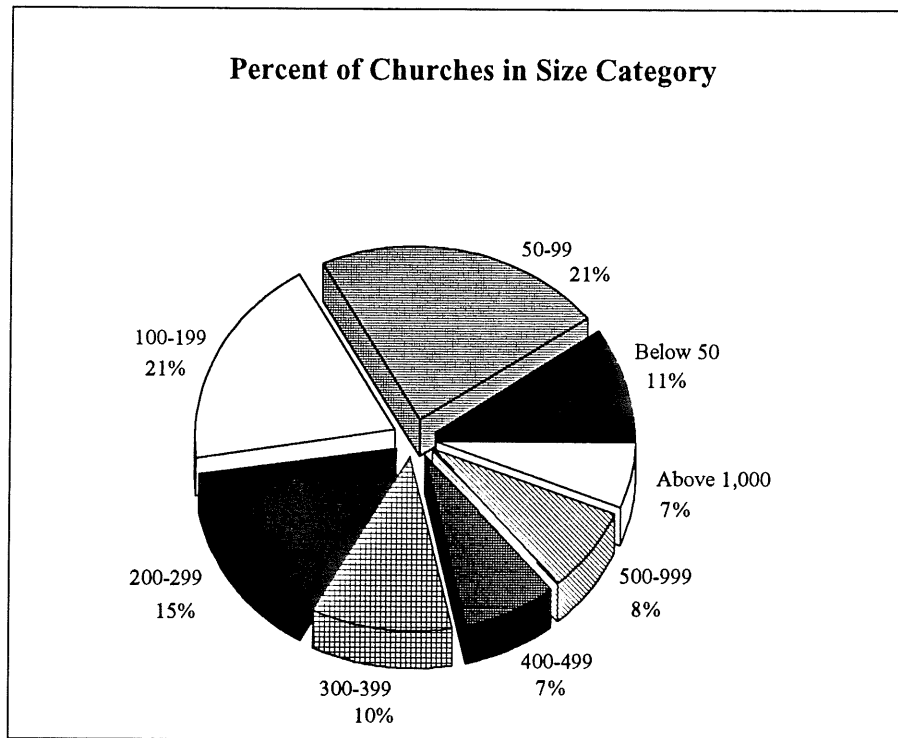
total attendance	55,936	average attendance per church	335
largest church attendance	4,000	smallest church attendance	10
total membership	51,907	total members under 15 yrs	7,926
total members over 15 yrs	43,981	percent of members under 15 yrs	26%
total number of ministry staff	587	average ministry staff per church	4
total number of support staff	355	average support staff per church	2

2. Denominational Breakdown

	Ang	A/G	Bap	B-P	Bre	CNEC	EFC	Luth	Meth	Pres	Ind	Total
Total English-speaking churches	19	27	28	16	14	55	6	4	25	17	82	243
Total Surveyed	11	15	22	5	13	3	4	4	24	15	51	167
% Surveyed	58	56	79	31	92	60	67	100	96	88	62	69

3. Size of church and financial commitment to missions

	Size of Attendance								Budget (K=Thousands)							
	<50	50-	100-	200-	300-	400-	500-	>1000	<5k	<10k	<20k	<50k	<100k	<200k	<300k	>300k
# of churches surveyed in each category	18	35	35	25	17	11	14	12	75	18	12	26	13	10	7	6
% of churches surveyed in each category	11	21	21	15	10	7	8	7	45	11	7	16	8	6	4	3



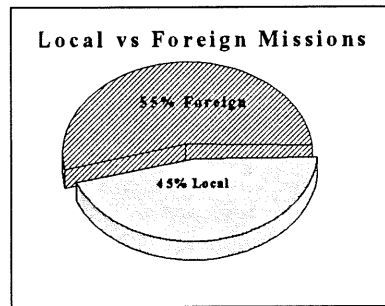
Supporting Missions in Church Under the area of support for missions, we included one question about prayer and one on finances. (The area of support not assessed in this survey was the degree of care provided for missionaries by the church). Although both areas are hard to assess and often strike a sensitive chord, they nevertheless are the most basic essentials for effective missions work.

Prayer

- 77% of the churches surveyed indicated that they hold prayer meetings which have a focus on missions. The focus could be either a part of a broader meeting or a specific meeting just focusing on mission.
- Prayer for missions was consistently high throughout all denominations.
- When a church reaches the size of 100 and has missions giving over \$10,000, prayer for missions seems to become a regular priority.

Finances

- The total missions giving (both local and foreign) from the churches surveyed amounted to \$7,609,722 annually.
- The missions giving directed to foreign ministry was \$4,198,381 or 55% of total giving. Foreign giving included short-term trips, mission projects, support for national missionaries, and support for foreign missionaries.

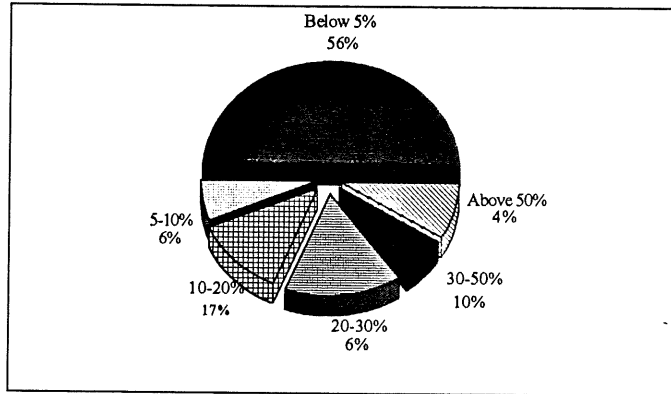


- Missions giving varied widely across denominations.
- The average yearly missions giving per attender for the churches surveyed was \$136.
- The average annual giving per church and individual within a denomination is listed below. It should be noted that these results reflect broad averages and not precise figures.

	Ang	A/G	Bap	B-P	Bre	CNEC	EFC	Luth	Meth	Pres	Ind	total
Total missions giving	1,424,197	627,633	916,148	593,740	648,800	84,600	274,400	60,981	1,026,568	658,378	1,293,777	7,609,722
Giving per church	129,472	418,422	41,643	118,748	49,907	28,200	68,600	15,245	42,773	43,892	25,368	45,567
Giving per attender	287	120	124	216	193	229	481	77	81	\$127	102	136

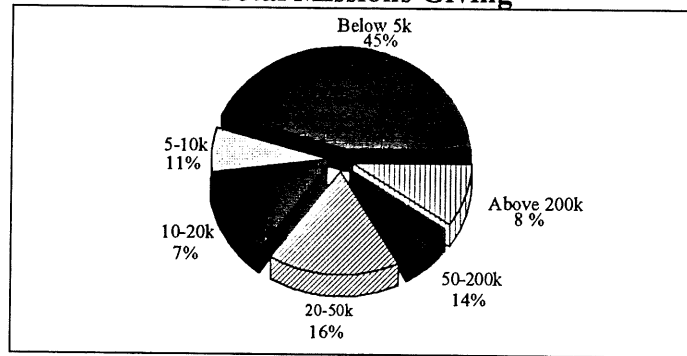
- On an average, churches were giving 13% of their overall church budget to missions. The range within specific churches actually varied from 0 to 75%.
- This included 56% of the churches surveyed that were giving less than 5% of their total budget to missions.

% of Total Church Budget Directed to Missions

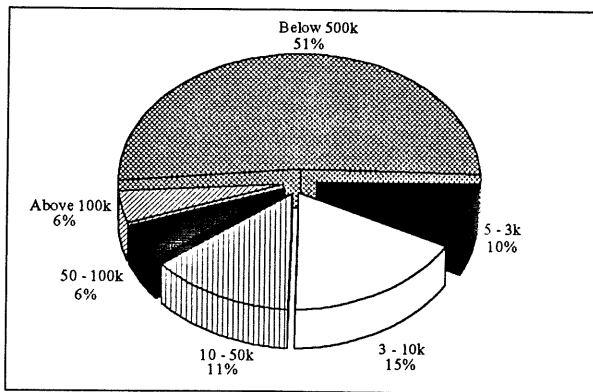


- 49% of the churches gave less than \$500 annually to foreign missions and 51% of the churches gave less than \$500 to local missions.

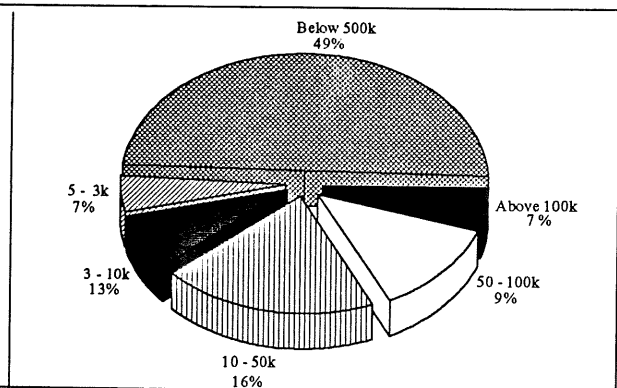
Total Missions Giving



Local Missions Giving



Foreign Missions Giving



Report Summary

Areas of Strength in the churches of Singapore:

Missions committee - 69% of the churches surveyed had a functioning committee and most have been around for some time.

Missions policy - 56% of the churches surveyed had a written policy.

Prayer - 77% of the churches surveyed indicated that they pray regularly for missions.

Short-term trips - 62% of the churches surveyed organized and/or sponsored short-term trips.

Areas in need of strengthening in the churches of Singapore:

Missions conference - only 32% of the churches are holding an annual conference.

Finances - 56% of the churches were giving less than 5% of their total church budget to missions: 51% giving less than \$500 locally and 49% giving less than \$500 to foreign ministry.

Adoption of unreached people groups - only 18% of the churches surveyed indicated that they were focusing efforts on reaching a particular people group.

Areas of greatest felt need by the churches of Singapore:

Missions Education - 85% of the churches surveyed indicated that they would welcome assistance in one way or another with educating their congregation for missions.

Candidate preparation - 64% of the churches surveyed indicated that they would welcome assistance in learning how to better prepare their own missionary candidates in the church.

Evaluation: A complimentary copy of the 20-page report was mailed to all English-speaking churches, Christian organizations, and selected Christian leaders. To those churches which did not respond to the survey, we invited them to complete the survey and return it to us so we could revise our data.

Within a week of releasing the report, our office began receiving calls and our staff received personal comments on how helpful the report was. Several churches made reference to the report from the pulpit over the next few Sundays. Two-thirds of the copies printed were mailed or purchased within the first two weeks of distribution. We obviously had provided a resource that Christians felt was important.

By enlisting the help of key denominational leaders we were able to obtain a larger response. In fact, the key denominational leaders should be contacted prior to beginning the survey out of respect and to obtain their endorsement since pastors under their supervision will be expected to complete the survey. Since research of this nature lends itself for ongoing updates, it is helpful to identify a pool of research interested people, (hopefully one person in each denomination) who can assist in the future.

**Appendix 1:
Correlation with National Missions Consultation Goals for AD 2000**

Goal	As of December 1991
1. 500 Singaporean missionaries	*138
2. 200 Singaporean missionaries serving the un-evangelized world	*NA
3. Half the churches in Singapore to be sending churches	51%
4. One-third of the churches in Singapore to have adopted an unreached people group.	16%
5. Singaporean missionaries to participate in reaching 50 unreached people groups.	15
6. Two-thirds of Singapore churches to give at least 10% of their income to	47%

*Further verification and confirmation is needed to obtain the precise number of Singaporeans serving as cross-cultural missionaries whether they serve among an un-evangelized people.

Note: These statistics are based upon the survey of 167 English-speaking churches and accounting for 69% of churches in this category. A subsequent report will identify totals from the Chinese-speaking churches.

Appendix 2: Statistical table

	Ang	A/G	Bap	B/P	Bre	CNEC	EFC	Lut	Met	Pres	Ind	Total
A Denomination:												
0 Total existing in each denomination	19	27	28	16	14	5	6	4	25	17	82	243
1 Total surveyed from each category	11	15	22	5	13	3	4	4	24	15	51	167
2 % surveyed of total (A1/A0)	58	56	79	31	92	60	67	100	96	88	62	69
3 With missions committee	7	10	14	5	11	3	2	3	22	9	30	116
4 % surveyed (A3/A1)	64	67	63	100	85	100	50	75	92	60	59	69
5 With missions policy	7	8	9	4	10	2	1	2	18	9	24	94
6 % surveyed (A5/A1)	64	53	41	80	77	67	25	50	75	60	47	56
7 With missions conference	2	4	8	3	4	2	2	1	8	4	16	54
8 % surveyed (A9/A1)	18	27	36	60	31	67	50	25	33	27	31	32
9 With missions sermon	8	14	19	4	12	3	3	4	22	13	47	149
10 % surveyed (A11/A1)	73	93	86	80	92	100	75	100	92	87	50	89
11 With missions trip	7	12	11	3	8	3	2	3	17	4	33	103
12 % surveyed (A11/A1)	64	80	50	60	62	100	50	75	71	27	65	62
13 With missions prayer meeting	9	12	19	4	12	2	2	4	21	9	34	128
14 % surveyed (A13/A1)	82	80	86	80	92	67	50	100	88	60	67	77
15 With local workers	2	2	11	3	10	2	1	2	16	8	21	78
16 % surveyed (A15/A1)	18	13	50	60	77	67	25	50	67	53	41	47
17 With overseas workers	7	6	14	5	9	2	2	1	12	7	20	85
18 % surveyed (A17/A1)	64	40	64	100	69	67	50	25	50	47	39	51
19 Adopting foreign people group(s)	1	4	4	1	4	2	1	3	4	2	4	30
20 % surveyed (A19/A1)	9	27	18	20	31	67	25	75	17	13	8	18
21 Adopting local people groups(s)	3	3	3	2	4	1	0	3	11	15	12	57
22 % surveyed (A21/A1)	27	20	13	40	31	33	0	75	46	100	23	34

**Toward An Understanding Of
The Singaporean Movement
In Local Churches**

This Nation-wide Survey conducted by the Research Department of Overseas Crusades Ministries, Singapore. Along with the other 350+ churches in Singapore, your assistance is sincerely requested in completing this survey so a better understanding of the missions movement in local churches can be determined. The results of this survey will be analyzed and reports will be released beginning in January 1992. With your cooperation, we will be able to serve your church and others with current information on who you can contact for ideas as well as networking with those ministering in similar areas or to similar people.

Directions for Completion:

1. Please answer all the questions as accurately as possible. If you are unsure of an answer and cannot easily obtain the information, just mark *unsure*. Obviously, the survey will be of greater effect and usefulness with fewer unsure answers.
2. Your survey will remain confidential. The reports produced will be general in nature.
3. A person familiar with the missions emphasis of your church should be able to complete this survey in 30 to 45 minutes. Thank you for investing this time. Please return by Mid-September to the address on the last page.

General Characteristics Of Your Church:

1. How many members are affiliated with your church? Under 15 yrs Above 15 yrs
2. What is the approximate average attendance on Sunday as of August 1991?

3. Does your church have a written missions policy?
If yes, when was it written (or last revised)? _____ (year) Yes No
4. Does your church have a written purpose statement for missions?
If so, please state: _____ Yes No
5. Are there any full-time staff in your church? Yes No
6. Does your church have standing missions committee? Yes No
7. What does your church include in your definition of *missions*?

Resources you would like in your church:

How would you value the following with regard to furthering the cause of missions in your church?
(Check the appropriate one)

	A little	Not sure	Useful	Very useful
1. To conduct indepth courses on missions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. An information file on missions needs and opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. News/current articles on missions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Help in missionary candidate selection and preparation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Information on missionary training colleges/courses in S'pore and world over.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Help in developing an ongoing missions education emphasis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Know-how in providing an ongoing follow-up/nurture program for those who indicated an interest in missions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Information on short-term programs of mission agencies (3mths-2 yrs duration).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Help for developing a missions policy and strategy appropriate for your church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Guidance for organizing and conducting a meaningful missions conference.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mission Activities

During the past 12 months please indicate if your church had:

1. A sermon focusing on missions Yes No
 2. Short term mission trips Yes No
 3. Prayer meeting focusing on missions Yes No
 4. A missions Conference Yes No
- If yes: How many days _____
No of times per year _____
Average number who attended _____

Ministries:

1. Has your church adopted a "people group"? Yes No
 If yes, which group(s)? _____

2. Is your church specifically focusing evangelistic efforts on some people groups in Singapore? Yes No
 If yes, what group(s)? _____

3. How much money did your church allocate to missions in 1990? _____
 Local Foreign

Summary Questions:

1. What factors have contributed most significantly to the growth of the missions emphasis below, or share with us other ways you would be interested in receiving missions assistance. We would appreciate receiving a copy of your missions policy and other information you have in print.

Church Name _____
 Address _____
 Main Church contact for Missions _____
 Person who completed this survey _____

Please Return by Mid-September to:
 Director of Research
 Overseas Crusades Ministries
 Bras Basah PO Box 0311
 Singapore 9118
 Tel: 3398598

Church Missionaries

Please list below those workers regularly prayed for and/or supported by your church.

- Name: Please provide the surname and initials so we can have greater accuracy.
- Member or affiliated: Enter M for a church member and A for one who is affiliated with your church as a missionary but not an actual member.
- Type of ministry: Please enter the one designation that most characterizes the work of this person; i.e. Church Planting, Pastoring, Teaching, Medical, etc.
- Country of service: Mark the political nation.
- Mission agency: Please mark which organization the worker serves with; if sent directly by the church just mark church.
- Year started: Mark the year this worker began full-time service.
- Finances Yes/No: Please mark Y if you assist the worker financially.
- Support %: Please mark the % of the workers total support which your church gives.

	Local Workers		Overseas Workers	
	Name	Member or Affiliated	Name	Member or Affiliated
Type of Ministry				
Country of Service				
Mission Agency				
Year Started				
Finances Yes/No				
Support %				

Copies of the original report are still available from:
SCEM, Raffles City, PO Box 1052, Singapore 9117, for
US \$3.00 which includes postage.

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