



Where Do My Sabbath School Offerings Go?

By Justin Kim

In 1890, the Adventist Church's first mission offering helped build the ship *Pitcairn*, which carried three missionary couples to Pitcairn Island. Not only were 82 people baptized and one church formed, but the mission ship continued sailing and evangelizing the South Pacific. Although the results of this offering were amazing, its preliminary work was just as inspiring. In six months, about \$20,000 USD was raised by adults and children through Sabbath School offerings. Adjusted for inflation, that would be more than a half million US dollars today.

In times of missionary need, local churches have pooled their sacrificial resources together to see large results and increases for the work. Today amid the pandemic, the church has seen much suffering and loss. But we can still praise God that growth continues and that many disciples have found other creative ways for mission. One area of need however is the Sabbath School mission offerings. Why? Because churches are on and off about meeting face-to-face, many have forgotten about the five Sabbath School mission offerings.

The first is the familiar Sabbath School mission offering that is usually collected during lesson study. In some parts of the world, these look like yellow envelopes, while others have different methods of collection. Regardless of form, these all go to World Budget. The second group is comprised of the birthday and thank offerings that also go to World Budget. The third is the Thirteenth Sabbath offering where 25% of the offering goes to the field showcased on the back cover of the Sabbath School Adult Bible study guide, while the remaining 75% goes to World Budget.

The fourth is the Investment Offering, where again 25% goes to the Division that chooses two union projects, while 75% goes to World Budget. Investment is not necessarily a sacrificial offering, but a creative project that is profitable in nature. For example in 2021, the North American Division chose the Atlantic Union's Community Service Centers and the Pacific Union's Kayenta Navajo Mission Church for its investment projects.¹

The fifth and last is the local Sabbath school class making local and/or international impacts beyond the support of the other Sabbath School offerings. The General Conference and its divisions oversee the World Budget and apply this resource in parts of global church that have greater needs for expansion. Without this fund, many of the mission fields would not be what they are today. But local Sabbath School classes can also make missional impacts of their own.

"The home missionary work will be farther advanced in every way when a more liberal, self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit is manifested for the prosperity of foreign missions; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off." (Ellen White, Testimonies to the Church, vol. 6, p. 27)

Local Sabbath School classes have been known to provide and serve food for local homeless shelters, but also distributing Bibles, equipment, and technology in foreign fields. Sabbath Schools have also built churches, supported the religiously persecuted, and funded various Gospel workers.

In the spirit of the *Pitcairn* and Sabbath School sacrifices, local adult and children's Sabbath Schools can do and see the same missionary results today in the midst of the pandemic. Regardless of our worship modes, may we present this "more liberal, self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit" especially by not forgetting the five Sabbath School mission offerings.

¹ <https://www.nadstewardship.org/tithes-offerings/mission-investment/>