



# Preparing for the Summer Offering Drought

By Rev. Melvin Amerson

Summer is almost here! Summers are hot! Church attendance is often low and the offering is typically even lower. The finances of the church during summer months can be very challenging for pastors and finance committee members, particularly when both attendance and contributions are down substantially. Each year the same pattern of panic and apprehension takes over, until late summer or after Labor Day, when members return from their vacation and weekend travel.

God blesses us with summer as a time for renewal, connecting with family and vacation. For some it is to get away for personal time. However, even in the midst of our absence, the Lord's work is still ongoing and requires financial support. Ministry takes place whether we are present or not. Further, our support is vital to ministry in our community and beyond.

Years ago, I coined an acronym, "M.M.I.A. Season," which is a code for *members missing in action*. That season often starts with Mother's Day and continues often through Labor Day. Other potential M.M.I.A. days are: Memorial Day, Father's Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, family and class reunions. The list may cause angst, but fear not, there are two suggestions to lessen or eliminate the summer offering drought.

Consider promoting e-giving or electronic giving. Online giving or pre-authorized drafts allow consistent giving not only during summer months, but throughout the year. It may be too late for your congregation to establish and promote e-giving for this summer, but this is a giving option churches should afford its members.

This suggestion you can implement for the coming summer: Pastors and finance committee members mail a simple *vacation letter*, sharing with the congregation how God has blessed many of us with opportunities to vacation, travel, and connect with family and old schoolmates. With

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the letter, be sure to enclose an envelope and mail it during May, the unofficial start of the M.M.I.A. Season.

Remember, God has provided the financial resources to eliminate the summer offering drought; we need to be mindful of presenting our tithes and offerings, even during our absence.

Here are a few words you may want to consider including in the closing of your vacation letter:  
*“God has never taken a vacation or a sabbatical; let’s support God’s church while we are on vacation.”*

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