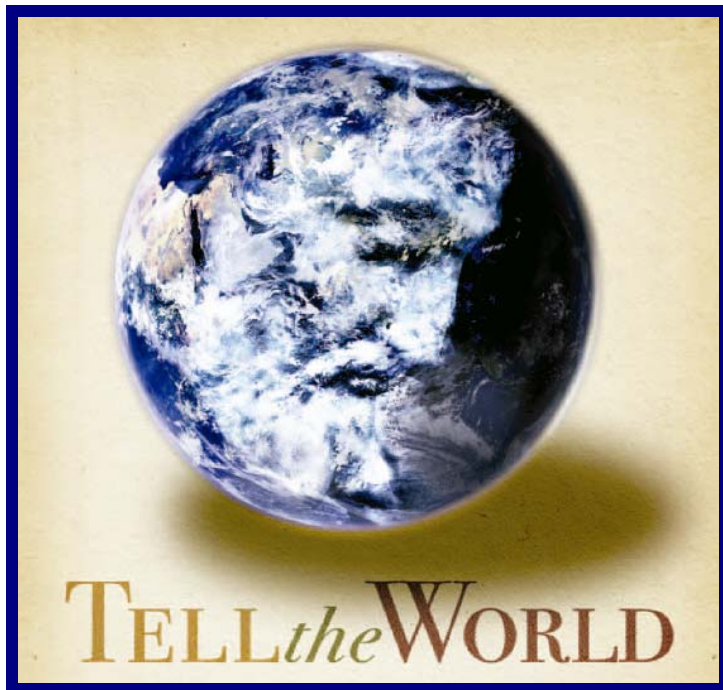


2009

Offertory Readings

English



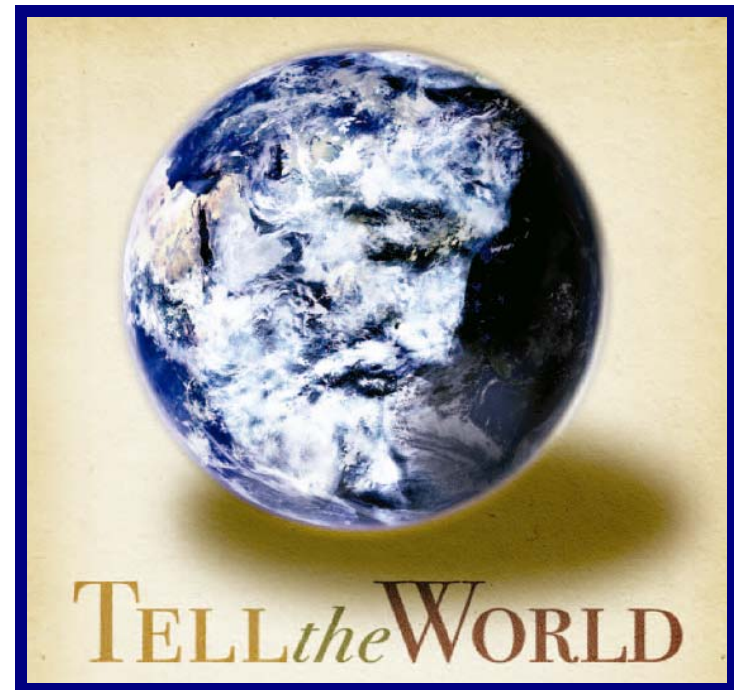
North American Division
of Seventh-day Adventists

STEWARDSHIP

2009

Offertory Readings

English



North American Division
of Seventh-day Adventists

STEWARDSHIP

Introduction to the 2009 NAD Offertory Readings

The 2009 Offertory Readings have been prepared for the convenience of local church leaders and for the education of all church members regarding the various offerings that are received on Sabbath. Each of you has a definite role to play in teaching faithfulness to God in returning tithes and offerings. These readings are to inform our members how the offerings are used.

Every Sabbath, as part of our worship experience, we bring our tithes and offerings to God. God has instructed us what to do with His tithe and has allowed us to use our offerings to support our local church needs, the local conference, and the worldwide work. The Personal Giving Plan materials fully explain this plan of supporting God's church.

Since it is understood by all that much of the expense of operating God's church takes place at the local church level, the offertory schedule gives priority to local church needs. On the first and third Sabbaths of each month the offering appeal is for local church needs. The second Sabbath of each month is a World or NAD offering. On the fourth Sabbath the offering is designated for Conference Advance projects. January is an exception: the second and fourth Sabbath offerings switch places.

Women's Ministries and Religious Liberty are stand-alone offerings and are not part of the World Budget. All other "second Sabbath" offering recipients receive a percentage of the World Budget distribution. (See attached chart.)

There are four "fifth Sabbath" months in 2009. Two of these are Union designated or default to the local church. The other two are used for the Spring Mission Appeal (May 30) and the special General Conference Session offering for the 10/40 window (October 31).

With thanks to God for His blessings and to each of you for your help,

G. Edward Reid, Stewardship Director
North American Division

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World Budget Offering Distribution of Funds
(Effective January 2005)

The North American Division (NAD) has adopted the **Personal Giving Plan**. A key component of the plan is encouraging members to be systematic in giving a percentage of their income to support the worldwide work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—all through one offering, the **World Budget** offering. The following information is the NAD authorized percentage breakdown of the entities and ministries supported by World Budget giving.

<u>Offering Recipient</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>General Conference</u>	
Weekly Sabbath School	57.00
Thirteenth Sabbath	16.00
Birthday Thank	4.00
Annual Sacrifice for Global Mission	4.00
Disaster & Famine Relief	1.75
Fall Mission Appeal	1.00
Spring Mission Appeal	0.75
Adventist World Radio	0.75
Christian Record	0.75
Oakwood College*	0.75
Andrews University	0.375
Loma Linda University	0.375
<u>North American Division</u>	
Adventist Television Ministries*	3.00
Voice of Prophecy	3.00
Inner City Ministries	0.75
Multilingual Ministries	0.375
Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries*	0.375
<u>Union Conferences</u>	
Local College	5.00

*In Canada these offerings go to special Canadian projects.

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Christian Record	0.75
Oakwood College*	0.75
Andrews University	0.375
Loma Linda University	0.375
<u>North American Division</u>	
Adventist Television Ministries*	3.00
Voice of Prophecy	3.00
Inner City Ministries	0.75
Multilingual Ministries	0.375
Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries*	0.375
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2009 North American Division Offering Schedule

JANUARY

03 Local Church Budget
10 Local Conference Advance
17 Local Church Budget
24 Religious Liberty
31 Union Designated

FEBRUARY

07 Local Church Budget
14 Adventist Television Ministries
21 Local Church Budget
28 Local Conference Advance

MARCH

07 Local Church Budget
14 Adventist World Radio
21 Local Church Budget
28 Local Conference Advance

APRIL

04 Local Church Budget
11 Christian Record Services
18 Local Church Budget
25 Local Conference Advance

MAY

02 Local Church Budget
09 Disaster & Famine Relief
16 Local Church Budget
23 Local Conference Advance
30 Spring Mission Appeal

JUNE

06 Local Church Budget
13 ACM/AMM Ministries
20 Local Church Budget
27 Local Conference Advance

JULY

04 Local Church Budget
11 Women's Ministries
18 Local Church Budget
25 Local Conference Advance

AUGUST

01 Local Church Budget
08 Andrews/Loma Linda/Oakwood U.
15 Local Church Budget
22 Local Conference Advance
29 Union Designated

SEPTEMBER

05 Local Church Budget
12 Fall Mission Appeal
19 Local Church Budget
26 Local Conference Advance

OCTOBER

03 Local Church Budget
10 Voice of Prophecy
17 Local Church Budget
24 Local Conference Advance
31 GC Session Offering

NOVEMBER

07 Local Church Budget
14 Annual Sacrifice
21 Local Church Budget
28 Local Conference Advance

DECEMBER

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January 3, 2009

Local Church Budget

Ephesians 5:23 reads, “Christ is Head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Christ is the Head of the church. He considers it His body and Himself its Savior. This should indicate to us the importance of the church to Christ. Thus, the status of the church member implies one of invaluable privilege and solemn responsibility.

As a member of the body of Christ, we should be committed to the well-being of the church. “Every believer should be wholehearted in his attachment to the church. Its prosperity should be his first interest” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, 42).

The church has its own reason for existing, its own mission. **When we join the church, we assume the responsibility of respecting its teachings and cooperating in accomplishing its mission.** It should become our first interest. The focus is not on us, but on Christ, its Founder. It does not become an organization to carry out our plans and strategies, but is to carry out the mission God ordained for His church.

“Everyone who connects himself with the church makes in that act a solemn vow to work for the interest of the church, and to hold that interest above every worldly consideration. It is his work to preserve a living connection with God, to engage with heart and soul in the great scheme of redemption, and to show, in his life and character, the excellency of God’s commandments in contrast with the customs and precepts of the world” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 43).

Today’s offering is for the Local Church Budget. May our financial support indicate the importance Christ as our Example places on His church.

Let us pray.

January 3, 2009

Local Church Budget

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Offertory Reading . . .

January 10, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

Our local conference is a sisterhood of churches that helps each congregation to accomplish important objectives that are beyond the reach of any one church. The Conference Advance offering addresses specific needs in the overall conference as well as a variety of special projects. One of the largest portions goes to fund Christian Education. Another substantial part of the Conference Advance offering is set aside for local evangelism to finance programs most local congregations cannot shoulder alone.

The summer camp program, child evangelism like Vacation Bible School, our free monthly union magazines, youth evangelism programs, conference programs for adults, elementary education, and academy operation are also areas supported by the Conference Advance offering.

All of these educational and life-changing programs are possible because individual members choose to contribute a suggested 1%-2% of their income to the Conference Advance offering. May the Lord continue to richly bless our conference as we financially support it today.

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

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January 17, 2009

Local Church Budget

“...Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

It is important that as Christians, we define, by the light of God's Word, the reason for our existence. Behind a covetous life, behind a person who gives first place to a desire for worldly possessions, there is a distorted concept of the reason for his existence. If we believe that the reason for being alive is to accumulate wealth, then this philosophy will be reflected in the way we use our time, our talents, and all the other blessings that God has given us. It will end up influencing our relationship with God.

“There is danger of losing all in the pursuit of worldly gain; for in the feverish eagerness for earthly treasure, higher interests are forgotten. The care and perplexity that are involved in laying up treasures upon the earth leave no time nor desire to estimate the value of eternal riches” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 217).

Satan knows the power that the desire for earthly treasures has over man.

“It is his studied purpose to lead men to forget God and heaven, to bring all the souls that he can under his own jurisdiction. And to this end he brings forward enterprises and inventions that will so occupy men's attention that they will have no time to think of heavenly things” (Obid., p. 219).

Today as we return our tithes and offerings, let us remember, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Let us pray.

January 17, 2009

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Offertory Reading for . . .

January 24, 2009

Religious Liberty

(Suggested Offering: As the Spirit impresses)

With His death and resurrection, Christ not only paid the penalty for sin and provided the power to overcome sin, but in doing so also **purchased for humanity a free will**. After His sacrifice, humankind could choose to accept or reject the sacrifice. *Our Creator and Savior gave us the freedom to choose*. “It is for our freedom that Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1, NIV). **It is our responsibility to protect that God-given freedom, for ourselves and for others.**

The annual Religious Liberty Offering helps ensure that churches—and individuals—are free to practice their faith as God has instructed. Your offering today will sponsor *Liberty* magazine subscriptions to high-level government officials and prominent social and religious leaders throughout the North American Division. It will also be used to support the North American Division litigation fund—resources that make it possible for us to defend and preserve your religious liberty in court if necessary.

Please give generously in support of these sacred freedoms of choice, belief, and practice. And join me in thanking our Redeemer for His original gift of freedom.

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Offertory Reading for . . .

January 31, 2009

Local Church/Union Designated

(Suggested Offering: As the Spirit impresses)

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

(Philippians 2:5-11)

“When we think of the great gift of heaven for the redemption of a sinful world, and then consider the offerings that we can make, we shrink from drawing a comparison. The demands that might be made upon a whole universe could not compare with that one gift. Immeasurable love was expressed when One equal with the Father came to pay the price for the souls of men, and bring to them eternal life. Shall those who profess the name of Christ see no attraction in the world’s Redeemer, be indifferent to the possession of truth and righteousness, and turn from the heavenly treasure to the earthly?” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 226)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

February 7, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

There is nothing more calculated to unite our interest with the interests of God than giving our time and means to His work. **When we acknowledge Jesus as Lord of all our affairs and accept His command to support and build up His church, we enter into a divine partnership that blesses us more than it blesses others. Setting aside our self-centered desires in order to provide for the needs of others will be an adventure in faith and will give tone to our walk with Christ.** This is the principle of life that the Creator reveals to us: “For God so loved the world, that He gave...”

“The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. Christ’s self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that He had, and then gave Himself. The cross of Christ appeals to the benevolence of every follower of the blessed Saviour. The principle there illustrated is to give, give. This, carried out in actual benevolence and good works, is the true fruit of the Christian life. The principle of worldlings is to get, get, and thus they expect to secure happiness; but, carried out in all its bearings, the fruit is misery and death. . . .

“Meet around the cross of Calvary in self-sacrifice and self-denial. God will bless you as you do your best.” --*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 14, 16

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

February 14, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **Adventist TV Ministries**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

Christ's return is just around the corner. **Now more than ever we need to support the Adventist Television Ministries that reach the hearts behind closed doors.**

The ministries of *Breath of life*, *Faith For Today*, and *It Is Written* continue to proclaim the Good News of Christ's soon return through innovative television programs, through evangelism, and through the Internet. (You can now watch the powerful programs of our Adventist Television Ministries on The Adventist Channel on the Internet at www.theadventistchannel.org.) Much of the explosion in baptisms and church membership is the direct result of our Adventist Television Ministries.

Your investment in last year's Television offering and your support throughout the year made their success possible. **Won't you prayerfully consider supporting Adventist Television Ministries with your best gift this year?**

The success of these ministries in 2009 will depend largely on your support now.

Let's seize the opportunity while there is still time to reach behind closed doors and touch hearts for the kingdom.

Let us pray.

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Offertory Reading for . . .

February 21, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

The Power to Surrender

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Surrendering to God means the full submission of the human will to His. This spiritual response of giving up everything in the name of God is difficult unless Jesus Christ is living in us.

God always calls for the best in worship, and the best in us—a living sacrifice. **By offering ourselves to God as a gift of praise, we are in fact surrendering all that we are and have in Him.** This act of surrender is a personal acknowledgement of His sovereignty over our lives.

Today as we return our tithes and give our offerings, may it be an act of worship to “Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7)

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Let us pray.

February 28, 2009

Local Conference Advance

David Crook, past president of the SDA Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, shares this testimony:

At a young age I was impressed with the importance of stewardship and began a practice of returning the Lord's tithe and giving offerings. At 14 I began supporting myself fully, including paying my entire expense through boarding academy and college. When I graduated from these institutions, both owed me money.

Early in our marriage, my wife and I felt convicted to return a second tithe. According to simple arithmetic, there wouldn't be enough money to cover all our commitments, including a home mortgage and car loan. However, we felt such conviction that we launched out in faith. We always had enough money to take care of all our needs—with some left over each month.

All through life these blessings have continued. When our son was contemplating attending Loma Linda Medical School, I wondered how we would ever manage that expense. Looking at every possible option, I contemplated cutting our conference advance offering from two percent to one percent. That would not have been a great help compared to the tuition, but it was an option. Then I had to stop and scold myself, "Why would you ever think of changing any of your giving when God has blessed you so greatly? Don't you trust His promises?" Shamed, I soon banished that thought. Beyond anything we thought possible, God blessed us with money to help our son through to graduation. During all of this, we have basically been a one-income family, living on a pastor's salary. I truly believe Malachi 3:10, because I am experiencing it.

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

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Local Conference Advance

David Crook, past president of the SDA Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, shares this testimony:

At a young age I was impressed with the importance of stewardship and began a practice of returning the Lord's tithe and giving offerings. At 14 I began supporting myself fully, including paying my entire expense through boarding academy and college. When I graduated from these institutions, both owed me money.

Early in our marriage, my wife and I felt convicted to return a second tithe. According to simple arithmetic, there wouldn't be enough money to cover all our commitments, including a home mortgage and car loan. However, we felt such conviction that we launched out in faith. We always had enough money to take care of all our needs—with some left over each month.

All through life these blessings have continued. When our son was contemplating attending Loma Linda Medical School, I wondered how we would ever manage that expense. Looking at every possible option, I contemplated cutting our conference advance offering from two percent to one percent. That would not have been a great help compared to the tuition, but it was an option. Then I had to stop and scold myself, "Why would you ever think of changing any of your giving when God has blessed you so greatly? Don't you trust His promises?" Shamed, I soon banished that thought. Beyond anything we thought possible, God blessed us with money to help our son through to graduation. During all of this, we have basically been a one-income family, living on a pastor's salary. I truly believe Malachi 3:10, because I am experiencing it.

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

March 7, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come into His courts.” (Psalm 96:8)

Like every family, the local church family has financial obligations to meet. Each week church members see evidence of their support of the local church in the form of warm, clean, and attractive surroundings. Some, such as electricity, gas, and water, are easy to see, but many are not so obvious. Property insurance, church school operating expenses, children’s magazines, teaching supplies, Sabbath School study guides, staff salaries, cleaning services, worthy student fund, church bulletins—these are but a few of the costs that must be met month after month.

Because these expenses are constant, it is recommended that 3-5% of one’s income be set aside for the local church budget. This **systematic giving ensures that all share in both the blessings and responsibilities of the local congregation.**

The offering today is for our local church.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Offertory Reading for . . .

March 14, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **Adventist World Radio**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

Radio broadcasts can reach places on earth that missionaries cannot. Adventist World Radio's mission is to carry the Adventist hope in Christ to the hardest-to-reach people groups of the world in their own languages. AWR hears evidence of how listeners are discovering God and His love for the very first time. Here's a testimony from a young listener in Somalia, a Muslim country that has no official Adventist outreach:

Before becoming a Christian, life was meaningless. I was tired of religion and all the holy people. I didn't believe that God cared for me. I desperately needed comfort but never found it in our religion. Then I came across Adventist World Radio and heard the living words of Jesus Christ. I gave my heart to Him, and He changed my life. He gave me comfort and hope.

In my first year of high school, I got to know two girls who were in the same situation I had been before I became a Christian. They were confused and worried. After one year, when I realized we were sincere friends, I shared my faith in Christ with them. They opened the door of their hearts and invited Jesus in. Now I have two friends who are Christians. They now have the same purpose in life as I have. Together we listen to Adventist World Radio.

AWR broadcasts programs in 70 languages through AM, FM, and short-wave radio, satellite transmissions, and Internet pod casts. These broadcasts bypass geographic barriers and government restrictions, bringing hope directly into people's homes and hearts. We invite you today to join AWR in this vital outreach.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Offertory Reading for . . .

March 21, 2009

Local Church Budget
(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

The Power to Give

“And all the tithes of the land whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s. It is holy to the Lord . . . And concerning the tithes of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord” (Leviticus 27:30, 32).

We honor God by worshipping Him with our offering of thanksgiving and returning to Him His tithes. The giving of offerings is an expression of our thankfulness to God; and the return of tithes is an expression of our faithfulness to Him.

Bring your tithes and offerings into His presence. “You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year.

“And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithes of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstlings of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.

“But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithes, or if the place where the Lord your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the Lord your God has blessed you, “Then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses.

“And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household” (Deuteronomy 14:22-26).

Today as we return our tithes and give our offerings, may it be an act of worship to “Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7).

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

March 21, 2009

Local Church Budget
(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Offertory Reading for . . .

March 28, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

The Dollar That Might Save a Soul

“A certain scribe came, and said unto him, ‘Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.’

“And Jesus saith unto him, ‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.’” (Matthew 8:19, 20)

“If ever we needed to exercise economy, it is now. All who labor in the cause should realize the importance of closely following the Saviour’s example of self-denial and economy. They should see in the means that they handle a trust which God has committed them, and they should feel under obligation to exercise tact and financial ability in the use of their Lord’s money. Every penny should be carefully treasured. **A cent seems like a trifle, but a hundred cents make a dollar, and rightly spent may be the means of saving a soul from death. If all the means which has been wasted by our own people in self-gratification had been devoted to the cause of God, there would be no empty treasuries, and missions could be established in all parts of the world.**” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 290-91)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

April 4, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

Ephesians 5:23 reads, “Christ is Head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Christ is the Head of the church. He considers it His body and Himself its Savior. This should indicate to us **the importance of the church to Christ**. Thus, **the status of the church member implies one of invaluable privilege and solemn responsibility**.

As a member of the body of Christ, we should be committed to self-sacrifice. Christ’s words in Matthew 16:24 are very well known: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” As members of Christ’s church, we are privileged to become involved in an enterprise that will surely triumph.

What would the church be like if we members allowed God to be Lord of our body temples, our time, our talents, our testimonies of Christ’s goodness, and our treasure or temporal resources? This kind of commitment should be evidenced even more as we see the culmination of earth’s history. God’s servant wrote, “Those who believe this solemn truth should possess such a spirit of self-sacrifice as will rebuke the worldly ambition of the money worshiper” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 41).

Today’s offering is for the Local Church Budget. **As members of Christ’s church, we have the opportunity and the privilege to sacrifice for a cause above and beyond this world.**

Let us pray.

April 4, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

April 11, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **Christian Record Services for the Blind**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

Ever hear the song, “Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord”? That song title captures the emphasis of today’s World Budget Offering . . . *Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord.*

Christian Record Services for the Blind may be the most unique of the 17 Adventist ministries sharing in your World Budget Offering today. Its portion is three-quarters of 1%. **Write CRSB on your tithe envelope or use the special envelope provided if you wish to direct your entire offering toward *helping the blind see Jesus.***

You may also make an online gift at www.christianrecord.org.

Your church reaches out to blind children, teens, and adults through Braille, large-print, and audio magazines, books, Bibles, and Bible lessons. An audio lending library circulates 2,000 book titles among 7,000 blind listeners. *Sabbath School Bible Study Guides* are provided in Braille and on cassette. **Though many blind Seventh-day Adventist benefit from these, the majority of subscribers are not members of the Adventist Church.** Outreach also includes the Missionaries of the Blind program which links church members like you with a blind person in our community—friendship evangelism at its best.

If you follow the *Personal Giving Plan*, enter the amount of today’s offering at World Budget on your tithe envelope. Thank you.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

April 18, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

The Power to Honor

“Worship Him who made heaven and the earth, the sea and springs of water” (Revelation 14:7).

Worship occurs when, as creatures, we honor our Creator. **As stewards of God’s grace and blessings in this world, we want to express and demonstrate our devotion to Him—Owner of the whole universe.**

It is in God’s Gift and Christ’s saving grace that the steward is given power to surrender, trust, love, give, and honor in worship to the One “who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6)!

Today as we return our tithes and give our offerings, may we worship Him because we love Him who first loved us.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

April 18, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

April 25, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“All that we do is to be done willingly. We are to bring our offerings with joy and gratitude, saying as we present them, ‘Of Thine own we freely give Thee.’ The most costly service we can render is but meager compared to the gift of God to our world. Christ is a gift every day. God gave Him to the world, and He graciously takes the gifts entrusted to His human agents for the advancement of His work in the world. Thus we show that we recognize and acknowledge that everything belongs to God, absolutely and entirely.” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 198)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

May 2, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

Being Generous Produces a Double Benefit

“Those who cultivate benevolence are not only going a good work for others, and blessing those who receive the good action, but they are benefiting themselves by opening their hearts to the benign influence of true benevolence. Every ray of light shed upon others will be reflected upon our own hearts” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 345).

As seen in this passage, being generous brings a series of positive influences to our own lives which end up being a blessing to us. It is incredible to notice this happening to us at the same time we are being a blessing to others. Our God made it this way so that when we serve Him, we are immediately rewarded.

Today as we give to our local church budget, “Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

May 2, 2009

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Offertory Reading for . . .

May 9, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **Disaster and Famine Relief**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

The Disaster & Famine Relief offering supports world disaster response efforts through Adventist Community Services (ACS) and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) International. This offering is split between ADRA (90%) used worldwide and ACS (10%) used in the United States and Bermuda. The average amount of the offering is \$1.5 million, so ACS receives about \$150,000 for disaster responses in the U. S. and Bermuda. ADRA does not directly respond to disasters in the U. S. and Bermuda but focuses primarily overseas.

ACS Disaster Response has trained volunteers in each conference who help set up emergency distribution/ collection centers and can be deployed with mobile kitchens or distribution units that hand out items such as pre-packed personal care kits, undergarments, clothing, blankets, etc. The volunteers are trained to utilize local Seventh-day Adventist facilities as collection centers and emergency distribution centers. ACS has a national agreement with FEMA to operate/manage donated goods programs following disasters. It is one of the seven National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) founding members. In addition, ACS provides Crisis Care training for pastors to equip them with skills that will be beneficial both to their local congregations and also in disaster situations.

The U. S. and Bermuda experience frequent disasters. Your donation to the World Disaster & Famine Relief Offering will support not only the great work done by ADRA but also ACS as it responds both locally and nationwide. Please consider supporting the on-going efforts of the disaster response program by giving a generous gift.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Offertory Reading for . . .

May 16, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” (Ephesians 3:20)

Personal testimony of Elder Robert Lister, past president of Southwest Region Conference, Dallas, Texas:

Promises are meant to be kept. It is easy for us to break them, but we always can depend on God to keep His.

Early in our ministry, my wife & I faced a big test, a strong temptation: we had to choose whether we would return our tithe and give an offering or pay the house mortgage. There was enough money to pay only one of the other, not both. We decided before the other bills were paid to set aside in love the first fruits of our increase plus offerings and trust God to supply us with additional money to pay the mortgage.

The next Sabbath we placed the tithe envelope in the offering plate with the joy of knowing that God was pleased with our faithfulness. As usual, we spent all day in church activities from Sabbath School to divine worship to fellowship dinner to missionary activities in the community to visiting the nursing homes and hospitals, then back to church for Adventist Youth meeting and sunset vespers. It was a long but happy day.

When we got home, in the mail was a brown envelope from the IRS with a refund check from an audit done on a return four years earlier. It was for more than the mortgage payment.

God keeps His promises!

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Offertory Reading for . . .

May 23, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

Departure From the Self-Sacrifice of the Pioneers

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price . . . Peter said, ‘Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land . . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.’” (Acts 5:1-4)

“There was a time when there were but few who listened to and embraced the truth, and they had not much of this world’s goods. Then it was necessary for some to sell their houses and lands, and obtain cheaper, while their means were freely lent to the Lord to publish the truth, and otherwise aid in advancing the cause of God. These self-sacrificing ones endured privations; but if they endure unto the end, great will be their reward.

God has been moving upon many hearts. The truth for which a few sacrificed so much has triumphed, and multitudes have laid hold of it. In the providence of God, those who have means have been brought into the truth, that, as the work increases, the wants of His cause may be met. God does not now call for the houses His people need to live in; but if those who have an abundance do not hear His voice, cut loose from the world, and sacrifice for God, He will pass them by, and will call for those who are willing to do anything for Jesus, even to sell their homes to meet the wants of the cause. God will have freewill offerings. Those who give must esteem it a privilege to do so.” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 215)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

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“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price . . . Peter said, ‘Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land . . . thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.’” (Acts 5:1-4)

“There was a time when there were but few who listened to and embraced the truth, and they had not much of this world’s goods. Then it was necessary for some to sell their houses and lands, and obtain cheaper, while their means were freely lent to the Lord to publish the truth, and otherwise aid in advancing the cause of God. These self-sacrificing ones endured privations; but if they endure unto the end, great will be their reward.

God has been moving upon many hearts. The truth for which a few sacrificed so much has triumphed, and multitudes have laid hold of it. In the providence of God, those who have means have been brought into the truth, that, as the work increases, the wants of His cause may be met. God does not now call for the houses His people need to live in; but if those who have an abundance do not hear His voice, cut loose from the world, and sacrifice for God, He will pass them by, and will call for those who are willing to do anything for Jesus, even to sell their homes to meet the wants of the cause. God will have freewill offerings. Those who give must esteem it a privilege to do so.” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 215)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

May 30, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **World Missions**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

Take a minute and look around you. No, not at the people. Look around and what do you see? Do you see walls? Do you see a ceiling and windows? **In many areas of the world there still are churches with no walls, no ceilings, and no windows—in fact, no permanent building at all!**

Now how many of you know the name(s) of the pastor(s) here in this church? **Did you know there are 25 countries or areas in the world with only one ordained minister in the entire country! And there are more than 40 where there are no ordained Seventh-day Adventist ministers at all!**

Twice a year the offering during the church service goes to support mission work around the world. This Sabbath is one of those days. **Today, your offerings will go to start new work, train workers, and support work in areas where there are few members or where the members are extremely poor.**

Please help carry a message of hope in Jesus to these areas by supporting the World Mission Budget offering today. **Make it a point to support mission offerings throughout the year.**

Thank you.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

May 30, 2009

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Thank you.

Let us pray.

Offertory for . . .

June 6, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

God Does Not Pay Salaries, He Gives Gifts

In the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16), we might feel that God is unfair. Why are the people who went to work at the very end of the workday given the same pay as those who went to work early in the morning and stayed all through the hottest part of the day? Evidently **Christ is turning things around—“the last will be first and the first will be last.”**

What the Lord is trying to teach us is that God does not give us what we deserve. If He did, we would all receive eternal death. In truth, when it comes to salvation in Christ, it does not matter what time of day we come into the vineyard, only that we come in. Everything we receive is by grace, not because we deserve it. If God gave us what we deserved, none of us could stand before Him. Instead, He treats us with grace. He freely gives us what we have no way of buying. As the Owner, He prefers to pay the price, just to watch us receive what we could not earn.

“Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;
“Praise Him, all creatures here below;
“Praise Him, above ye heavenly host;
“Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

Please remember our local church as you give your offerings to the Lord.

Let us pray.

Offertory for . . .

June 6, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

June 13, 2009

WORLD BUDGET

Focus: **Adventist Chaplaincy/Multilingual Ministries**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

*On the 5,000 public college and university campuses across North America, two-thirds of Adventist young adults are pursuing their education. Those students have formed and lead over 100 Adventist activities groups. *Serving in the Bermudian, Canadian and United States Armed Forces are 7,500 Adventists in military uniform. Currently, 16 Adventist Military Chapel Worship Groups meet in Germany, Iraq, Japan and Korea. *Increasing numbers of prison inmates are Adventists. *And weekly, prayer requests come in for those in our own church families who become patients in healthcare facilities for a variety of reasons.

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) cares for the spiritual well-being of all these people and others in two special ways: first, through the ministry of chaplains; and second, by providing religious resources. Over 350 endorsed chaplains represent the denomination to the public while serving the religious needs of students, prisoners, patients and military-related personnel. Help ACM help others with a generous offering that provides the religious resources of Bible kits, devotional books, Sabbath School and worship materials, religious retreats and outreach literature. Thank you for caring enough to give today.

The Adventist Multilingual Ministries (AMM) addresses ministry challenges to an ever-increasing number of language groups in North America. And the number of members within each group is growing rapidly--which calls for greater resources. Truly, every kindred, tongue, and people group in North America are hungering and thirsting for the old-fashioned power of the gospel message. AMM with its 24 different language groups that need to hear the gospel story will benefit from today's World Budget Offering.

Let us share the gospel of Jesus' salvation by worshipping God with our offering to Him.

Shall we pray?

Offertory Reading for . . .

June 13, 2009

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Offertory Reading for . . .

June 20, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33)

Personal testimony of Eunice Senior, an administrative secretary and member of the Linden SDA Church in Laurelton, New York:

Like the widow of Zarephath, I had to tread the winepress alone. With a teenage son in church school, it became increasingly difficult to meet the monthly financial obligations on my meager salary. There were days when we had no money for groceries.

One Sabbath as I sat in church, I knew my bank account balance was insufficient to allow me to give an offering in addition to returning my tithe. I wavered for a while but finally decided to step out in faith. The Lord would provide.

After church, I paid a visit to the home of my former landlady. I hadn't lived at that address for more than a year. To my surprise she handed me a letter that had been delivered that day for me. To my further surprise, enclosed was a check for \$75 from a company whose name I did not recognize. The note said that it was a refund for an overpaid medical bill. I thanked God for His goodness.

Later that evening while attending a meeting in another city, a friend shook my hand and placed a \$100 bill in it. That day I learned firsthand that God is a covenant-keeping God. He is faithful to His promises.

Let us step out in faith as we give to our local church budget today.

Shall we pray?

Offertory Reading for . . .

June 20, 2009

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(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Shall we pray?

Offertory Reading for . . .

June 27, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plane suggests 1-2% of income)

“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, ‘If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:24-27)

“To Matthew in his wealth, and to Andrew and Peter in their poverty, the same test was brought; the same consecration was made by each. At the moment of success, when the nets were filled with fish, and the impulses of the old life were strongest, Jesus asked the disciples at the sea to leave all for the work of the gospel. So every soul is tested as to whether the desire for temporal good or for fellowship with Christ is strongest.”
(*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 216)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

June 27, 2009

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory for . . .

July 4, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“The young man said to Him . . . ‘What do I still lack’” (Matthew 19:20)?

The Lord never asks us to do more than what He Himself has already done for us. Like the rich young ruler, there are people who desire the rewards God promises, but when they find out the price, they sorrowfully turn away.

“Christ would have the young man understand that He required nothing of him more than to follow the example that He Himself, the Lord of heaven, had set. He left His riches and glory, and became poor, that man, through His poverty, might be made rich; and for the sake of these riches, He requires man to yield earthly wealth, honor, and pleasure” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 211).

Material riches compete with our love and loyalty to God. **If Satan manages to fill our hearts with love for earthly possessions, honor, and pleasures, he will at the same time make us incapable of putting God first in our lives.**

“Here is the danger of riches to the avaricious man; the more he gains the harder it is for him to be generous. To diminish his wealth is like parting with his life; and he turns from the attractions of the immortal reward, in order to retain and increase his earthly possessions” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 211).

Today as we return our tithes and offerings, may we choose to follow the example Christ set, “Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:6, 7).

Let us pray.

Offertory for . . .

July 4, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

July 11, 2009

Women's Ministries

(Suggested Offering: As the spirit impresses)

Today the North American Division (NAD) offering will be for Women's Ministries. Since its inception, the Women's Ministries Department has been engaged in carrying out the mission of the Church, which is "to proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel. . ." Last year nearly 21,000 people were baptized as a direct result of evangelistic efforts by the women of North America.

When Jesus explained what separates the sheep from the goats in Matt. 25:31-46, He made it clear that ministry to others is a primary characteristic of Christian believers. **With the theme "A Ministry for Every Woman," the NAD Women's Ministries Department actively encourages every woman in the Church to be involved in some kind of ministry or service.** In the home, in the church, and in the community, there is work that can best be carried out by women. According to Ellen G. White, "They [women] can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed" (*Evangelism*, p. 465).

This year's offering will affirm the work of women in the Church. Keep in mind that by supporting this offering, you will be giving a gift to yourself, since 40% will stay in your conference to be used to benefit the women of the conference.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Let us pray.

Offertory for . . .

July 18, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

Each church member should reflect on and value the privilege God has given him in allowing him to be part of a church where he can enjoy the experience of salvation in Christ. Even though the church does not save us, it does help us to remain connected to the Personification of salvation, Jesus Christ. Each member should also recognize the great responsibility that God has given the church of preparing the world for the Lord’s return.

We do not want to be members who do nothing. We do not want to be ones who do as little as possible. We do not want to do only what we have to. **Our love for Jesus makes us want to go above and beyond our duty!**

“Indeed, some seem ready to exceed their duty, as though fearful that they will lose an opportunity of investing their portion in the bank of heaven” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 42).

Thank you for your faithfulness in support of our local church, in returning your tithes and offerings. God will abundantly reward.

Let us pray.

Offertory for . . .

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

July 25, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

“Therefore take no thought, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or, ‘What shall we drink?’ or, ‘Wherewithal shall we be clothed?’

“(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:31-33)

“The Lord looks with pity on those who allow themselves to be burdened with household cares and business perplexities. They are cumbered with much serving, and neglect the one thing essential. ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness,’ the Saviour says; ‘and all these things shall be added unto you.’ That is, ‘Look away from this world to the eternal. Put forth your most earnest endeavors to obtain those things upon which God places value, and which Christ gave His precious life that you might secure. His sacrifice has thrown open wide to you the gates of heavenly commerce. Lay up your treasure beside the throne of God, by doing with His entrusted capital the work that He desires done in the winning of souls to a knowledge of the truth. This will secure your eternal riches. . . .’” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 225-226)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

July 25, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 1, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

Being Faithful to God Brings Prosperity to Our Lives

“Whenever God’s people, in any period of the world, have cheerfully and willingly carried out His plan in systematic benevolence and in gifts and offerings, they have realized the standing promise that prosperity should attend all their labors just in proportion as they obeyed His requirements. When they acknowledged the claims of God, and complied with His requirements, honoring Him with their substance, their barns were filled with plenty” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 347).

It is incredible that even now, people want to prosper while being unfaithful to God, when faithfulness is precisely the key that opens the door to prosperity. God made things this way, not because He is buying us with His blessings, but as part of His plan of immediate reward for those who serve Him with self-denial and loyalty. In this sense we begin to enjoy a new life in Christ, and our salvation is sure in Him from the moment we receive Him as our Savior.

There are certainly wonderful, tangible rewards for those who love God and serve Him unselfishly. Ellen White wrote, “The Lord measures the spirit, and rewards accordingly” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 340).

Today as we give to our local church budget, remember, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 1, 2009

Local Church Budget

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 8, 2009

WORLD BUDGET

Focus: **Andrews/Oakwood/Loma Linda Universities**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

In 1872 **Ellen White** wrote “Proper Education” based on a vision she had earlier. She **emphasized the cultivation of thinking skills and health, redemptive discipline, balance through physical work, and the Bible as central to all instruction.** Two years earlier (1870), she had a role in establishing **Battle Creek College (now Andrews University).**

At the 1891 General Conference Session she called on the Church to fulfill “our duty to the colored people” and among other initiatives, **Oakwood Industrial School** was established in 1896.

She supported purchase of a resort hotel in California to establish **Loma Linda Sanitarium** in 1905 to **focus on nursing and medical education.**

Following her counsel to establish schools “if there are no more than six children to attend,” **the educational system has proved to be one of the Church’s most successful evangelistic tools** and has grown to **over 1.4 million students** from kindergarten to university levels, **nearly 75,000 teachers** and **7,283 schools.**

Andrews University, Oakwood University, and Loma Linda University will benefit from today’s offering as part of the World Budget. Please support Adventist education.

For more about Adventist education, see *In Passion for the World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education* by Floyd Greenleaf, Pacific Press, 2005.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 8, 2009

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 15, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:34)

Personal testimony of Joyce Hairston, a licensed practical nurse in Winston-Salem, North Carolina:

It wasn't an unreasonable plan, this call to fund a new educational building so our children could be taught of the Lord. Our children deserve the best. The pastor had caught the vision. The plan was announced that every member should sacrifice each month. In less than two years we'd have a new school building.

But I'm giving enough already, I thought. Surely that plan is not for me. I already return a faithful tithe and generous offerings. Twenty-five years earlier I had adopted the "10+ Plan." When I was given a raise at work, I gave God a raise as well in offerings. I believed in Christian education. My husband and I had sent all six of our children to church school. Wasn't my 10 + 13 enough?

The more I tried to rationalize why I shouldn't give to the plan, the more troubled I became. After three days of battling, I finally gave up and said, "Lord, I'm willing to give my part toward the building project."

That night when I arrived at work, my supervisor called me in for my annual evaluation. I left the meeting in shock! I had received my biggest raise ever! The building project would receive my full commitment. Once again I had been shown I couldn't out-give God!

May we be willing to do our part as we give to our local church budget.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 15, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:34)

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May we be willing to do our part as we give to our local church budget.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 22, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

“By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

“There are many in our churches who should bring large offerings, and not content themselves with presenting a feeble pittance to Him who has done so much for them. Immeasurable blessings are falling upon them, but how little they return to the Giver! Let those who are indeed pilgrims and strangers upon the earth, now send their treasures before them to the heavenly country, in the much-needed gifts to the Lord’s treasury.” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 153)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 22, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

August 29, 2009

Local Church/Union Designated

(Suggested Offering: As the Spirit impresses)

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:18-21)

“This gospel message is one of the most precious passages in the New Testament. When it is accepted, it yields in the lives of the receiver good deeds whose value is far above that of diamonds and gold. It has power to bring gladness and consolation into the earthly life, and to bestow eternal life upon the believer. O that we might have our understanding so enlightened by grace that we could take in its full meaning! The Father is saying to us, I will bestow upon you a treasure more precious than any earthly possession, a treasure that will make you rich and blessed forever.” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 226)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

September 5, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

Since the entrance of sin into this world, human beings have lived with a natural tendency toward selfishness. This is what motivates them in nearly all their activities. They look first at what benefit they will obtain.

This also is the case in their relationship with God. Humans frequently function on a basis of personal interest. This attitude was expressed by the apostle **Peter** when he said to Christ, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” (Matthew 19:27).

Peter’s question, like turning in a receipt to Christ for reimbursement, clearly indicates his **understanding that, since the disciples had done a certain amount of work, they deserved compensation—some kind of reward.** The Lord’s answer was very interesting: “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.” (Matthew 19:29).

“Duty is duty, and should be performed for its own sake. But the Lord has compassion upon us in our fallen condition, and accompanies His commands with promises... He calls upon His people to prove Him, declaring that He will reward obedience with the richest blessings” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 90, 91).

Very soon we will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him, but we will cast it at His feet and worship Him Who forsook all heaven for us.

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power” (Revelation 4:11).

Today we remember our local church needs.

Let us pray.

September 5, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Offertory Reading for . . .

September 12, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **World Missions**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

Unusual Opportunities

More than 130 years ago, J. N. Andrews was sent to Europe as the first Seventh-day Adventist missionary. Since that time, we **Seventh-day Adventists have generously supported mission work through our tithes and mission offerings.**

Jesus called on us to carry the gospel to the whole world, to every kindred, tongue and people. We still believe that's our mission. Yet, over the years, **mission giving has effectively declined.** Today we are giving less than our parents and grandparents did.

These offerings are vital for starting work in new areas, nurturing and establishing new believers in the faith, placing missionaries around the world, and advancing God's kingdom here on earth. These offerings provide the foundation for many of the other projects we choose to support.

Thank you for your generous support of Adventist mission work around the world. Thank you for helping carry a message of hope in Jesus to a hurting world.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

September 19, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

“Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:21, NKJV)

Personal testimony of George Crumley, retired treasurer of North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist:

When I finished college, I was asked to work at a boarding academy as an accountant and teacher. My wife and I were excited about our first job in the Adventist Church! We had done well financially while in college. My wife worked full-time, I worked part-time, and we received the GI Bill. A few weeks before graduation, our daughter was born. We had decided that my wife would stay home as a full-time mother, so when we arrived at the academy, we would be living on just one salary (\$58/week).

Early in our marriage, we had committed ourselves to two basic financial principles: 1) God’s tithe and our offerings to Him always came first; and, 2) we would live within our family budget—no cash advances on next month’s paycheck.

We had to cut our family expenditures in every way, and still some months we had only \$3 in our checking account 1-2 weeks before our next paycheck. Without knowing our financial need, my wife’s sister & husband would come for a visit from the farm. They didn’t have much more than we did, but they would bring potatoes, milk, cream, and eggs as a gift of love. **Praise the Lord He provides abundantly for those who are faithful in returning His tithe and their offerings of love.**

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

September 19, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

September 26, 2008

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

Freewill Offerings

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor, giving it highest efficiency in service for Him. If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him. Our gold and silver, our most precious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 198)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

October 3, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

The psalmist writes, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1). **Nature reveals to us the many ways God provides for His creation.** Every breath of air, every drop of water declares that God is good and that each has a part to play in His plan.

No part of nature exists to itself. A stream could not become a river without each tiny drop of rain. And, in turn, the great oceans provide the earth with refreshing rain. **That which ensures the well being of every creature, including men and women, are the predictable cycles of nature Providence has ordained—each member living and giving for the other.**

The same principle is at work in God’s church. Although the church is made up of individuals, we find our strength in our united efforts. **Each member plays a vital role in the body of Christ so that all may contribute to the picture of Jesus that the world sees.** We recognize that our time, our talents, and our possessions are not our own, but are a trust given to us by a loving Creator.

Everything in God’s creation is orderly and purposeful. He invites us to respond to His church’s needs with both our minds and our hearts. **No great work can be built upon emotional or sporadic giving.**

Today we invite you to give to the many costs that must be met month after month here in our local church. Because these **expenses are constant**, it is recommended that 3%-5% of one’s income be set aside for the local church budget. This **systematic giving ensures that all members share in both the blessings and responsibilities of our congregation.**

Let us pray.

October 3, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Offertory Reading for . . .

October 10, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **Voice of Prophecy**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

Colleen grew up in a Christian church where Bible teaching wasn't emphasized. Longing for something more, she got into the New Age movement and took up channeling. **Colleen had lots of questions, but she wasn't finding the Big Answer**, just a grab bag of messages with no way to determine what was truth.

Then a friend introduced her to a Christian radio station where **she heard the Voice of Prophecy**. "I loved it," she says, "and there was always a practical spiritual lesson."

She enrolled in the Discover Bible Guides from the Voice of Prophecy. **She found a compelling picture of Jesus Christ as the Big Answer**, her Very Present Savior and Lord. Colleen accepted the truth of the Bible and was baptized.

Today is Voice of Prophecy Emphasis Day. Your special offering will help light up the lives of more people like Colleen as they find God's message in Voice of Prophecy radio and television broadcasts, Bible courses, and Internet websites.

Thank you for your generous support.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Let us pray.

October 17, 2009

Local Church Budget

The Power to Trust

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on.

“Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.

“Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?

“And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

“If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?

“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil or spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

“If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?

“And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, or have an anxious mind.

“For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things.

“But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you” (Luke 12:22-31).

Trust is allowing God to take control of every area of our human existence, including our resources. It is living the Lordship of Jesus Christ daily.

Trust is a spiritual value that is born out of an intimate relationship between the believer and God. Like a child holding onto a parent’s hand, so will the Christian hold on to the hand of God through faith in spite of the unknown challenges of life.

Today as we return our tithes and give our offerings, may it be an act of worship to “Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7). **Let us pray.**

October 17, 2009

Local Church Budget

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Offertory Reading for . . .

October 24, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

Invest Now in the Bank of Heaven

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”
(Matthew 6:20-21)

“Has not the time come when we should begin to cut down our possessions? May God help you who can do something now to make an investment in the bank of heaven. We do not ask a loan, but a freewill offering,--a return to the Master of His own goods which He has lent you. If you love God supremely, and your neighbor as yourself, we believe you will give tangible proofs of the same in freewill offerings . . . There are souls to be saved, and may you be coworkers with Jesus Christ in saving these souls for whom Christ has given His life. The Lord will bless you in the good fruit you may bear to His glory. May the same Holy Spirit which inspired the Bible take possession of your hearts, leading you to love His word, which is spirit and life. May it open your eyes to discover the things of the Spirit of God. The reason there is so much dwarfed religion today is because people have not brought practical self-denial and self-sacrifice into their lives.” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 51-52)

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading for . . .

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[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading . . .

October 31, 2009

2010 General Conference Mission Offering

(Suggested Offering: Sacrificially)

Today's offering is the first of four to be taken by the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church for the 2010 General Conference Session's special mission projects planned for the 10/40 Window and the Silk Road.

The 10/40 Window refers to the region of the world between 10-40° latitude in the Northern Hemisphere, an area with the smallest Christian penetration on the planet. Two-thirds of the world's population lives here, but only about 2% of the population is Christian. It is the birthplace of the three largest non-Christian religions—Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Nine of the 10 countries with the largest non-Christian population are in this area. There are 34 Muslim, 7 Buddhist, and 2 Hindu countries located here. More than 80% of the world's poorest people (those making less than \$500 a year) live in this window. This area has been singled out for special mission attention because it constitutes the core of the challenge for world evangelism.

Central Asia, site of the ancient trade route between China and Europe known as the Silk Road, also presents an enormous challenge for evangelism. Five countries make up this region—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. The major religions in this area are Muslim and Russian Orthodox, but after 70 years of Communism, many consider themselves atheistic or secular. Of the 60 million people who live in this region, only about 6500 are Seventh-day Adventists.

Traditionally the Adventist Church has invested the vast majority of its resources in areas where Christianity is known. **Now is the time to introduce Jesus to His "other sheep." Please set aside significant funds for these urgent General Conference mission projects. Let us pray.**

Offertory Reading . . .

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Offertory Reading for . . .

November 7, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

Ephesians 5:23 reads, “Christ is Head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Christ is the Head of the church. He considers it His body and Himself its Savior. This should indicate to us the importance of the church to Christ.

Being a member of the church of our Lord is an invaluable privilege and also a huge responsibility. The challenge right now is to enjoy this privilege with an attitude of preference toward the well-being of the church, of faithfulness in our relationship with it, of commitment to the spreading of the message given to it, and also of sacrifice in every area required of us.

Remember, the final triumph of the church is guaranteed in Christ. **When we do our part, we can be assured that we will have the privilege of participating in Christ’s triumph.**

“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:21).

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

November 7, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Offertory Reading for . . .

November 14, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **Annual Sacrifice**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

In Matthew 24:14, it says, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (KJV). The word *Adventist* in the last part of the name of our church means that we’re looking forward to the second coming of Jesus. **As Seventh-day Adventists we long for Jesus to come and end all the suffering, to end all the wars, to end all the evil.**

Do you know that there are still 26 countries or areas of the world where there are no Seventh-day Adventist churches? And did you know that there are 20 countries where for every one Adventist you have more than 100,000 who are not Adventists? And did you know that there are communities, towns, and villages around the world where you can’t find a group of Adventists to worship with even if you wanted to?

Today’s World Budget Offering will help Global Mission carry the gospel to the unreached people and areas of the world. Global Missions is committed to helping start new groups of believers in unreached areas.

Your offerings today can help carry a message of hope in Jesus to an unreached area of the world. Your offering can help us take one step forward in telling the world about Jesus.

Thank you for your sacrificial support to help build God’s Kingdom.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

Offertory Reading for . . .

November 14, 2009

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Offertory Reading for . . .

November 21, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

The Power to Love

“We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

To love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind is Jesus’ command to make Him first in our lives. This is a worship call that seeks to create in our hearts a love that comes from knowing Him as Creator and Redeemer. And we love Him because He first loved us.

“And Jesus said . . . , ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind’” (Matthew 22:37).

Today as we return our tithes and give our offerings, may it be an act of worship to “Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7)

Let us pray.

November 21, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading . . .

November 28, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

Henry Cowen, president of Family Heritage Books, Thomaston, GA, shares this testimony:

At our fledgling publishing ministry, finances were predictably tight. So we opened the mail with eager anticipation, relishing each new order. A friend challenged us to make the Lord our partner in the operation of the ministry and to give Him a specific amount for each item the ministry sold. We decided to do this.

We began to send God's share to the conference every Friday. Almost immediately good things started to happen. Sales that had been slow nearly tripled and have continued to grow for several years, and the Lord has blessed us with talented helpers who work for a fraction of their worth.

We have had several severe tests to our commitment. One Friday payables and payroll were due, but the only money we had in the bank was the share of previous sales we had promised to God. We prayed. As we wrote out the check to the conference, the phone rang. It was an order for several thousand dollars' worth of books.

Our Father does a great job of supplying our many needs, and we have found that we are now more interested than ever in the work of our conference, such as evangelism, new pastors and churches, and academy projects.

[Appeal to be completed by local conference for specific project(s).]

Offertory Reading . . .

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Offertory Reading for . . .

December 5, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

Ephesians 5:23 reads, “Christ is Head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Christ is the Head of the church. He considers it His body and Himself its Savior. This should indicate to us the importance of the church to Christ. Thus, **the status of the church member implies one of invaluable privilege and solemn responsibility.**

As a member of the body of Christ, we should be committed to being faithful. Paul challenges us, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2). **As servants and managers for God, as members of His body, our neighbors and friends could expect us to be faithful in our relationship with His church and its mission.**

“All are to show their fidelity to God by the wise use of His entrusted capital, not in means alone, but in any endowment that will tend to the upbuilding of His kingdom” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, 43).

“There is a great work to be done in a short time. We need to understand our work, and to do it with fidelity” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, 43).

Today’s offering is for the Local Church Budget. **May we be faithful in our financial support of the church that Christ purchased with His own blood** (see Acts 20:28).

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

December 5, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

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Offertory Reading for . . .

December 12, 2009

WORLD BUDGET
Focus: **Inner City Ministries**

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 2-3% of income)

What is ACS Inner City Ministries Offering Day?

It is an annual event that is designed to solicit financial support for the Adventist Community Services Inner City Community Development Program.

Who does ACS Inner City Ministries help?

It provides vital help to individuals and families who are unemployed, working-poor, uninsured, and disadvantaged living in metropolitan areas throughout the United States and Bermuda.

How does ACS Inner City Ministries help people?

It offers humanitarian services such as food pantry, clothing, housing assistance, substance abuse awareness and prevention training, addiction treatment and counseling, medical and health care services, crisis intervention and emergency assistance, domestic violence aid, family and parenting counseling, teen outreach pregnancy services, homeless shelters, tutoring and mentoring programs, job skills training, and much more!

The North American Division Adventist Community Services Inner City Community Development Program invites you to join us in making a difference in our communities by participating in today's offering. We encourage you to get involved in our mission to provide vital help to individuals and families who are unemployed, working-poor, uninsured, and disadvantaged in metropolitan areas throughout the United States and Bermuda. Thank you for your support.

Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

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Let us pray.

Offertory Reading for . . .

December 19, 2009

Local Church Budget

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 3-5% of income)

Mack Tennyson shares: As a 25-year-old college student, I became a Seventh-day Adventist. I made a commitment to tithe, plus an additional 10% for offerings. After graduation, I began working for a CPA firm. My salary steadily increased, and my wife and I looked forward to buying a new home and starting a family.

Then God convicted me that I should return to school to get my Ph.D. in accounting. This would mean several years of financial struggle, delaying our family, etc. My wife was against it. I worked out a budget to show her we wouldn't starve.

"Where are our offerings?" my wife asked. "Well, I left them out," I replied. "I'm sure God won't mind if we skip them while in graduate school."

"Going back to school surely can't be God's will if it means that we have to quit giving offerings," she countered. I shot back, "Since it's going to take a miracle to pay for it anyway, let's increase the offering amount to 15 percent."

We did return to school, and even though I was sure we were going to starve, we kept our word to give 15% offerings.

Praise the Lord, through a sequence of miracles—unexpected government refunds, tires that seemed to last forever, an invitation to work with a faculty member I hardly knew on a for-pay consulting job—God changed from a theoretical spiritual abstraction to a living, personal God interested in me and my simple problems and needs.

Consider this testimony as you give today. **Let us pray.**

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December 26, 2009

Local Conference Advance

(Personal Giving Plan suggests 1-2% of income)

Michael L. Ryan, general field secretary for Global Mission, GC, shares this testimony:

My four siblings and I knew that our family wasn't poor, but we also knew that we had little beyond the absolute essentials. Dad was a literature evangelist; Mom ran the house and worked when possible.

How did Mom and Dad manage? There were all the usual expenses of family life. All five of us children were in church school, academy, or college, depending on our ages. We lived in an older house, drove small cars, and had few clothes. We were not disappointed if we got one present for Christmas. All of us knew that such gifts were given in love, for money was scarce.

Absolute essentials around our house started first with the church, a divine institution with a special message and mission. Regardless of any financial crisis in our home, all of us children knew that tithes and offerings were given before any other expenses were paid.

Mom and Dad loved getting involved in church planting. They helped to establish several churches. I remember a meeting one night of one of those little congregations. The members were trying to raise money to buy some property. I was old enough to understand our family's finances, so I was shocked when Dad pledged \$500. I said nothing. I watched the next day as he went to the bank and borrowed \$500. I also observed how he paid that loan month by month with dollars the Lord was providing, because we didn't have extra money to pay bank loans.

Many things were not absolute essentials at our house. How thankful I am that sharing God's love, supporting His work, and bringing hope to the unreached were set before us as absolute essentials.

Let us pray.

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