

TITHE AND OFFERING READINGS



ATTENTION!

Dated material to be adapted,
translated and distributed to
Seventh-day Adventist churches
before December 2009.

2010

Excelling in the Grace of Giving

By Kigundu Ndwiga

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Excelling in the Grace of Giving is the theme of this year's readings. Though intrinsically selfish, a deep satisfying drink of the free grace of God motivates and energizes us to become givers too. A giving life is an outflow of the overflow of the inflow of God's abundance. Giving is not limited to money, but giving generously of our financial resource is an indicator of how deep the grace of God has infiltrated our hearts. We give because God first gave!

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We welcome your comments and suggestions for future authors and themes for the **Tithe and Offering Readings.**

(For your convenience, pages i-v are repeated at the end of the readings.)

SABBATHS WITHOUT DESIGNATED OFFERINGS

There are **six Sabbaths** in 2010 that do not have designated offerings. Each Division Committee is to designate these offerings for use in their Division, Conference or Union. The Sabbaths are: January 9, February 13, June 12, August 14, October 9, and December 11.

The titles of the readings of these non-designated offerings are noted as **“Scheduled Offering: Division.”**

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERINGS FOR 2010

East-Central Africa Division	March 27
Euro-Africa Division	June 26
Trans-European Division	September 25
West-Central Africa Division.	December 25

Special Offerings

RECOMMENDED, To adopt the Calendar of Special Offerings—World 2010, as follows:

JANUARY

2 Outreach/Church Budget
9 Division
16 Church Budget
23 Conference/Union
30 Church Budget

FEBRUARY

6 Outreach/Church Budget
13 Division
20 Church Budget
27 Conference/Union

MARCH

6 Outreach/Church Budget
13 Adventist World Radio*+
20 Church Budget
27 Conference/Union

APRIL

3 Outreach/Church Budget
10 World Mission Budget*+
17 Church Budget
24 Conference/Union

MAY

1 Outreach/Church Budget
8 Disaster and Famine Relief*+
15 Church Budget
22 Conference/Union
29 Church Budget

JUNE

5 Outreach/Church Budget
12 Division
19 Church Budget
26 Conference/Union

JULY

3 Outreach/Church Budget
10 World Mission Budget*+
17 Church Budget
24 Conference/Union
31 Church Budget

AUGUST

7 Outreach/Church Budget
14 Division
21 Church Budget
28 Conference/Union

SEPTEMBER

4 Outreach/Church Budget
11 World Mission Budget* +
(Unusual Opportunities)
18 Church Budget
25 Conference/Union

OCTOBER

2 Outreach/Church Budget
9 Division
16 Church Budget
23 Conference/Union
30 Church Budget

NOVEMBER

6 Outreach/Church Budget
13 Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)*+
20 Church Budget
27 Conference/Union

DECEMBER

4 Outreach/Church Budget
11 Division
18 Church Budget
25 Conference/Union

*Reading provided by corresponding entity
+Worldwide Offering

SCHEDULED SPECIAL OFFERINGS

SABBATH	TITLE	DATE
11 th	Adventist World Radio	March 13
15 th	World Mission Budget	April 10
19 th	Disaster and Famine Relief	May 8
28 th	World Mission Budget	July 10
37 th	World Mission Budget (Unusual Opportunities)	September 11
46 th	Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)	November 13

Sabbath 1

January 2, 2010

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

The worship song; "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.... God in Three persons blessed Trinity," touches a deep cord in our hearts. The very truth of the Trinity-God in Three persons is powerful indeed! This profound truth has many implications for our salvation but most touching is the intimate interrelationship, interdependence and unity of purpose amongst the Godhead. Such deep, intimate interrelationship denotes the highest level of giving, a deferring to the Other!

That intimate unity of purpose and deep interrelationship is seen at creation. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...'" (Gen 1:26). It is also revealed at the Fall, "And the LORD God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil'" (Gen 3:22).¹

This unity of purpose is plainly revealed in the plan of Salvation. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16). "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).

Unity of purpose, interdependence and interrelationship characterize the Trinity. That is only possible because of the members of the Trinity being Other-centered. Giving in the essence of the Godhead.

Appeal:

As we give today, let us embrace the very spirit of giving that characterizes the Trinity.

¹ Underlined emphasis supplied by author.

Sabbath 2
January 9, 2010
Offering: Division

A Zimbabwean shepherd is herding his sheep when he hears a pitiful meowing sound coming from the bushes. He discovers a lonely abandoned lion cub in the bushes. When evening comes, he takes the lion cub home. The lion grows up with the sheep and is socialized as one.

One day the young lion is drinking water with the sheep at a pool, when he hears the most dreadful roar coming from a ferocious beast emerging from the forest. He runs for cover with the sheep to the sheep pen.

As he drinks water a few days later he sees the ferocious beast in the water. He runs for dear life, but is surprised the sheep don't follow. Puzzled, he checks out the beast in the water and realizes it's his reflection. He hears a deafening roar from the ferocious beast coming from the forest. He looks at his reflection and then at the other beast and makes a connection. The beast comes near and roars but when he tries, he bleats like a sheep seven times. At the eighth attempt he lets out a deafening roar. As he roars, he realizes he is not a sheep but a lion! When the other lion beckons, he follows. Deep calls out to deep!

Appeal

As we give today, let us remember we were created in the image of a giving God. When we make a connection with Him, the spirit of giving will take hold of us.

Prayer

Sabbath 3
January 16, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"But Noah was a pleasure to the Lord. He was the only truly righteous man living on the earth at that time. He tried always to conduct his affairs according to God's will" Genesis 6:8-9 (TLB).

The morally bankrupt world had turned its back on God. God regretted that He had made mankind—but there was Noah who brought a smile on God's face. Through him God started the human race all over again. There are five acts of worship in the life on Noah that made God smile:

1. Noah loved God more than anything else. *"Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God"* (Genesis 6:9).
2. Noah trusted God completely. *"By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family"* (Hebrews 11:7).
3. Noah obeyed God wholeheartedly. *"Noah did everything just as God commanded him"* (Genesis 6:22).
4. Noah praised and thanked God continually. *"Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it"* (Genesis 8:20).
5. Noah used his abilities to please God. *"Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth'"* (Genesis 9:1). Noah was used by God.

Appeal

Let us bring a smile on God's face as we worship Him with our giving today.

Prayer

Sabbath 4
January 23, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

The children of Israel knew something significant was going to happen when Moses came from Mt. Sinai with a face shining with the glory of God. The words of Exodus 25:8, *"Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them,"* were life changing! The Almighty God was going to come and live with them! That gripping vision was as exciting as it was scary. When it was time to give for the sanctuary, the response was overwhelming.

The fact is that very few people get excited about giving to routine needs. It is great visions that evoke the most generous giving. In his book, *Courageous Leadership*, Bill Hybel asserts:

"People will not give generously unless they know that their hard earned money will be used to fund authentic ministry that impacts real people. People do not give to organizations or to other people; they give to visions...generally, the grander the vision, the greater the giving!"

He adds, "So when you are raising resources for the church, remind the people that you are building something that represents the hope of the world. Cast exciting, stretching, God-honoring visions. Paint brilliant pictures in people's minds then pray like crazy and be prepared because people will give more than you think."

Appeal

As we give today, may the vision of the soon coming Christ grip our hearts! May we give confidently that our offerings will help in the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom!

Prayer

Sabbath 5
January 30, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds"
John 12:24.

Because God is love, He wanted a family to share all He has. So He created Adam and Eve in His image as seeds to reproduce and build His Family. Unfortunately, Satan messed up that plan.

God's plans are never thwarted. He put plan B in motion to accomplish that purpose. He had a Seed-His only Son Jesus Christ. He had a choice; He could have kept His only unique Son by His side. Had He done so, He would have remained with that One Son. But no, God decided to give His one Son as a seed to fall into to ground and die on the cross.

The good news is that because Jesus, like a kernel of wheat fell into the ground and died, He produced many seeds. Before the cross, Jesus was referred to as the only Son but after the cross He became the First-born. That's why he told Mary to tell the disciples after His resurrection. *"I am going to My Father and your Father."*

Appeal

All what we are and have are seeds. If we try to preserve seeds, we will lose it all. Let us cast our seeds to the ground today.

Prayer

Sabbath 6

February 6, 2010

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

"We are not here to develop a spiritual life of our own, or to enjoy a quiet spiritual retreat. We are here to have the full realization of Jesus Christ, for the purpose of building His body" (Oswald Chambers).

We were formed for God's family. The plan of salvation is all about God building a family that will love, honor and reign with Him forever. When we accept Jesus as Savior, God becomes our Father, we become His children and the other believers become our brothers and sisters. The church becomes our spiritual family. The truth is that our spiritual family is even more important than our physical families because it will last forever!

Being included in God's family is the highest honor and greatest privilege that we can ever receive. Whenever we feel insignificant, despised or self-doubting, we need to remind ourselves to whom we belong—the Family of God, the church.

This comforting truth carries with it a serious obligation! In our physical earthly families, each member of the family has certain obligations and responsibilities that contribute to the upkeep of the family. Consequently, we also have the serious obligation of ensuring that we have done our level best to contribute to the welfare of our spiritual family—the Church.

Appeal

As we give today, let us reflect on what our spiritual family—the church needs to meet to operate optimally.

Prayer

Sabbath 7

February 13, 2010

Offering: Division

It was a stewardship Sabbath. For the sermon, the preacher presented a wonderful exposition of John 3:16. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

He emphasized that salvation is a loving initiative from God extended towards a hostile sinful world. He went to great lengths explaining what agape love is; an unchanging, unconditional, unearned and undeserved love that was extended to us while we were still enemies, sinful and ungodly. He contrasted agape love to conditional eros and philos. He finished by expounding on the greatest prove of that love on the part of God; the giving of His One and Only Son! It was a touching sermon.

For the afternoon program, he declared he was going to preach from between the lines of John 3:16! He said, "For the people so loved God, that they gave _____." He challenged us to fill in the blank.

We love because He first loved. Love awakens love. We give because He first gave. Generous giving evokes the cord of giving in our hearts.

Appeal

As we give, let us contemplate God's greatest gift to mankind—Jesus Christ. By giving us Jesus, God emptied "His pockets." Let us further consider Romans 8:32: *"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"*

Prayer

Sabbath 8
February 20, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him'" (John 7:37-38).

According to the philosopher, Blaise Pascal, man was created with a God-shaped vacuum that can only be filled by himself. It is only Jesus who can quench the deepest thirst of the human soul. No water from any other fountain can quench. Jeremiah is quite emphatic when he declares in Jeremiah 2:13 (TLB), *"For my people have done two evil things: They have forsaken me, the Fountain of Life-giving Water; and they have built for themselves broken cisterns that can't hold water!"* Jesus underscored the same truth when talking to the Samaritan woman in John 4:13-14, *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

Drinking deeply of the water of life brings Jesus, the fountain of living water, into our lives. Jesus, the flowing Fountain cannot be confined within. That water will look for avenues to flow out.

Appeal

Let our giving today be an outflow of the overflow of the inflow of the Christ-life within our lives.

Prayer

Sabbath 9
February 27, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them" (Matthew 25:14).

The master entrusted to his servants with his property. Many times we seem to forget undeniable facts that everything that we are and possess is not ours but His. We belong totally to God both through creation and redemption by the precious blood of His Son. All the profit from our labor belongs to Him. Paradoxically, the capital is also His! Not only 10% of our income belongs to God, but also the 90%. He has a say over how the 90% is used.

The talents are entrusted to servants. The Greek word for servants, *"doulos"* can also be translated as slaves. Slaves existed solely to do the will of their master. They carried out the instructions of the master to the letter without questioning the wisdom of the master. We are slaves of righteousness after God has redeemed us from the slavery of sin in Christ. Our sole reason for existence is only to please our Heavenly Master without questioning His wisdom and instructions.

Appeal

As we give today, let our giving be an acknowledgement of His total ownership over us and all our possessions. Let our giving be a reminder that we exist only for His glory!

Prayer

Sabbath 10
March 6, 2010
Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them" Matthew 25:19.

Delay! How we hate it. How we become impatient and irritable with delays. Delay has a way of revealing what is really hidden within us. The parable of the 10 virgins reveals how we respond to delay—all the saints slumbered and slept. Delay has a way of making us careless and insensible to the demands of the Lord upon each of us.

Because of the delay, many of us have become like the wicked steward in Matthew 24:48-50: *"But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on the day when he does not expect him and at an hour when he is not aware of."*

Ready or not, our Master will come. When He comes he will inevitably settle our accounts with Him. At that time, we will find out whether being a faithful steward pays or not.

Appeal

Jesus says in Revelation 22:12: "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to every one according to what he has done."
Let us give generously today knowing the reward is sure.

Prayer

Sabbath 11
March 13, 2010
Offering: Adventist World Radio

As you walked through the church doors this morning, did you stop to think about the many religious freedoms we enjoy? We can meet as a church family, listen to religious broadcasts, talk to our friends about our faith, and so much more. But as we know, these freedoms do not exist in many parts of the world. Adventist World Radio is filling a unique role in carrying the gospel to places where the Adventist Church would otherwise have a very difficult time entering. Listeners in countries such as Sudan, Bangladesh, Iraq, and more are hearing of God's love for the first time through AWR's programs, and they are responding with testimonies of transformed lives. One new believer in Africa wrote:

"I used to be an Islamic extremist for many years. Four years ago, I accepted Christ as a Savior. People like you ministered to me. My conversion into Christianity has caused a lot of problems to me, and by God's grace I have gone through many things. Eventually, I was wrongly accused and was thrown into jail, and that is where I found your programs. They are not only a source of inspiration and courage but are also a great tool for me as I minister unto others here in prison. I have learned from your programs, and I will continue using it as I tell others about the wonderful love of Christ. Please continue the good work you are doing."

An organization called Open Doors publishes a list of countries every year where Christians are facing the highest intensity of persecution. Out of the 50 countries on the most recent list, AWR is broadcasting programs to 40 of them.

Appeal:

There are still millions of listeners who cannot hear the message of salvation in a language they can understand. With your help, AWR can keep adding new languages and reach ever-further into untouched territories. We invite you today to partner with AWR in this vital ministry.

Sabbath 12
March 20, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal" Matthew 6:20.

Christ is giving us an incredible investment opportunity to cash in earthly treasure for heavenly treasure. Why? Because it will last eternally! It won't be consumed by moths, rust, and thieves. In His hands, our treasure is safe for eternity!

Jesus also adds a profound life-changing truth. We cannot take our treasure with us because at the river of Jordan, we leave all behind. However, if we can't take it with us, then we can send it ahead to our true home, heaven! Anything we try to hang onto will be lost. Anything we put in His hands will be ours for eternity.

When richest man, J.D. Rockefeller died his accountant was asked, "How much money did John D. leave?" His reply was classic: "He left ... *all of it.*" John Wesley rode all day with a proud plantation owner and saw only a fraction of the estate. When they sat down to dinner he asked, "Well, Mr. Wesley, what do you think?" Wesley thought about it and said, "I think you're going to have a hard time leaving all this."

Appeal

As we give today, let us remember that we are citizens of heaven and pilgrims in this world. Let us therefore transfer our treasures in heaven by putting our resources in areas where God is at work.

Prayer

Sabbath 13
March 27, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

"A checkbook is a theological document. It tells who and what you worship" (Billy Graham).

Commenting on the above passage Randy Alcorn depicts Jesus as saying, *"Show me your checkbook, your Visa statement and your receipts for cash expenditures, and I'll show you where your heart is. Your heart follows your money."*

The truth contained in this passage is profound! We can actually know where our hearts truly are by monitoring our expenditures closely. It is not what we profess that shows what is truly important to us but those things that we spend our money on. Our expenditures mirror our hearts.

This passage advances another profound truth! Acting on this insight, we can actually direct our hearts to become passionate for a certain venture by investing in that venture. When we buy up shares in a company, our hearts are wrapped up with its welfare.

Consequently, if we want a heart for God we must put our treasures where God is at work. If we want a heart for missions, we must put our treasures in missions. If you want a heart for your church's ministry, then you must invest your money in your church's ministry. If we want a heart for God's eternal Kingdom, we must buy up more shares in God's kingdom everyday!

Appeal

Let us invest generously today in the Kingdom of God by buying Kingdom shares.

Sabbath 14
April 3, 2010
Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

The spirit of giving shown during the offerings for the sanctuary at the desert is unparalleled! Never again do we have an account of leaders struggling to stop people from giving. The Bible records:

"Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work" (Exodus 36:6-7).

In the up-and-coming early church we see a close reflection of the above.

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had... There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need" (Acts 4:32-35).

What was the motivating factor behind the overwhelming generosity on both occasions? The Holy Spirit moving upon the human heart! The Spirit is the only effective Stewardship Director!

Appeal

As we give today, let us turn to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit as it pertains to our giving. Let us choose to obey that voice.

Prayer

Sabbath 15
April 10, 2010
Offering: GC Session

For many decades a special offering has been promoted in connection with the General Conference Session which is held every five years. These offerings are always evangelistic in nature and in recent years have been for "Hands Across the World," "The 10-40 Window," and "Hope for the Big Cities."

The offering for this year's session is named, the "**10-40 Window— Salvation on the Ancient Silk Road.**" The Silk Road was an important ancient trading route from about 100 B.C. until the 15th century, beginning in northern China and running westward as far as the Mediterranean Sea. It was named for the Chinese cloth that was traded abundantly along the route.

Instead of Chinese silk, porcelain, and other commodities, we wish to focus on providing the gospel to the millions of Islamic, Buddhist and other peoples who inhabit that area and need to know Jesus. Very few Christians live in this vast area. But it is included among the "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" to whom the everlasting gospel must be preached.

Appeal:

You can have a part in this challenging outreach by participating in our offering today.

Prayer

Sabbath 16
April 17, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" John 15:15.

Jesus had been with His disciples for three and a half years. They had dutifully followed Him as Master. They trusted Him though they could not always figure out what He was all about. They were students and He was their Teacher. They were servants and He was their Master because "a servant does not know his master's business," a servant simply obeys orders.

The relationship changed! They were graduating from being servants to friends. Jesus explained the reason for the new relationship of friendship, "for everything that I learned from the Father I have made known to you." They were now in the inner circle because they understood the plans and the purposes of God.

We are His friends. We know His plans and purposes. He wants to establish a Kingdom which is everlasting. He wants to populate that Kingdom with sinners who have been saved by grace. For them to be saved, they must be reconciled with the King. As His friends who understand His heart's desire, we must be willing to spend and be spent to make His vision reality.

Appeal

As we give today, let us not give as ignorant servants but as friends who understand and are involved with God's eternal purposes.

Prayer

Sabbath 17
April 24, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

Use your every ability for the glory of God. "... *Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*" (1 Corinthians 10:31). God gives some people the ability to make money. People who are good at making money are good at building businesses, selling merchandise and services, and seeing possibilities of making profits from various money making endeavors. This ability should be harnessed for the glory of God by doing the following:

- First, realize your ability comes from God and give Him all the credit. God does not share His glory.
- Second, use your business to serve the genuine needs of others and to share your faith with unbelievers. Use your business as a platform to reveal Christ.
- Third, return a faithful tithe (10%) of the profit to God as an act of worship.
- Fourth, partner with God in the greatest adventure of giving as the Lord blesses you. Consider increasing your giving as the Lord blesses you. Remember free will offerings bring great joy to the heart of God.
- Fifth, make it your goal to become a Kingdom Builder rather than a Wealth Builder.

Appeal

As you give today, take into account all the abilities that the Lord has given you. Remember God has a special place for you in His church where your abilities can shine and make a real difference. Try to find that place.

Prayer

Sabbath 18

May 1, 2010

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

"Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends" John 15:

"If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:3).

"The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian" (MH 470.1).

God is love and so life is all about love. Loving God and our neighbor sums up all commandments. The most important lesson God wants us to learn in life is how to love. Love is the greatest gift one can ever give. The only genuine giving is that which is motivated by love. To love means giving up our preferences, comfort, goals, security, money, energy or time for the benefit of someone else. Rick Warren argues that the best expression of love is time.

"The importance of things can be measured by how much time we are willing to give them...If you want to know a person's priorities, just look at how they use their time. Time is your most precious gift because you have only a set amount of it. You can make more money but you cannot make more time. When you give someone your time, you are giving them a portion of your life because you will never get it back. Your time is your life. That is why it is the greatest gift you can give to someone."

Appeal

May our giving today be an expression of our commitment to love God and others!

Prayer

Sabbath 19

May 8, 2010

Offering: Disaster and Famine Relief

(Program provided for NAD only)

God cares for each one of His children. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is working to improve the lives of millions of God's children around the world, regardless of age, religion, ethnicity, or political affiliation. Thanks to ADRA's commitment to saving lives, many communities who have been affected by armed conflicts, droughts, diseases, and natural disasters are finding hope for the future.

With your support ADRA brings light to the darkness, hope to the hopeless. Your gifts make it possible for ADRA to plan and respond effectively. Every cup of water, every morsel of food, every life-saving medicine that is given to one of God's precious children in need happens because of your support. And while you may not have the opportunity to bring hope and compassion face to face to each individual, you are there when you enable ADRA to do these things.

Appeal

Today we have the opportunity to be agents of mercy. The palmist wrote *"He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy..."* Psalm 72:4 (NKJV). Your generous gift enables ADRA to save lives and to provide short-term relief and long-term rehabilitation, to children, women and men in the greatest need. Remember, what you give today may well be used to help individuals who will experience their first glimpse of God's love through ADRA's response to their great need.

Prayer

Sabbath 20
May 15, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

The faith of George Müller in God's ability to provide really challenges me! He started an orphanage in Bristol in England without resources. He has one precious commodity-faith in God's willingness to answer prayer and supply for the needs of His children.

Believing God will provide all he needed, Müller prayed for land and God provided land. He prayed for money for the construction of the orphanage and God provided. Müller soon had under his care over one thousand orphans.

Providing daily for the upkeep of the orphans was mammoth task. Müller's policy of never sharing his needs with anyone except God and leave God to impress the donors complicated matters. The interesting thing is that God always came through for Müller.

Müller asserts the ministry to the orphans was secondary. He confesses his primary reason for starting that ministry was to prove to the modern unbelieving generation that God can still supply our daily needs when we pray and trust Him to provide. What a faith!

Appeal

Jesus wondered aloud about the last generation: *"When the Son of Man Comes, will he find faith on earth?"* May He find a resounding "Yes" in us who trust Him to supply and provide for all our needs!

Prayer

Sabbath 21
May 22, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

With the approaching eternal dawn, the desperate prince of darkness has raised his high stake deadly battle against the church to the highest notch.

I saw Satan and his angels consulting together. He bade his angels go and lay snares especially for those who were looking for Christ's second appearing, and who keep all God's commandments... But the sect of Sabbath-keepers we hate. They are continually working against us, and taking from us our subjects, to keep that hated law of GOD" (Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, V1, 179-180)

*Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with cares. If you can make them place their affections upon these things. We have them yet. They may profess what they please, only make them care more for money than the success of the CHRIST'S kingdom, or the spread of the truth we hate. Present the world before them in the most attractive light, that they may love and idolize it. We must keep all the means in our ranks as we can. The more means they have, the more they will injure our kingdom by getting our subjects... Hold up every plausible excuse to those who have the means, lest they hand it out... And those who shall attempt to give put within them a grudging disposition that it may be sparingly." Ellen White, *Spiritual Gifts*, V1, 179-180.*

Appeal

As we give today, let us pray for understanding, revelation and victory through the indwelling Spirit.

Prayer

Sabbath 22
May 29, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"They may profess what they please, only make them care more for money than the success of the CHRIST'S kingdom, or the spread of the truth we hate." The Devil, as quoted by E.G. White in *Spiritual Gifts*, V1, 179.

The accuracy of our theology, our service and ministry do not astound the devil as long as he controls our finances! He does not even bat an eyelid!

Therefore we must interrogate ourselves with the following brutal bottom-line questions:

- What do I really care for most?
- What is at the center of my life?
- What dominating thought occupies my waking moments?
- What excites me most—the success of my business, the increase in my paycheck, or the advancement of the Kingdom of God?

We may claim that the success of the Kingdom of God concerns us most, but there is only one way to find out if the success of God's Kingdom concerns us greatly by answering the following question honestly: "What do I do with my money?" Billy Graham's comment is apt: "A checkbook is a theological document, it shows who and what I worship."

Appeal

We can preach, sing, perform miracles and serve to the best of our ability, but as long as we disregard the will of the Lord in regard to our finances, the devil is still the lord of our lives and we are still his captives.

Prayer

Sabbath 23
June 5, 2010
Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

"Present the world before them in the most attractive light, that they may love and idolize it. We must keep all the means in our ranks as we can. The more means they have, the more they will injure our kingdom by getting our subjects." The Devil, as quoted by E.G. White in *Spiritual Gifts*, V1, 180.

"There is no money, there is no money" seems like the best-known refrain in the Adventist church circles. It would seem that the devil has to a great extent been successful drying and shutting the pipes that convey the resources to the Lord's storehouse planting the insidious plants of selfishness and covetousness. Satan's strategy is to keep the church poor knowing an empty armory can inflict very little damage to his kingdom of darkness.

Peter's way of propagating the gospel in power without "silver or gold," seems to be more an exception than the norm. Generally, God's way of propagating the gospel seems to involve a partnership where we surrender ourselves and our financial resources while God provides the power!

Appeal

As we give today, may the example of the children of Israel, who gave so generously towards the construction of the Sanctuary until Moses stopped them, spur us towards giving so generously that there will be enough food in the storehouse!

Prayer

Sabbath 24
June 12, 2010
Offering: Division

*"Discourage and dishearten their ministers for we hate them. Hold up every plausible excuse to those who have the means, lest they hand it out. Control the money matters if you can, and drive their ministers to want, and distress. This will weaken their courage and zeal." The Devil, as quoted by E.G. White in *Spiritual Gifts*, V1, 180.*

With the devil controlling the money matters, the storehouse becomes depleted. A depleted storehouse implies there are not sufficient funds to take care of the gospel ministers. A minister, driven to despair by want and distress of poverty can hardly give a quality, spiritually invigorating uplifting ministry! Self-preservation usually wins.

In the sad history of the Israelites, whenever the Levites, who had no inheritance, were neglected, they would get discouraged, give up the ministry and try to make a living to support their families. Jesus declared that it is impossible to serve two masters. Consequently, it is impossible for a gospel minister to work full time for God on one hand and try to make a living to support his family on the other hand.

Appeal

As we give today, may we resolve to bring the whole tithe to the Lord's storehouse so that there may be enough food in His house for Him to feed His children who depend on Him for sustenance!

Prayer

Sabbath 25
June 19, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

*"Hold up every plausible excuse to those who have the means, lest they hand it out." The Enemy, as quoted by E.G. White in *Spiritual Gifts*, V1, 180.*

Excuses, excuses, we give so many. Excuses are as old as Adam and Eve or as novel as King Saul's when trying to rationalize our disobedience. We are masters at rationalizing and explaining away all God's express commands.

Ever heard the following "plausible reasons" meant to excuse giving?

- I am so broke to give. I am sure God will understand and forgive me.
- The rich will support the church. I do not have the money.
- My income is so little; I will not survive if I give.
- I will return my tithes and offerings as soon as I get out of debt.
- The workers are misusing the money, so I will not give.
- I do not have to give the money to the church. I will give it to a more worthy cause.
- Why should I support the pastor to have a better lifestyle than myself, while I languish in poverty?

It is important to note that all the myriad excuses actually emanate from self. "I", "I", "I" is at the center of all excuses.

Appeal

As we give today, let us pray that the cross of Christ will silence all excuses. May we remember our life is not just about us but about Him!

Prayer

Sabbath 26
June 26, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

*"And those who shall attempt to give put within them a grudging disposition that it may be sparingly." The Enemy, as quoted by E.G. White in *Spiritual Gifts*, V1, 180.*

Paul seems to understand that we can give, but not cheerfully. He counsels in 2 Corinthians 9:7: *"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

Giving that stems from the heart without any manipulation brings great joy to God. It strikes a cord in the heart of God because it echoes His unfathomable gift of Christ to us.

We give with a grudgingly disposition when we give motivated by guilt, manipulated emotions, desire to impress others, desire to "buy" salvation or even to "bribe" God to bless us or overlook our sins. Such giving is meant to "fulfill all righteousness." The giving that is meant to "fulfill all righteousness" can be seen in cases where only the tithe and little or no free will offering. As one saint aptly put it, "tithe shows our loyalty to God while offerings express our love for God."

Appeal

Let us contemplate Calvary as we give today. A lingering look at Calvary will unclog pipes clogged selfishness and dislodge covetousness deposited in our hearts by the devil. Let our resources flow back to God in to the glory of His Name. May we be willing to sacrifice anything and everything to gain Jesus!

Prayer

Sabbath 27
July 3, 2010
Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

The Israelites were the new residents of Jericho. Ai was the next city on Joshua's list to conquer. Confident over Jericho's victory, and seeing no need to consult God, Joshua sent his army only to be defeated.

Confused and bitter over the defeat, Joshua lodges a complaint against God. God explains. "You have taken those things that were devoted to me and have mixed them with your own possessions. Until that mess is sorted out, I will withdraw my presence from you. All your enemies, regardless of the number will always defeat you, as long as that issue is not addressed."

In our "modern" minds, we cannot fathom how Achan's misappropriation of a Babylonian robe, a few shekels of silver and gold could bring such a serious judgment from God. Why should the whole of Israel pay so dearly for Achan's unfaithfulness?

God is very meticulous about minutest details. Obedience is crucial. Disobedience has dire consequences. Moses striking rather than speaking the rock, Nadab and Abihu offering unauthorized fire, Uzziah supporting the Ark to prevent it from falling and God's response to their actions is telling.

Appeal

As we give today, let us remember that the greatest blessings follow meticulous attention to the Lord's commands. If we obey wholeheartedly and discharge our stewardship obligations faithfully, the joy of the Lord will overtake us and fill our hearts with divine awe.

Prayer

Sabbath 28
July 10, 2010
Offering: World Mission Budget

Thanks to your generous mission offerings, prayers, and personal involvement, the Seventh-day Adventist Church shares the love of Jesus in more than 200 countries around the world. It feeds the hungry, cares for the sick, leads people to Jesus, and establishes new churches and new congregations each and every day! It is truly "Love in Action."

In addition to funding many frontline projects, it is your mission offerings that sustains the continuing mission work of the church. In 2008 over \$1,000,000 was received from this offering which was received twice during the year. It provided a major boost to our mission work.

Appeal:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church faces huge mission challenges around the world. Thank you for your generosity in bringing the life-changing good news about Jesus to a world in need.

Prayer

Sabbath 29
July 17, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had to the valley of Achor... Then all Israel stoned him, and after they stoned the rest, they burned them... then the Lord turned from his fierce anger." (Joshua 7:25-26).

When Joshua and the Israelites identified Achan as culprit behind their humiliating defeat, they stoned and buried him, after that God's presence returned. To experience victory in our lives and as a church, we need God's presence.

1. We must bury all the Achans in our lives. We must acknowledge our unfaithfulness and ask the Lord to forgive us for all our failures, greed, and covetousness like Achan
2. We need to realize that confession is not enough. We need power to be victorious over our greed. When we acknowledge our greed and the tendency in our hearts to covet and cry to Him for help, the blessed Holy Spirit will come to our aid giving us victory.
3. We need to spend much time enjoying the vastness and the sweetness of Jesus. As we think about Jesus, we become more like Him. The greedy selfish materialistic inclinations will be gradually replaced with generous, kind and altruistic impulses.

Appeal

Friends, the extermination of our Achans will vanquish our Ai's. Victorious and transformed by God's presence, we will attract those looking for an authentic manifestation of the Holy Spirit just like at Pentecost.

Sabbath 30
July 24, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

The inquiry by the young man, "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Must have sounded like heavenly music to Jesus. Many sought Jesus for the temporal but here was one interested in the eternal.

Responding to Jesus, he confidently asserted he obeyed all commandments all his youth. However, when asked to sell all, give to the poor and follow Jesus, he sadly turned away.

What made him turn back? He loved his wealth more than God. He trusted his wealth more than God. Jesus later defined the young man's problem as trusting in wealth, or in Paul's words, the love of money.

His lack of love to God was manifested in his love of wealth. Ultimately, he loved himself more than Jesus. He could accept Jesus as a good moral teacher, but not as the Lord of his life. His understanding of Jesus as a moral teacher prevented his love for Jesus to exceed the love for his money.

"If only this young man could yield himself to the loving voice of Jesus, he would have become a great disciple as Apostle Paul, but he didn't give Jesus a chance to do that great thing for him." E. G. White. Jesus was not ruling his wallet.

Appeal

As we give today, let us ask Jesus to be the Lord of our wallets. Let us not look at ourselves, our wealth or the world around us. Instead, let us look at the loving, longing eyes of Jesus and then follow Him no matter what!

Prayer

Sabbath 31
July 31, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

Judas! Disgust, abhorrence and serious negativity surround the name. Why? He betrayed his Master! How could Judas, prominent among the twelve for his influential ministry, barter his Master of three years for only thirty pieces of silver, the price of a common slave?

"But Judas did not come to a point of surrendering himself fully to the Lord. He did not give up his worldly ambition of his love for money. While he accepted the position of a minister of Christ, he did not bring himself under the divine molding.... But while listening daily to the lessons of Christ and witnessing His unselfish life, Judas indulged a covetous disposition. The small sums of money that came into his hands were a continual temptation. Often when he did a little service for Christ, or devoted time for religious purposes, he paid himself out of this merger fund." E.G. White, *Desire of Ages*, 705,704.

Judas loved money! Money was more important to Judas than anything else. *"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money"* (Matthew 6:24). Judas could not worship Jesus and money at the same time and neither can we!

Appeal

Today, we have to make the destiny determining decision about who will be the Lord of our lives—Jesus or money. It can never be Jesus and money.

Prayer

Sabbath 32

August 7, 2010

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

When God created the world, everything was good. All things were created for the good of man and were to be under the control of man. Man was to have dominion over the whole creation and subdue everything as God's steward. If God's original purpose was maintained, humanity would have been blessed abundantly.

"Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and things were allowed to enter. Within the human heart things have taken over.... There is within the human heart a tough, fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess. It covets things with a deep and fierce passion. The pronouns my and mine look innocent enough on print, but their constant and universal use is significant... They are verbal symptoms of our disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die. Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God's gift now takes the place of God and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution" (A. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, 22).

The Creator has indeed been overthrown by creation! What a tragedy!

Appeal

As we give today, let us lift our hearts in earnest heartfelt prayer that God will come and occupy the central shrine restoring our dominion over material things.

Prayer

Sabbath 33

August 14, 2010

Offering: Division

Life is so uncertain. Human nature dreads uncertainty. We want concrete assurance of a certain tomorrow. God may have promised to provide us with manna for our tomorrows, but human nature wants to refrigerate today's manna as tomorrow's security just in case God fails to show up!

The Enemy exploits this deep uncertainty. He whispers seductively, "Forget the invisible God and save heaps of tangible money to secure your own future!" Sadly, the logic of the devil strikes a cord in our fallen human hearts. The world applauds his logic.

As the financial reserve grows, Satan, with great cunning, plants seeds of his deadly original lie in our minds, "Do you really need God as your future security when you have secured your future? You can now be the captain of your own life!" Unfortunately, many of us answer, "I have covered all my bases. Goodbye God."

This lie is deadly because any independence on our part from God means our very death. It is a lie because wealth will never be sufficient security for the future. Banks collapse, inflation wipes away our hard-earned life savings, and thieves steal our treasures, demand for our products change, convenient laws are replaced with new unfavorable laws, governments are overthrown and death strikes.

Appeal

As we give today, let us tell the devil, "Away with your lie. Only God is unchanging. Only God is certain. Only God is constant. Our future is only secure with God. We choose God today."

Prayer

Sabbath 34
August 21, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"Watch out! Be on guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

One of the deepest cravings of the human heart is to have others think highly of us. Being wealthy is one of the fastest way of attracting instant recognition and envy of others. In a fallen world where "I" must be the center of attention, money and the things it can buy make a statement about our importance. Money becomes what gives identity.

Think about it! People may despise you and look down upon you, but the moment they realize you are wealthy they will treat you like a celebrity! Money will buy designer clothes, a house, and cars that will speak without words. James laments about how wealth generated preferential treatment even in the body of Christ.

The preferential treatment wealth brings is just superficial. When wealthy, "friends" and admirers are in abundance, but should fortunes change, we may end up with "pigs" for company like the prodigal son. Our lives are shallow indeed if all we live for is to amass wealth so as to make a good impression on others.

Appeal

Let us give today with a heart felt prayer that our identity will be in God and not our material possession. May God so transform us that our identity will be the image of His Son reflected in our lives!

Prayer

Sabbath 35
August 28, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

Most of us are control freaks! The craving to control and manipulate others is deep seated. When we control others, we exercise power over them. It was this desire for control that turned Lucifer into Satan. The great controversy is all about power.

The craving for power can be seen everywhere. The struggle for control is the root of most marital, gender, church, political, national, international and racial conflicts. When the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest the whole argument was about power. Power, power, power is a deep craving in the human heart.

Paul argues: *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil..."* (1 Timothy 6:10). Many people will do anything to get money. For money, murders will be committed, blind eyes turned on crimes, justice perverted, and sacred bodies sold for degrading sex.

The old saying, "He who pays the piper calls the tune" is telling. Therefore, he who has money has power! The more the money, the more the power! As money accumulates, the devil whispers seductively, "With money, you have all the power you need! You can control anybody."

Yes, with money, we may control others but Jesus challenges us, *"What does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, but lose his soul?"*

Appeal

We need to ask the Lord to help us look at everything in the eyes of eternity. Rather than seeking to control others through our money, let us use our money to serve and bless others.

Prayer

Sabbath 36
September 4, 2010
Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." Luke 12:21.

We may look clever storing up wealth to provide security, identity and power, but in the light of eternity, such wealth is but a mirage. A person who loses what is eternal pursuing what is temporal is a fool! The parable of the rich fool underscores the height of this foolishness.

The rich fool in the parable thought he was in charge of his own destiny. He made plans without taking the God factor into account. He failed to come to grips with two very crucial facts- the brevity of present life and the fact that the present determine the present life. He forgot the reality of the words of David, Job, Solomon, and his Talmud.

"Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it" (Psalm 39:6).

"Naked a man comes from his mother's womb and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand" (Ecclesiastes 5:14-15).

"Man is born with his fist clenched but dies with his hands wide open" (Talmud).

Appeal

As we give today, may we seek to be rich in what matters most—rich towards God because we will have what matters most—abundant life for now and the hereafter.

Prayer

Sabbath 37
September 11, 2010
Offering: World Mission (Unusual Opportunities)

The church is God's chosen instrument to proclaim hope in Christ to every person in the world. If we are to keep pace with a spiraling world population—massed in huge cities, planning and implementing must continue to be a major priority for the world church.

On average, 10.8 new groups of believers are established each day. As amazing as this may seem, it was just in the first quarter of 2009, that plans began to be implemented to establish the church in two unentered countries, better to remain unnamed. Yet, through good times and bad times, through war and peace, through depressions and economic booms, every year, the ratio of Seventh-day Adventists to world population has dramatically improved.

How is this possible? Without the sacred work of the Holy Spirit, not one person would ever be converted. However, the Holy Spirit has chosen to work through people. Time and money are required to move forward the mission of the church. This work began in the spirit of sacrifice and will end in the spirit of sacrifice. What would God have me do?

Appeal:

Please faithfully give your gift today to help spread the gospel and to help finish the work.

Prayer:

Sabbath 38
September 18, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

The young man in Luke 12:13 had a problem for Jesus to solve, the division of inheritance. Rather than fight for justice, Jesus rebuked the young man!

Ponder for a moment! In his search for justice, was the young man looking for justice or just greedy? Could the perpetual clamor for justice in the issues of regional representation in church committees, remuneration of church workers, job distribution among the church communities, and the like be motivated by the same greed?

The young man erroneously believed wealth was the answer to his woes. "If only my brother gives me a more inheritance, my life will be full," he may have said to himself. In Jesus, he was looking for a judge not a Savior. He was pursuing a temporal and not eternal agenda.

The malady is hidden in many of us. "If only I had a little more money, I would be happier," is a cry of many believers. And yet Jesus' concern is to give true happiness that comes by learning to trust in him.

Appeal

Mammon is the idol of many. The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. We are not God's children unless we are such entirely (*Steps to Christ*, 44).

Prayer

Sabbath 39
September 25, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

Though Jesus did not say being wealthy is sin, He spent one third of his sermons warning of dangers posed by wealth. The spirit of prophecy exposes that danger.

"But many, when they begin to gather earthly riches, commence to calculate how long it will be before they can be in possession of a certain sum. In their anxiety to amass wealth for themselves they fail to become rich toward God. Their benevolence does not keep pace with their accumulation. As their passion for riches increases, their affections are bound up with their treasure. The increase of their property strengthens the eager desire for more, until some consider that their giving to the Lord a tenth is a severe and unjust tax. Inspiration has said: "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Many have said: "If I were as rich as such a one, I would multiply my gifts to the treasury of God. I would do nothing else with my wealth but use it for the advancement of the cause of God." God has tested some of these by giving them riches, but with the riches came the fiercer temptation, and their benevolence was far less than in the days of their poverty" (3 *Testimonies for the Church*, 403).

Appeal

As we give today, let us strive to keep our benevolence in pace with our accumulation while taking seriously the biblical warning on wealth.

Prayer

Sabbath 40

October 2, 2010

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

In the story, *A Sense of Values*, Nathan Bond, a poor young soldier, marries a young lady and are happily in their poverty until Nathan becomes wealthy as a celebrated cartoonist. The rest of the story is tragic portraying workaholicism, partying with celebrities, estrangement from his children, unfaithfulness to his wife, and finally divorce. How true this scenario replays in many families! The coming of wealth can bring unhappiness and anxiety.

Consider the testimonies of five extremely wealthy persons in the US:

- "I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness." —*John D. Rockefeller*
- "The care of \$200,000,000 is enough to kill anyone. There is no pleasure in it." —*W. H. Vanderbilt*
- "I am the most miserable man on earth." —*John Jacob Astor*
- "I was happier when doing a mechanic's job." —*Henry Ford*
- "Millionaires seldom smile." —*Andrew Carnegie*

The renowned sociologist, Tony Campolo, tells a story of an Indian traveling by train on a three-day journey. Fearing its theft, he clutched his luggage tightly for protection. Eventually he succumbed to sleep and his luggage was stolen. When he woke up and discovered the theft, he panicked, but when he realized there was nothing he could now do, he relaxed and slept soundly. Wealth can make us anxious like the Indian, fearing that we might lose it.

Appeal

We should adopt the stance of John Wesley when he was told that one of the buildings had burned down. He said, "Well, that is one burden less for me!"

Sabbath 41

October 9, 2010

Offering: Division

The maxim of John Wesley, "make all you can, save all you can and give all you can" (underlined supplied) is legendary. When he worked at Oxford for £30 a year; he lived on £28 and gave £2. With income increasing to £60, £90, and £120, he still lived on £28 and gave away the balance.

The rich fool could have emulated Wesley had his priorities been different. Like Zacchaeus, the poor widow, Mary, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Cornelius and many modern saints, he could have given to the needy, invested in worthy projects, and sponsored worthy Kingdom projects. He could have invested in the kingdom of God, been rich towards God and thus be saved.

Immediately after the parable of the rich fool Jesus said, "*do not worry about your life*" (Luke 12:22). The young man who asked Jesus to divide the inheritance was worried for his future. The rich fool was expanding his plans out of worry for the future. Many Adventists fail to return tithe faithfully because they worry about their lives.

Appeal

Friend, stop worrying and begin trusting God. Trust that God can supply all your needs as he supplies the needs of the flowers and the birds. God has never failed to supply enough to His people. David has testified, "*I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread*" (Psalm 37:25).

Prayer

Sabbath 42
October 16, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

The beauty of the Bible is its balanced approach to money. It avoids either embracing blatant materialism or glorifying asceticism. Truth is usually found in the middle; we can be rich and still be saved by doing the following:

1. Remember the Lord and praise Him when He blesses you. The best way to remember the Lord is by returning His tithes and giving generous offering. Just remember him by investing in church building projects, Adventist education, youth programs, women ministries, evangelistic crusades and the like.
2. Remember your neighbor. According to Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan, your neighbor is anyone in need of your help. This is the essence of Jesus' parable about the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25. The sheep, in the parable, minded about the needs of the poor among them. Let your riches reach out to some disfranchised and needy soul.
3. Remember to save some for your self and for your family.

"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5: 8).

Appeal

Let's resolve today that we will overthrow money from the throne of our hearts and crown Jesus as the Reigning Monarch. Let Him be Lord of our possessions, ambitions and plans. Let him be Lord of our hearts because we can still have wealth and be saved.

Prayer

Sabbath 43
October 23, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

After Elijah dropped the equivalent of 9/11 on Ahab, the Lord directed him to a hideout at the Kerith Ravine with the promise: *"You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there"* (1 Kings 17:4).

If Elijah were like us, he would have started questioning the logistics of how ravens would feed him and from where they would get the food. Elijah had no tangible evidence that the ravens would feed him, but he decided to take God at His word and rest upon His promise. So the Bible records, *"So he did what the Lord told him"* (1 Kings 17:5).

When the brook dried up, God spoke again to Elijah directing him to where his needs would be supplied. *"Go at once to Zarepath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food. So he went to Zarepath"* (1 Kings 17:9-10).

Even though Zarepath was outside the borders of Israel, we see Elijah making the long journey without asking any questions. God came through for Elijah because of his willingness to obey. When we choose to do our part in obedience to God, God will always bless us without fail.

Appeal

As we give today, may we trust in God's ability to provide for us! Let us do our part in obedience believing He will do His part without fail for He cannot lie.

Prayer

Sabbath 44
October 30, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

"Elijah said to her, 'Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land'" (1 Kings 17:13-14).

Elijah's diagnosis of the widow is true of us. One reason for not giving is fear of future survival when surrounded by scarcity. We are convinced that if we give tithes and offerings, we will just deplete that precious future reserve.

Humanly speaking, if we compare our expenses with our little incomes, we will definitely be paralyzed with fear. We are bound to wonder how we will ever make the ends meet! When a "prophet" comes and challenges us to give to God first, the instinctive human fear of the future just jump starts our self-preservation mode.

Internalizing the truth that the child of God must walk by faith and not sight, faith must replace fear. We must choose to giving to God first while embracing the promise of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 (TLB): *"and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to."*

Appeal

As we give today, let us be guided by Stephen Covey's maxim, "First things First."

Prayer

Sabbath 45
November 6, 2010
Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

As a result of deciding to put God first, the widow of Zarepath experienced three divine blessings:

The first blessing was the daily provision of food for her family. Because of seeking to put God first, her life was sustained when she chose to lose it for God's sake. By providing for Elijah, she was willing to die, but be faithful to God. God will always vindicate such radical faith in Him.

The second blessing was the miraculous resurrection of her son. Even though we believe in the resurrection, very few people have been resurrected from the dead. However, God performed a rare miracle just for her, to reward her faithfulness. What a testimony of how far God will go to reward a faithful steward.

The greatest of all the blessings was her experiential knowledge of the true God of Israel whom to know is eternal life. Even though after Elijah moves from Zarepath of Sidon, nothing else is heard about the widow, we infer we will see her, a gentile in the New Jerusalem from the words of Jesus referring to her and from her confession to Elijah: *"Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth"* (1 Kings 17:24).

Appeal

As we give to God in radical faith by putting Him first, we can be sure He will shower us with His superabundant blessings.

Prayer

Sabbath 46
November 13, 2010
Offering: Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)

When Jesus was here on earth he commissioned us to go and tell the world about His love, His sacrifice, and His soon return. Many years ago, Seventh-day Adventists felt it was so important to tell the whole world about Jesus that they created a special offering to save the church's mission program. They called it the annual sacrifice offering because it was taken up only once a year and because they called on Adventists to give even if it meant giving something else up. Today this offering is touching hearts and lives in the most unreached areas of our world. This offering helps fund frontline work in some of the toughest mission fields on earth.

Do you know that there are still 29 countries or areas of the world where there are no Seventh-day Adventist churches? And did you know that there are communities, towns, and even countries around the world where you can't find a group of Adventists to worship with even if you wanted to?

Today's offering will help Global Mission carry the gospel to the unreached people and areas of the world. Every bit you give for the Annual Sacrifice offering goes to help start new groups of believers in unreached areas.

Appeal

Please think carefully before you give today. What are you willing to sacrifice this week or this year to help reach the unreached with hope. 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.

Prayer:

Sabbath 47
November 20, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

Like the widow of Zarepath, God is both challenging and promising: *"Bring the whole tithe into the store house, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this...and see if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough room for it"* (Malachi 3:10).

In this challenge, God is offering us a way to wholeness. Paradoxically, it is in giving that we receive our greatest blessings. It is in giving up ourselves that we find ourselves. It is in the losing that we find. God's way, once embraced leads to life.

God is promising to pour an avalanche of blessing upon us if we choose to make Him the Lord of our possessions by returning a faithful tithe and a generous offering. Like the widow of Zarepath, God will bless us in ways that transcend our imagination.

When we choose to walk on that narrow path of trusting the Lord, it will lead us to our greatest adventure, exploring the depths of God, *"where eyes see the invisible, ears hear the inaudible, and minds conceive the inconceivable."* It is only then we will experience the full blessing of faithful stewardship.

Appeal

God asks us to test Him deliberately through giving, promising to open the floodgates of heaven. As we give today, let us brace ourselves for the floodgates of heaven will open showering us with overflowing blessings.

Prayer

Sabbath 48
November 27, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

"And now brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given to the Macedonian churches. Out of their severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (2 Corinthians 8:1-2).

Tears gushed freely when the immensity of their sacrifice dawned on missionary. He had visited the poorest family in the church wanting to understand how they had given the most to the church building fund. Approaching them as they tilled the field, he noticed the two sons pulling the plough instead of the strong ox he knew they owned. The tears came when they told him they had sold it to take part in building a house for God. The poor family was willing to give to the cause of God despite their abject poverty.

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Paul writes to encourage the Corinthians to grow in the grace of giving. To stir them to give generously, he points to the Macedonian churches as an example worthy of emulating when it comes to the whole question of giving to God.

Appeal

We may be suffering and undergoing many trials and plagued with abject poverty, but the Macedonian example silences all our protests to giving. May their example of generosity expose all our hiding places and silence all of our excuses until we are compelled to confess that it is selfishness and self-preservation that prevents us from giving generously to the cause of God.

Prayer

Sabbath 49
December 4, 2010
Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

"And now brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given to the Macedonian churches" (2 Corinthians 8:1).

If we are to follow the Macedonians in the grace of giving, we must learn their secret and make it our secret. It is only then we will be enabled to give beyond our ability and beyond expectation.

By nature we are selfish and cannot give generously. If we give, it is oftentimes with mixed motives. For us to give to the cause of God freely, we need to encounter the grace of God in the Person of Christ. Understanding His sacrifice for us on the cross will touch the invisible cords in our hearts, melting our selfishness and self centeredness that resides there.

It is only when we see the Son of Man lifted up for us that we are drawn closer to Him in awesome wonder. When we gaze upon Him dying on the cross and realize that that costly sacrifice was made just for us, our hearts will be moved to reciprocate for love awakens love. Indeed, we love because He first loved us. His love will constrain and propel us to give.

Appeal

As we give today, let us turn our eyes to gaze at the dying Jesus on the cross. As we contemplate that sacrifice, we will be compelled to also sacrifice our all for Him.

Prayer

Sabbath 50
December 11, 2010
Offering: Division

And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will" (2 Corinthians 8:5).

The reason many do not give generously is because they have not really given themselves first to the Lord. The reason the Macedonians gave beyond both Paul's expectation and their ability is found in this very fact—they had given themselves to the Lord. When the Lord possesses our hearts, He will also have our wallets and purses.

Zacchaeus is a classic example. He was a money lover, selfish and stingy with his ill gotten wealth. As he contemplated the emptiness and meaninglessness of his life which could not be answered by his wealth, he gladly accepted the invitation of Jesus for friendship at a deeper level.

When Zacchaeus saw through the lowly garb of humanity and discovered that Jesus was indeed the forgiving and accepting Son of Man, the long awaited Messiah, he surrendered himself to the Lord and made two life changing declarations of giving away his immense wealth. Jesus declared that salvation had come to the house of Zacchaeus that very day.

Appeal

As we give today, let us be willing to give ourselves first in total surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. We will only give generously, whether rich or poor when we have given ourselves first to the Lord!

Prayer

Sabbath 51
December 18, 2010
Offering: Church Budget

And they did not do as we expected...and then to us in keeping with God's will" (2 Corinthians 8:5).

The words "*And then to us in keeping with God's will*" are very significant. The Macedonians gave beyond their ability not only because they had given themselves to Lord, but because they had also espoused the cause that Paul was championing. They had become partners with Paul in the greatest enterprise of all; the ministry of the salvation of souls. They wanted to see others experience the blessed assurance of being found in Jesus and being reconciled with God.

Parting with our means is usually difficult. We only invest our money in those things that are very dear to us. It is for this reason Jesus declared that our heart follows our treasure. For the Macedonians to give so generously to the cause of God, it is evident that they cherished the mission of their church and wanted it to succeed at all costs. They wanted to see and experience the blessed hope, the return of their beloved Master, Jesus Christ in Glory to establish the eternal Kingdom.

Appeal

We need to pray that God will give us passion for lost souls. If only we would be so tired of living in this sin sick miserable world and desire the better one that God has prepared for us! May the desire to finish the work and go to our true home greatly motivate us in our giving today!

Prayer

Sabbath 52
December 25, 2010
Offering: Conference/Union

"And now brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given to the Macedonian churches. Out of their severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (2 Corinthians 8:1-2).

The cheerful Macedonian givers believed their merger contribution would make an eternal difference! Sometimes, when we are poor and have little, we think that our little coins will not make a difference and thus desist from giving hence blocking the pipeline conveying heavenly blessings.

In the economy of God, God does not look at the amount given but at the generous heart. We must be cognizant of the divine truth that when we give our small offering, the Lord Jesus takes it in His creative hands multiplying it to bless many.

A caring Jewish mother packed five small loaves and two small fishes for her fish-sandwich loving son who was going to listen to Jesus. When it was meal time, Jesus decided to throw a party for the five thousand plus crowd. To the dismay of the disciples, only the little boy's meal was available. How could so little feed so many? When the small boy's lunch was brought to Jesus, He multiplied it, fed the multitude and so much remained! Little does become much when it is given to the Lord!

Appeal

Today, let us give our tithes and offering regardless of the amount. Jesus will bless and multiply it to bring the bread of life to the starving billions across world.