

BEING RESPONSIBLE IN THE USE OF RESOURCES

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church stands as a prophetic movement established by God at the right time to restore biblical truths and prepare humanity for Jesus' second coming.

Undoubtedly, the church's mission and its widespread presence in 2012 out of the 235 countries and territories worldwide can be attributed in part to its well-organized structure and the disciplined and responsible management of its financial resources.

A rigorous budgeting system informs the allocation of funds, enhancing efficiency in supporting the mission. At the same time, a robust auditing system contributes to transparency and accountability, checking whether funds were spent according to policy and providing regular reports about each institution's financial practices.

However, developing accountability and transparency is not only the responsibility of treasurers and auditors. The effectiveness of this vital process also depends on the way we return tithes and offerings and the importance we attribute to receipts after we give. Receipts are not only our right to have; they are our duty to expect.

But obviously, receipts can only be provided to those who identify themselves in the real or virtual tithe and offering envelopes. For this reason, tithes and offering envelopes should be widely available in Adventist churches.

When you use your envelope or give electronically, be sure [1] you understand all giving options, that [2] you clearly indicate what is tithe and what is offering, and that [3] your offering will be distributed to equitably uphold the mission of the church at the same time locally, regionally, and internationally, as Jesus told us to do in Acts 1:8. This fair distribution happens automatically when you give unassigned offerings in countries or regions that have implemented the Combined Offering Plan.

While loose offerings may be an acceptable option, it is only when you identify yourself in the physical or virtual envelope and expect to receive a receipt that a chain of conditions is established for auditors to effectively perform their duty. However, if, for instance, you decide to give your tithe anonymously without using an envelope, it may likely be recorded by the church treasurer as an offering. Consequently, it may not fulfill God's sacred purpose for the tithe.

This example highlights the importance of using the envelope and identifying ourselves when giving, with the expectation of receiving a receipt. Once you have the receipt, it is

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advisable always to verify if the amount stated on it corresponds to what was given and if the resources were allocated to the purposes that you indicated.

This church is the body of Christ, with Him as its Head, and He desires that all things be done in an orderly manner. As we work together to keep the church's financial system reliable and efficient, let us put our desires last and God first.