

February 15, 2020

HOW MUCH IS THE TITHE OF ZERO?

“How many of you do not have any income?” Pastor Josino Campos asked his large congregation one Sabbath morning during the 1970s at the Brazilian Adventist University in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Some church members, including Marcos, age 11, raised their hands. Smiling at them, the pastor added: “This is the very best moment in life to become a Promisor!”

But how can I become a Promisor without having any income? Marcos wondered. He knew that being a Promisor means to have a commitment to regularly return tithes and to give offerings as a previously vowed percentage of the income.

The pastor seemed to read Marcos’ thoughts! “If you become a Promisor now, even though you don’t have any income, that means your income is zero, right?” continued the pastor. Then he added: “How much is 10 percent of zero?” After a long pause, the pastor continued: “And let’s suppose that you vowed to give 5 percent of your income as offerings, how much would be 5 percent of zero?”

Marcos was still struggling to grasp the idea

when the pastor concluded: “Obviously, the tithe of zero is zero, and 5 percent of zero is also zero. So, if you are a Promisor but you don’t have any income, you give ‘zero’ as tithe and ‘zero’ as Promise (regular, percentage-based offerings), and you are faithful!” And then the pastor suggested that those who had no income pray: “Lord, you know that I’ve decided to become a Promisor, but I don’t have any income. If you want means to forward your work in the earth, please give me an income. From everything you give me, I will first return tithe and give percent-based offerings.” And so that’s what Marcos Bomfim, the author of this text and the current GC Stewardship director, did.

APPEAL: As the Lord is always the first to give, He invites us to give back to Him only after He has first given us something. We give every time we are blessed, not in order to be blessed, but because we have been already blessed, recognizing Him as the Originator of all that we have.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, as we return tithe and give our offerings, help us to recognize You as the Giver and Maintainer of us all!

