



GENEROUS LIVING

All of Me in Response to All of Him

Offering Appeals 3rd Quarter 2023

Please store a copy in the pulpit.

July 1, 2023 – Local Church Budget

Happy Independence Day!

If you live in Canada, today is *the* day. If you live in the United States, it comes this next week. For both countries, independence came from no longer being under the British crown.

Some might compare this to a child growing up and becoming independent of one's parents—something pseudo or fabricated until there's financial independence as well.

Independence Day—for your nation or for kids who grow up and stand on their own—how does this compare to our relationship with God? When do we declare our independence from Him? Is this something we forge, or is it merely fictitious? Does our increase in responsibility release God to care for others who need Him more?

Consider ancient or more recent history, and you'll find throughout earth's orbits around the sun that our "independence" from God might find a place in our imagination, but not in reality. Can you change the earth's rotation, add 100 years to your life, make an actual sunset rather than just paint it on canvas, answer the individual prayers of billions of people each day, put your finger on sub-atomic particles, or change a heart of stone to a heart of flesh?

You don't need to. God remains in control and invites you to be "interdependent" with Him rather than "independent" of Him. Make this Sabbath your "Interdependence Day" by giving to God, who gives life to you.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

July 8, 2023 – Carolina Evangelism 8002

Have you ever wondered what happens to the mission offerings you give each week or as part of your promise offerings? Think of your mission offerings as a vital river flowing through the entire world, providing life-giving support to build God's work in every mission field. But exactly where do our offerings go? What do they achieve? And what do they support?

Seventy percent of your weekly mission and promise offerings help support the work of about 400 missionary families working with the 13 world Divisions, plus the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission and the Israel Field, to help these regions build and sustain mission activities. The remaining 30 percent of your mission offerings help several church institutions such as the medical mission work of Loma Linda University, the outreach of Adventist World Radio, and the humanitarian ministry of ADRA, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

Thanks to your faithful offerings, millions of people from the most challenging areas of the world have found salvation in Jesus and have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Thousands of new congregations have been established in unreached areas, and new believers are being trained in how to share their new faith with others in their neighborhoods. Your river of mission offerings helps grow and sustain mission work throughout the world. Please keep this life-giving river flowing.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

July 15, 2023 – Local Church Budget

Can you outgive God?

This idea is that when you give something to God, He gives you more than you gave to Him.

But does it work? If you give God a dollar, or \$100, or \$1,000 or \$100,000, will you get back more than you gave to God?

For some of us, just paying our bills is a great accomplishment. Others have extra or prioritize investing in a retirement account, real estate, or the stock market, hoping they will get back more than they put into their investment. Often it works, although sometimes it doesn't.

Can you outgive God?

Remember, whatever we give actually came to us from God, the original Giver (James 1:17 says: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father..."). God started this by giving us something to give—like an older person giving a child something to put in the offering plate.

When Jesus told the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30), it seemed clear that He expected us to take what He gave us and put it to use—to yield even more than He gave. When those recipients gave an account of what their master had given them, commendation went to those who invested, and the master gave them even more.

Today I invite you to take what God has given you and give it to Him; then let Him give you more—whether that's money, opportunities, talent, heart, love, or life.

You can't outgive God, but it's great to try!

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

July 22, 2023 – Carolina Youth 8001

When I was a young boy I remember the first time I saw my older brother Albert in his Marine uniform. I was moved by how different he looked. He looked assured, accomplished, mature and well, just different! I stood back as his kid brother and just saw him respectfully, “different”.

The Adventurer and Pathfinder participants also wear a uniform. We do not have to go to Camp Lejeune or pass rigorous training to earn the right to wear our uniforms, but once we have it, we continue to wear it with pride and respect. Hopefully, we feel “different”. In this mindset, the wearers realize that they are part of something big and important. They realize they are representing a youth organization that is much bigger than just their local club.

The uniform represents unity to a cause and mission that is **different** than anything else they do. The mission of the wearer is “real and visible”. The uniform represents loyalty toward to the mission of serving Christ and loyalty to all the others wearing the same uniform. Together as a group the wearers grow in fellowship and purpose towards showing the world that Jesus is KING.

Through your offering today, you may continue your support of our Busy Bees, Helping Hands, Companions, Master Guides, etc. continue to praise God’s name by being “different” for others everywhere to see and be moved.

Written by Hector Gonzalez,
Youth and Young Adult Director

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM

July 29, 2023 – Local Church Budget

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

The one thing that stands out in this Bible verse is that it doesn't give us an option NOT to give. The Bible takes for granted that we are going to give. The issue is how much have you decided to give? Zacchaeus gave 50% of his wealth. The poor widow gave 100% of what she had—two copper coins. Barnabas sold a field he owned and provided for the preaching of the gospel. The people of God have been giving for the Lord's work throughout history. God's children don't spend all their income on themselves but think of sharing their wealth for the preaching of the gospel.

We find three biblical principles of giving in this passage. First, you need to decide how much you are going to give. We need to plan in advance what we are going to give to God. Second, don't give reluctantly or under compulsion. The opposite of a cheerful giver is a sad and ornery giver. God doesn't want you to give because you are being pressured to give. Third, God loves a cheerful giver. God wants you to give from the heart, willingly and cheerfully. Are you happy that you can contribute to God's remnant church?

Today, I encourage you to provide for your local church expense and give, not reluctantly but cheerfully.

Prayer: Father in heaven, bless the lives of the people here today as they provide for our local church by giving cheerfully to preach the gospel in our part of the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

August 5, 2023 – Local Church Budget

At this time during our worship service, we typically collect money, whether that's cash or checks. Some people give each week as part of their worship to God. Others give once a month or once every pay period. Some give online, and still others do a combination, maybe planning in advance so they can participate at this moment rather than just reaching for some spare change or the customary dollar.

This week we're going to add more options! We have a simple card for each person. You can fill this out now and put it in the offering, or you might choose to think about it longer and give it at the end of today's church service. (Ask for the cards to be distributed at this time. You will need to plan in advance to have these ready now.)

The card lists the "4 T's" of what God has given us and asks us to give back to Him—Time, Temple (body/heart), Talent, and Treasure.

What will you give to God today? Whatever you check, you'll need to ask yourself the specific amount(s) and how you will do that. Use this card to communicate with God about your relationship with Him and your gift(s) today.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

Activity – Print the card below for August 5 Offering Appeal.

God

Today I give you my:

___ Time ___ Talent
___ Treasure ___ Temple

Name _____

August 12, 2023 - Christian Record Services 500

(World Budget)

Imagine the scene recorded in Mark 10. A huge crowd was following Jesus. Voices buzzed around Him, clamoring for His attention. And then, a desperate shout reached Jesus' ears (or, perhaps, struck His heart).

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stopped in His tracks and called out to Bartimaeus. Immediately, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Without hesitation, Bartimaeus declared, “Rabbi, I want to see!” Jesus answered, “Go, your faith has healed you!”

I love that we can share the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ with people who are blind or experiencing vision loss! Christian Record Services, a ministry of compassion of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1899, is serving nearly 18,000 members throughout the United States and in countries around the world.

Christian Record Services offers an array of services and programs, including Bible study lessons, books, magazines and Bibles in audio, braille, and large print from a library of more than 2,000 titles. Members can also deepen social, educational, and spiritual connections through PhoneFaith, scholarships for higher education, and National Camps for Blind Children.

These services and programs are free of charge to people who are legally blind. Your offerings will help further the mission to *empower* people who are blind to *engage* with their communities and *embrace* the Blessed Hope.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

August 19, 2023 – Local Church Budget

You have, at your control, the power to increase or decrease your love for God. The same can be said about your love for this church—you have the power to increase or decrease your love for it.

How?

Jesus stated it plainly in Matt. 6:21: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Here’s how the Amplified Bible explains it: “Where your treasure is, there your heart [your wishes, your desires, that on which your life centers] will be also.”

Let me explain it this way. God has set things up so that your heart will follow wherever you make your investment. If you neglect your friends or family, your love for them will diminish. If you invest more time and money with them, your love for them will grow! The same is true with your love for God and His church. Your love for God and His church increases as you place your treasure—your money, time, skills, and service—with God and His church.

I can testify today that it works this way for me. How about you? The amount of time you spend at work or school, on a hobby, or virtually anything will impact how important that is to you. Your heart follows where you place your treasure.

Today I’m inviting you to increase your love for God and for His church. And you can do that simply by giving at this time.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

Our offering today is for Carolina Youth. It is interesting to note how Jesus often used investment analogies to describe the kingdom of God. For instance, Jesus encouraged believers to store up treasures in heaven and to seek God's kingdom as much as they would seek a wise investment, such as a field containing a hidden treasure or a pearl of great price. Jesus also encouraged believers to allow God to grow them just as a seed in fertile ground produces a good crop.

Jesus is after the disciple's heart. That's why His analogies of treasures and the heart are so relevant to humanity. It is even more so today in a culture that appeals to individuals' senses, connecting identity, pleasure and security with possessions, investments and money. "He who dies with the most toys wins," a bumper sticker reads. Today's youth are heavily bombarded with advertising that links acquiring things with happiness.

Wouldn't it be great if our children could actually see us doing an inventory of our hearts while worshiping God today? Where is your heart this morning? Where are you accumulating treasures? Are you willing to sacrifice everything for God's kingdom? Let us partner with God today as we invest with Him in advancing God's kingdom through the ministries of Carolina Youth. Let us make a wise and heavenly investment in our youth.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

September 2, 2023 – Local Church Budget

Labor Day Weekend is here—for the United States, Canada, Bermuda, plus Guam and Micronesia—throughout the North American Division.

Ironically, instead of working on Labor Day, most people have a holiday with no work! In other words, many “play” on “Labor Day.”

Does that seem wrong, or is it actually right—in a counter-intuitive way? Is it like:

Laughing so hard that you cry;

Letting something go and then finding it returns to you on its own;

Saying, “It doesn’t matter” when it really matters a lot;

Being groggy because you’ve slept so much;

Teaching people a lesson, but they learn nothing at all;

Hiding something from people so well that you can’t find it yourself;

Getting ahead because you helped so many get ahead of you;

Standing tall before others because you kneel before your Maker;

Giving away what you have and finding you have more than you had at the start.

Those who think Labor Day is for working need a new perspective because it’s the holiday given for the work you’ve already done. When we put it in spiritual terms, it means we give to God and others because we’ve already received so much from both God and others. Our offering today provides the opportunity for you to do it!

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

September 9, 2023 - World Budget 500 (Radio Ministries)

The Voice of Prophecy radio ministry began with an offer that founder H.M.S. Richards Sr. simply could not refuse. The *Los Angeles Express* newspaper promised Pastor Richards several *free* 15-minute slots of radio time each week if he would place weekly advertising for his tent meetings in their paper.

Always wanting to embrace new methods to reach souls, the 35-year-old Richards jumped at the chance. On October 19, 1929, only days before the Great Depression hit, Richards was on the air, sharing the hope of Jesus with the people of Southern California.

By World War II, the Voice of Prophecy had become the first religious coast-to-coast broadcast in North America on the Mutual Broadcasting Network. That same year, 1942, it launched a Spanish-language broadcast that would later be called *La Voz de la Esperanza*.

More North Americans access radio regularly than any other major media format. Eighty-eight percent of Canadians report having listened to radio in any given month, while 93% of Americans say they listen to radio every week. Online audio also remains a fast-growing market, as millions turn to digital platforms for more engaging content. As listeners tune in week by week, they are invited to go deeper with the Lord through the radio ministries' Bible schools and evangelistic events.

Day by day and week by week, the power of radio evangelism continues to change lives. Please join today in giving generously to support the ministry of the Voice of Prophecy and *La Voz de la Esperanza*.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

September 16, 2023 – Local Church Budget

Even though the Bible says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35), sometimes it’s just not possible to give. Let’s illustrate this because it might help each of us when it comes to the part of our worship service where we can receive a blessing, but only if we give.

Activity

(You will need to have a collection of small objects in a sack with you to do this illustration. Invite someone to join you in the front for a “living illustration.” You can ask the person in advance or take a chance and invite someone on the spot. Often this makes a great opportunity to bring a young person on the platform to participate actively in the church service.)

(Say to the volunteer who has joined you in the front of the church:) I’m going to ask you to hold out your hand and clench your fist (demonstrate for your volunteer). Good! Just hold it there as together we illustrate the statement, “When you clench your fist, no one can put anything in your hand” (Alex Haley quote, available as a PowerPoint slide). Another way of saying it is, “A clenched fist won’t give, and can’t receive.”

Let’s try it. I have something in this sack to give you. How does this work when your fist is clenched? (Pull out one of the objects, like a golf ball, ping pong ball, apple, etc.) With a closed fist, you can’t receive my gift.

Let’s try it again, but this time release the fist and open your hand. What a difference that makes! But I have more! Can you receive more? Let’s try. It might work only if you give what you have received.

Today I invite you to open your fist—to give. Only then will you be able to receive.

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

September 23, 2023 – Carolina Youth 8001

In the parable of the talents, the Bible says, “After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them” (Matt. 25:19). As we remember, two of the three were found faithful and invested their master’s talents; “Well done” was pronounced on them. We remember what was said about the unfaithful one. This idea of settling accounts is similar to the activity of the investigative judgment of our day. In other words, God simply asks His servants, stewards, and managers of His goods an obvious question: How did you do with My stuff? I left you in charge of it. Your life, employment, children, money, everything is in your care. Have you managed them to My glory, or yours?

Good stewards know that they have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous Judge. And they know they are wearing the Judge’s robe of righteousness.

The robe covers us because we give our cares to Him daily. We are not anxious about the judgment, because we know the Judge.

Prayer: Dear God, bless the tithes and offerings we return to you today. We pray that when you come back to take us home, we will hear the words of Jesus: “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 the Lord.” In Jesus’ name, AMEN!

IT IS ALL OF US IN RESPONSE TO ALL OF HIM!

September 30, 2023 - Local Church Budget

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap” (Luke 6:38).

Gloria and Enoch embarked on their long-awaited vacation. The plan was to spend a couple of days visiting their son’s family and their three granddaughters and then go to their favorite beach on the coast to enjoy the sun and water. That Sabbath, as they attended church with their granddaughters, the pastor made a special offering appeal to those in attendance to cover the expense of replacing the roof on the church. Gloria and Enoch felt impressed to give all the money they had saved for their beach vacation to the church for the new roof and to spend the rest of their vacation with their son’s family instead. To their surprise, when they returned home, Gloria found a letter in the mail from her work at the hospital stating that they had miscalculated her wages and needed to pay her back wages. Enclosed was a check for exactly double what she and Enoch gave to the Adventist church to help with the roof.

The Bible promises that when you give, it will be given to you. We invite you to give for your local church budget so the work of the Adventist church will continue here at _____ [name of your congregation].

Prayer: Dear Jesus, help us to believe in your promises that you will provide for us when we give of our resources to advance God’s kingdom here on earth. In your name, Amen.

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Tips for a Successful Offering Appeal

1. Pray

Your attitude is of utmost importance. An offering appeal presented with a pre-season of prayer is always more effective. People in the pews will know the difference and respond accordingly. With an attitude of gratitude, calling for the offering is always a privilege for which to be thankful.

2. Practice

Read the script out loud several times and stay with the script until the reading comes naturally. If possible, stand in the church location and read the script with the microphone on. Take courage, you will gain experience over time and eventually come to wonder why it seemed so hard at first.

3. Appreciate your audience

Realize that they want you to succeed. Relax as best you can! We are all in this together.

4. Visualize yourself giving the offering appeal

Smile! Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and confident. Visualize the congregation smiling and pleased with your presentation. This will boost your confidence as they approvingly smile.

5. Know and share your material

Make sure you fully understand and share how the designated offering will be used. Give everyone a reason to help support the designated offering.

6. Do not apologize for any nervousness or problem.

Being nervous is natural. No one but you have to know. Do not allow yourself to focus on your anxiety, but rather focus on your message and audience. They will never suspect you are not a public-speaking pro!