Nor th American Division

**Offertory Readings 2016**

Our mission as a church is “to reach the North American Division territory, with the distinctive, Christ-centered Seventh-day Adventist message of Hope and Wholeness.” Stewardship Ministries is dedicated to helping members catch the vision of “*funding the mission to finish God’s work*.” These funds make an impact on preaching the gospel to save the lost.

Systematic giving is part of being a faithful steward. When we tithe, we are recognizing that God owns everything. Offerings express our gratitude for what Christ has done for us. He loves a cheerful giver and has chosen this method to support those who preach the gospel as they reach the world with His message.

The 2016 English offertory readings were written by Nelson Silva. He is a native of Venezuela, a church planter and pastor who lives in Indianapolis, IN. He earned his Doctoral degree in Ministry in Youth, Family and Culture. Silva created the DDMC (Development, Discipleship and Mission in Community) model in collaboration with Brown Chapel Missions in Indianapolis Public Schools.

Again, this year we are videotaping these offertory readings in short clips that can be played in your church. You will find them at www.iGiveSDA.org.

Revival and reformation will drive your actions. Wherever revival and reformation is present, tithe appears. These three: revival, reformation, and tithing, will deepen your spirituality. Remember to *fund the mission to Finish God’s work.*

**John Mathews**

**NAD Stewardship Ministries Director**

Dear Presenter,

Thank you for your willingness to share the following appeals with your local congregation. It is a wonderful and gratifying responsibility. How you present these readings could determine how effective they are. Here are some suggestions you may want to consider before you share:

**PRAY:** Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray that God will use your words to speak to the hear ts of the congregation.

**PRACTICE:** Read over the appeal at least three times to familiarize yourself with it. Find key words (underline or highlight them) to emphasize throughout the reading. Strive to share these readings with excellence.

**PREPARATION:** There may be times when other materials are sent to your local church to distribute or present along with the appeal. Please use them accordingly, and determine how they can be used most effectively.

**PRESENT WITH PASSION:** Read slowly and clearly. It is an amazing responsibility to lead out the worship in giving. Fill your hear t with the thoughts presented, and God will do the rest.

**PRAY:** Each appeal has a prayer that has been prepared as a guide to go along with the thought of the day. Present to God what is on your hear t as it relates to the appeal. Please keep the prayer concise and to the point.

May God richly bless you and speak through you as we take this journey together in 2016.

January 2, 2016

Local Church Budget

Today is the first Sabbath of 2016. New Year’s resolutions are on many people’s minds these days. Most resolutions center on education, health, finances, and relationships. According to researchers, almost half of the population in the United States make resolutions, but only about half of those people keep their resolutions longer than six months. Still, there is something powerful about setting goals at the beginning of the year (*Journal of Clinical Psychology*).

Interestingly, Christians can summarize most New Year’s resolutions with one word: Stewardship. God owns everything (Ps. 24:1). Therefore believers are managers, not owners. What if believers would keep God and others foremost in this year’s resolutions instead of setting goals with selfish motives in mind? For instance, self-improvement is great, but why do it? Are you seeking power, fame, and recognition? Or are you seeking to honor God by being good stewards of gifts, talents, and abilities in order to serve others?

Avoiding debt, saving, and investing in God’s cause are biblical financial concepts. How can Christians honor God with the money He has entrusted to them? What would your giving resolution be for 2016? Are you willing to test the Lord on this? May the Lord pour His blessings abundantly upon you in 2016 as you faithfully give for God’s work locally and worldwide through returning His tithes and giving generous freewill offerings.

**January 9, 2016**

 Alberta Advance

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 (Matt. 6:19) 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 (Matt. 13:44, 45). Jesus also encouraged believers to allow God to grow them, just as a seed in fertile ground produces a good crop (Mark 4:20), or as those who use their talents receive even more (Matt. 25:29).

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. Furthermore, today’s adolescents are heavily bombarded with advertising that links consumerism with happiness. “Today’s teenagers are building their lives around the desire to possess things” (Walt Mueller, *Youth Culture* 101, 54).

Wouldn’t it be great if believers would do an inventory of their hearts while worshiping God today? Where is your heart this morning? Where are you accumulating treasures? How badly are you seeking the Kingdom of Heaven? Are you willing to sacrifice everything for God’s kingdom? Let’s partner with God today as we invest with Him through our Alberta Advance in advancing God’s kingdom.

January 16, 2016

Local Church Budget

A church member once confessed to struggling with tithing. She was going through a number of difficulties at home, at work, and with extended family. How could the little money she brought home be sufficient for the needs of her family?

For this woman, giving wasn’t an issue of outstanding debts, poverty, or even distrust in the church’s handling of money. While taking a class on biblical finances, she realized that some of her financial problems stemmed from her family’s handling of money. There was no family budget, and often money was spent without a lot of forethought.

Once this woman realized the source of her problem, she made a promise to God to claim His promise to “supply all her needs” (Phil. 4:19) when she kept her covenant to return God’s tithes and her offerings to His church. On Sabbath she gladly shouted, “I’m trusting God to supply all of my family’s needs according to His riches in glory.”

Statistics show that only 5 percent of the people living in the United States give 10 percent of their income to churches or charities. About 80 percent of Americans give 2 percent or less of their income to any charities. Christians are giving only about 2.5 percent of their income, down from 3.3 percent during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Will you trust God as you return your tithes and give a liberal offering for local outreach today? God will keep His promise and supply all your needs as you trust Him with the funds He has entrusted to you.

January 23, 2016

Religious Liberty

By Lincoln Steed

This year the Liberty Campaign video features the heart-warming story of how Patty Waldrop not only found a way to Sabbath accommodation in the workplace, but found out how God can reward us in ways we never imagined. Religious liberty is not an abstract concept but a living principle of the Gospel in action that is proven again and again by faithful Christians.

Your religious Liberty department, through legal interventions to support mostly workplace challenges; through distribution of Liberty Magazine to thought leaders in Washington, D.C., and State and Provincial centers; through member-based initiatives and seminars; as well as all media outlets, is dedicated to spreading an understanding of the great “gospel of liberty.”

Without your cooperation, without your funds, little can be done. We need you as never before. Prophecy is unfolding daily and the moves to compel to false worship more blatant. Thanks for your generous participation.

January 30, 2016

NAD Evangelism

The name of Jesus comes from the Hebrew name Joshua, which means “the conqueror.” Emmanuel means “God with us.” Both names align with the fact that Jesus came to “seek and save what was lost.” Moreover, Jesus said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt. 4:17, NIV). Jesus recognized the preaching of the good news of the kingdom of God as the purpose for which He was sent (Mark 1:14; Luke 4:43). Furthermore, Jesus “traveled from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:1, NIV).

Jesus commissioned His disciples to continue announcing the Kingdom of God. Errol McLean from the North American Division says, “Evangelism is not a focus of the church for the sake of the church. Evangelism is the focus of the church for the growth of the kingdom of God. Evangelism is about inviting lost people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord so the church must once again take up the challenge of evangelism and experience the heart of God in love for lost people” (NAD Evangelism Challenge).

What a privilege believers have today to partner with the Lord in announcing His kingdom through their freewill offerings. Today’s offering will be used for evangelism in the North American Division. Let us fund the mission to finish the work where we live!

.

**February 6, 2016**

**Local Church Budget**

As a child, Nelson learned three lessons very early in life. The first lesson was that the diligent prospers (Prov. 10:4). He got his first job when he was in the fourth grade. He had to cut out preselected newspaper articles for a neighbor, collecting two cents per article. Later he became an entrepreneur when he started a fruit business at his grandmother’s house and sold produce at school.

The second lesson was to tithe what he earned. And the third lesson was that money could be saved. Soon, with this strong work ethic, God’s blessings, and the habit of saving part of his income, Nelson accumulated $10. However, there was one more lesson to be learned.

One Sunday morning Nelson was asked to use his hard-earned money to buy food for the family. It was the only money available at home. Nelson didn’t appreciate that; he complained that it was unfair to use his money to feed the family. But he soon realized that he had only two options: keep the money or feed the family. To make matters worse, on his way to the grocery store, Nelson walked by a bookstore where toys and table games were exhibited. He saw all kinds of wonderful things he could buy with his $10. But he hurried on toward the grocery store, where he purchased the food. Then he returned home.

Nelson wanted to accumulate money for selfish purposes. However, he learned that God gives believers money, health, and gifts in order to use them for the common good.

May the Lord help us today to give generously so the local congregation is able to maintain this church building and to minister to others in need.

**February 13, 2016**

 **Canadian It Is Written**

This morning all across Canada on CTV an average of over 84,000 people are tuning into the *It Is Written Canada* broadcast. Because of the visionary leadership of Henry Feyerabend 40 years ago, *It Is Written Canada* is the leading media ministry in market penetration in all of the North American Division. But more than just a media ministry, *It Is Written Canada* is committed to leading the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada in taking the 3 angels messages to all of Canada and around the world as the evangelistic resource centre of Canada.

This year as part of *It Is Written Canada’s* emphasis on urban evangelism, they will be leading city-wide comprehensive evangelism in Calgary, Alberta and St. John’s and the Avalon region of Newfoundland. These areas have been working for over a year, in all areas of ministry, to impact their communities with the gospel. These city-wide projects emphases will also help in the development of resources for all local churches across Canada for evangelism.

In addition, *It Is Written Canada* is partnering with the *Voice of Prophecy*, and other church entities to deliver Bibles, Bible studies, and DVD resources to the Inuit in Nunavut in their native language. They will also be assisting them to build a community centre in Igloolik, serving not only Igloolik but all of the 25 communities of Nunavut.

Today, the offering being taken throughout Canada is to support the work *It Is Written Canada*. Please be generous with your prayers and offerings.

**February 20, 2016**

 **Local Church Budget**

“What is that in your hand?” God asked Moses (Ex. 4:2). It wasn’t Moses’s staff that God wanted; it was the hand that held it. God uses people’s hands—their willingness—to do great things for His kingdom.

Jesus stood before a crowd and told His disciples, “give them something to eat” (Mark 6:37). The disciples didn’t know what to do. They had no money to buy food, even if it was available. Perhaps the young boy overheard the disciples discussing how they could feed so many people. “Eight months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite,” Phillip had said (John 6:7, NIV). So with childlike faith, the boy gave his lunch of five small barley loaves and two tiny fish to the disciples, who gave it to Jesus, who used it to feed a multitude. And no one left that day unchanged by the boy’s generosity.

One year a young man who was struggling to pay his tuition at Andrews University received a blue envelope with no return address on it. Skeptically, he opened it and found a dollar bill inside with a brief note: “to help with your studies.”

Perhaps a child sent that letter—a child like the boy who shared his lunch. One dollar didn’t go far toward paying tuition, but it touched the student’s heart and gave him hope and reassurance that God would make a way for him to complete his studies.

What is in your hand? Will you open your hand and allow Jesus to multiply your gift? You won’t regret it!

**February 27, 2016**

**Alberta Advance**

Campus Ministries here in Alberta is growing but at a very slow rate. It is a known fact that most of our Adventist University and college students attend public institutions. It has been said that “Today’s college and university campuses have more influence on the direction, morality and overall fabric of society than any other institution on the face of earth.” It has also been said that “…College ministry is the most strategic mission field in the world today.” That’s quite a bold statement to make, but let’s look at the facts.

* In the 2010 – 2011 school year, University of Alberta had a total enrollment of 38,290 students, 15.14% of whom were from countries outside of Canada. That’s almost 6,000 students, which represented 146 countries…that’s about 75% of the countries in the world represented at the U of A that year.
* University of Lethbridge boasts that to date 36,479 of their alumni have gone on to make important contribution in communities around the world.
* University of Calgary boast of having 157,000 alumni in 152 countries around the world.

We currently have a few active campus groups offering bible studies and planning and hosting student outreach events and activities, but there are still many campuses that have no active groups.

Your Alberta Advance offering will go a long way in helping the Alberta Conference equip our university and college students with the needed resources to minister and encourage them to be missionaries, on their campuses, to share the message of Jesus Christ, and impact the world

Please give generously.

**March 5, 2016**

Local Church Budget

“Hello, young man! How goes it?” Mr. Trotta greeted Harold in his friendly manner. Harold smiled up at the kindly man. “Is my son treating you well?” he asked.

Harold was 17 and grateful to have a part-time job with Mr. Trotta’s son’s company. The pay wasn’t great, but the hours fit his study schedule and the skills he was learning would help him in the future.

“How much is my son paying you?” Mr. Trotta’s eyes became serious. Harold told him, and the man’s forehead wrinkled in anger. “That’s not enough to pay your bus fare to work!” the man bellowed. Harold lowered his eyes. He didn’t want to make his boss or his father angry.

Harold thought about his wages. Though small, he was glad to give God a double tithe on Sabbath. He shouldn’t have had enough left to pay his bus fare, but he always had something left. In fact, he was even saving a bit of money. Harold knew that God was blessing his faithfulness and providing for his needs. But as he considered the questions his boss’s father had asked, he realized the scope of the miracle God was working in his life and the truth of Malachi: “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this…if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it (Mal. 3:10).

God invites you to test Him today to prove that He will bless you when you are faithful with your tithe and offerings.

March 12, 2016

Adventist World Radio (AWR)

Adventist World Radio blankets over 80 percent of the world’s population in more than 120 languages using AM, FM, and shortwave radio as well as the Internet and podcasts. All the work is done by producers who are born and raised in the language group they serve. That’s right. AWR doesn’t just translate English sermons into other languages. Local people write messages that will reach the hearts of people in each region of the world.

One of Adventist World Radio’s most exciting outreach tools is podcasts. AWR provides more audio content for iTunes than anyone else in the world. In 2014 alone, listeners downloaded more than 8.75 billion programs! That’s Billion with a “B.”

Radio works! The highest mountains cannot stop the signals; borders of closed countries cannot block the programs; people locked in a lonely prison cell or caught in a traffic jam in a large city can tune in to listen to God’s message of love in their own language. Radio is reaching the hearts of listeners every day!

It costs money to reach the world for Christ. Your help is needed to keep producing new programs in new languages every day. Today your gift of love will help provide programming in one of more than 100 languages around the world. Think of the people who may hear the name of Jesus for the first time because you gave your offering for Adventist World Radio today.

March 19, 2016

 Local Church Budget

“I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread” (Ps. 37:25). That verse illustrates Josephine M. Kuntz’s amazing story of God’s providence.

Both Josephine and her husband found themselves unemployed at one point during the winter of 1940. To make matters worse, their daughter, Rachel, had pneumonia. Their family doctor strongly suggested feeding their daughter a boiled egg daily. But even that was beyond their means. Yet Josephine and their babysitter prayed together, “Lord, Rachel needs an egg each morning.” With that prayer the women placed the problem in God’s hands.

“About ten o’clock that morning we heard some cackling coming from the hedge fence in front of our house. We had no idea where she had come from. We just watched in amazement as a chicken laid an egg and then continued down the road, out of sight.” Every day for over a week, the little red hen showed up, layed an egg and walked away (Josephine M. Kunts, “The Little Red Hen,” Corrie Ten Boom et al., *Snow Flakes in September*, 29).

Have you experienced God providing for your needs? As you return your tithes and offerings today, put your trust in God. He is the one able to meet your needs in unconceivable ways.

Today’s offering will help fund the ministries of our church in our community.

March 26, 2016

Alberta Advance

Today’s offering is for Alberta Advance.

The Alberta Advance offering today goes in part to support the Prayer and Ministries Departments of the Alberta Conference. One of the goals of Prayer Ministries is to host an event in each area of the Conference in which we are all inspired to pray. Guest speakers are brought in to present about prayer and share their own experience with an amazing God that answers prayer, enabling us to fall more deeply in love with God and have our own prayer life strengthened. There are cost associated with such Prayer Conferences and your support today will enable the Alberta Conference Prayer Ministries department to continue to bring these inspiring events to a church in your area.

Thank you for your faithful support.

April 2, 2016

Local Church Budget

Is there ever a time when believers are excused from tithing?

Debt is a prevalent issue in society today. Can believers be excused from tithing when expenses are greater than their income? Can believers be excused from tithing while working toward getting out of debt? Mrs. White posted a logical question, “Should I tell you to be sure to pay all you owe any man, although you rob God to do so?” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, 92).

Many believers have significant consumer debt. Some make a difference between good and bad debt. Charles Griffin observes, “Being in debt is not a sin! The Bible does not forbid us to have debts, although it does recommend that we don’t have them” (*Personal Finance*, p. 16). Mrs. White agrees and adds that debt is the symptom of a much deeper problem: selfishness. “Some will always remain in debt. Because of their covetousness . . . they love this world better than they love the truth” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, 93).

Mrs. White advises that the believer’s first duty is to God, even over the family. She encourages practicing economy at home, denying extravagant purchases, and trusting God. Nine-tenths of our income with God’s blessing is worth more than ten tenths without it (*Counsels on Stewardship*, 68, 74, 94).

What would happen to your giving if you were debt free? What would happen to this congregation if all of our members would practice self-control, live debt free, and give generous offerings to further God’s work? What would mission look like here at home and around the world?

April 9, 2016

Canadian Christian Record Services/

 Ministries of Compassion

Can you imagine what it would be like to go through life blind? It is pretty hard to comprehend, isn’t it? How would life for you change if you lost your eyesight?

During His ministry, Jesus was attentive to the blind. His healing touch restored sight to their eyes. Today, we as Adventists seek to bring hope and wholeness to the blind in communities across Canada.

Perhaps you know someone who is visually impaired that lives near you. Providing support for their specific needs is part of what the church is all about. In planning for the church’s activities throughout the year, let’s make plans to include them in our ministries and events. A caring church family can make a huge difference for one who is blind.

Each year, Adventists throughout Canada support an offering for the blind. Christian Record Services in Canada has offered support in many areas for the blind. Currently its focus is on the Annual Camps for the Blind. Using our Adventist youth camps in four locations throughout Canada, staff provides a week of enrichment for our blind neighbors and friends.

Thank you for your generous support for today’s offering as we continue to engage in Christ’s ministry of compassion for the blind.

April 16, 2016

Local Church Budget

A long-time Christian approached a new Christian with a question on stewardship. “If you had 100 cows, would you give 50 for the Lord’s work?”

“Sure I would,” the new Christian replied.

“What if you had 100 horses,” the seasoned Christian continued. “Would you give 50 to the Lord’s work?”

“Sure I would,” the new Christian replied.

The experienced Christian continued, “What if you have 100 sheep? Would you do the same?”

“Yes,” the new Christian replied with conviction.

“Now,” the older Christian asked, “would you give one goat to the Lord?”

“No!” snapped the new Christian. “And you have no right to ask me. You know I have only two goats!” (adapted from Leslie B. Flynn, *Your God and Your Gold*, 58).

What believers do with little is exactly what they would do with much. In 2013, the wealthiest people donated only 1.3 percent of their income, while the poorest donated 3.2 percent (Ken Stern, *“Why the Rich Don’t Give to Charity”*).

Some Christians believe that giving is for the rich. But Jesus taught His followers that giving is not about quantity. The widow gave two mites, all she had (Luke 21:2). Those two mites equal about one-fifth of a cent today. Let us give sacrificially to our local congregation today. May the Lord bless us as we give our all to Him.

April 23, 2016

Alberta Advance

We are accustomed to hockey stats, census stats, and election polls…almost any kind of stats. Listen to some Alberta Adventist Education stats for the 2015-16 school year. Keep in mind that these numbers are close approximations.

69 classrooms (including 9 virtual classrooms) filled with 949 students taught by 84 teachers and overseen by 9 administrators. (That’s 9 schools including one virtual school).

105,000 instruction hours in Grades K-12

1600 lunch breaks

20 Spiritual Emphasis weeks held bi-annually sometimes with guest speakers and sometimes presented by students.

3 nature based education opportunities for students in Grades 5-9 where the time spent is intentionally Christ centered.

Countless classroom worships and opportunities to pray together

Unnumbered outreach projects, acts of kindness and moments of care demonstrated by staff and students.

Adventist Education in Alberta:

* Employs dedicated and certified teachers
* Serves Seventh-day Adventist families in every corner of Alberta
* Impacts the surrounding community
* Provides nurture and training to future church leaders
* And lastly…needs and values your support! Thank you for being a part of educating our youth

April 30, 2016

Burman University

The main offering today is to benefit our Seventh-day Adventist University in Canada, Burman University (formerly Canadian University College). It is exciting to hear of the tremendous growth that has taken place at Burman over the past few years. With youth from every province in Canada, the Northwest Territories, much of the US and abroad, Burman is very representative of our church in Canada and our world church. Many of our pastors, teachers, evangelists, administrators and vibrant church members across Canada are proud of their connection to Burman. Please support your university in Canada as our young men and women study, work and live together on a safe, vibrant, and diverse campus, striving to fulfill their goals of training for service and preparing for the heavenly kingdom.

Your gift today is very much appreciated, needed, will be carefully used and will make a real difference in the lives and success of our incredible young people. Even just small gifts from many, adds up to a tremendous blessing! Our goal this year is $100,000 which is only $7 per family across Canada if all participate. Is there any better investment to make than in our youth? Investing in youth and education today is investing for eternity!

If you are not prepared to give this morning, please take home one of the special envelopes provided for future giving. Thank you for your crucial financial support and for continuing to lift up the students, faculty and staff of Burman University in your thoughts and prayers throughout the year. When able, go to the www.Burmanu.ca website to keep current with all the good news, events and student achievements taking place.

May 7, 2016

Local Church Budget

Martin Luther once said, “Every man needs two conversions: the first of his heart and the second of his pocketbook.” Tithing and giving offerings are an affirmation that God is first in the believer’s life.

Dogon Goon was a Chinese Christian who came to America in the 1920’s. His bride, Toy Len Goon, was also new to America and to Christianity.

Over the years the couple had eight children. Mr. Goon returned a faithful tithe regardless of how hard the economy was or how large his family grew. His influence helped his wife’s faith grow stronger as well.

Dogon Goon died in 1941, leaving his wife to care for the children with only a small laundry business and her faith in God to see her through. Week after week she faithfully returned her tithe to God. And God blessed her. Her children took turns attending university, and all became accomplished in their fields of endeavor. In 1952 she was chosen as the American mother of the year.

“When God controls our money we can live better on nine tenths than on ten tenths.… And when this happens God will set a song in our hearts and glorify the work of our hands” (Charles M. Crowe, *Stewardship Sermons*, 91–95).

Today’s offering will further the ministry of our local church.

May 14, 2016

Disaster and Famine Relief

Almost every day somewhere in the North American Division, people are affected by natural disasters. Many blame God for the destruction of homes or community, and for the death of loved ones during disasters. But the Bible assures us that during those real or metaphorical storms in life, God is beside us, leading us.

Jesus warned us about destructive forces at work in the world. “See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet” (Matt. 24:6-7). *The Great Controversy* (589-590) says that “Satan . . . is at work. In accidents and calamities, . . in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms. . . . These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous.”

Almost daily, Adventist Community Services (ACS) volunteers compassionately respond to disasters throughout North America. They collect, sort, and distribute items needed by people who have endured these disasters. They also train and locally deploy Adventists to provide emotional and spiritual care to the survivors.

As Adventists, we are compelled to do our best to provide assistance to survivors. ACS and volunteers join forces to transform us into Christ’s hands and feet to fulfill that purpose. We demonstrate God’s love when we mobilize to assist our community and neighbors during times of disaster.

Today, your offering will benefit Adventist Community Services in North America and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) internationally to further their efforts. Thank you for returning God’s tithe and supporting today’s offering for ACS.

May 21, 2016

Local Church Budget

Randy Pausch, an American computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon University, became famous in 2007 when his “Last Lecture” went viral on the Internet. He lectured on living while dying from pancreatic cancer at the age of 47.

The Apostle Paul was in a similar situation. He was not sick; but he knew that going to Jerusalem could mean his death. Paul had one more lecture to deliver: a message for the church leaders. At the end of his message, Paul highlighted two important principles that had been clearly illustrated in his life: work and giving (Acts 20:33–34). Paul believed that a worker deserves his wages (1 Tim. 5:18), and he warned against idleness when he wrote, “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). Leading by example, Paul worked as a tent maker so he wouldn’t be a burden to the churches (Acts 18:3).

Paul put the responsibility of helping someone in need first on the immediate family, telling those responsible for helping family members that if they refused to help, they were denying the faith and were “worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8). Paul’s last words to the elders from Ephesus were on giving. He quoted Jesus’s words, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Although not found literally in the Gospels, these words summarize Jesus’s ministry.

What a blessing to be able to work in order to give! Your giving today will not only help with this building’s maintenance; it will also bless those who are in need. Paul concluded by saying, “you must support the weak” (Acts 20:35).

May 28, 2016

Alberta Advance

The Personal Ministries department of the Alberta Conference is fully committed to equipping and empowering all church members to reach their fullest potential in Christ-method ministry. As part of that initiative, CHANGE School of Evangelism recently finished its third summer program with 13 graduates who were lay members from all over North America, trained to conduct relevant ministry in their local communities. CHANGE Online also had its first graduate this year indicating successful training for those who couldn’t attend CHANGE in person. KIDS in Discipleship training was also held simultaneously to the CHANGE program which yielded success for the kids as they not only learned about Jesus, but also how to share Him.

Your offering today helps to fund this project.

June 4, 2016

Local Church Budget

How can someone be rich toward God? Luke 12:13–22 describes a man who wanted Jesus to convince his brother to divide their family’s inheritance with him. Jesus, however, followed the inquiry with a series of teachings that are still relevant to Christian living today.

Jesus warned against greed. One’s life should not consist of accumulating possessions. Next He urged listeners to seek the kingdom of God, centering their lives on God’s eternal kingdom. The promise is that God will provide for the physical needs of those who give priority to God’s kingdom. The third piece of advice is one of response. The disciple who trusts God will be a good, watchful steward. In fact, the owner might come at any time and will hold the steward accountable. “For everyone to whom much is given … much will be required” (Luke 12:48).

Many are tempted to think of men such as John D. Rockefeller Jr. or Albert Schweitzer when reading this passage. One inherited a fortune, which he never thought of as his own. He served God and humanity with it. The other was one of the most gifted men of all time. He used his gifts freely for God and humanity (Campbell Ferenbach, *Preaching Stewardship*, 62).

But what about ordinary people like you and me? What has God given you? Has God given you property, speech, strength, or influence? “According to the talents bestowed will be the returns called for” (*Stewardship*, 116). Being rich toward God is about where your treasure is. Your heart follows your treasure. Where is your heart today? May the Lord help you to be rich toward God as you support the local ministry with your offerings today.

treasure. Where is your heart today? May the Lord help you to be rich toward God as you support the local ministry with your offerings today.

June 11, 2016

Canadian French Work\*

The two official languages of Canada are English and French with most of the French speaking population living in the province of Quebec. The Quebecois and the neo-Quebecois have become disillusioned with organized religion and are indifferent to the truth as presented in the Word of God. Our challenge is to reach this population of about 7 million French-speaking people w3ith the Christ centered message of hope and wholeness.

Your offering today will help us plant four (4) churches in three cities where there is currently no Adventist church, as well as to hire Bible Workers to work in these cities. Intense evangelistic work is being done in Quebec City, the provincial capital, a city with a population of about 800,000, but only 125 Adventist. Community based programs that seek to arouse the interest of the population our distinctive Christ centered message are ongoing.

Our most valuable evangelistic tool for the French work in Quebec is the Il Est Écrit (It Is Written) TV program. We receive hundreds of letters from seekers who have been blessed by it and asked for prayers, visits and Bible studies. It warms our hearts to see that all over the province, new believers have been baptized as a result of this telecast.

Your offering today for World Budget, in support of the Canadian French Work, is needed to provide materials for our French speaking members, organize more outreach events as well as planting new churches to reach the French speaking population in Canada.

Your generosity will be appreciated and used directly to support the Canadian French Work. (Personal giving plan participants please mark “World Budget” on your envelope.)

June 18, 2016

Local Church Budget

Wealth is a gift from God. Many men of God were rich. Abraham, David, and Solomon were just a few. Wealthy women followed Jesus, and many others became Christians through the ministry of the disciples in the early church (Luke 8:1–3; Acts 16:14; 17:4).

“The desire to accumulate wealth is an original affection of our nature, implanted there by our heavenly Father for noble ends” (*Stewardship*, 148). In fact, Mrs. White encourages mission work among the wealthy, the talented, and those of influence. They have a special place in God’s work (*Stewardship*, 139–140).

Many use the young rich ruler as grounds to refuse wealth. “Go, sell what you have and give to the poor…” (Matt. 19:21). However, this young man’s problem wasn’t the money, but the love of money. “Christians are safe only in acquiring money as God directs, and using it in channels which He can bless” (*Stewardship*, 139, 141).

Whether rich or poor, spiritual prosperity comes from dependency upon God. Wealth or the lack of it should not come between God and the believer. What a privilege we have to give from what the Lord has given us this week. God demands faithfulness, which is the reason why He says, “My son, give me your heart” (Prov. 23:26)great expense, made provision to rescue us from the sin in this world. He gave before He ever asked us to give anything to Him.

June 25, 2016

Alberta Advance

The offering today is for the Alberta Advance. This offering provides for many ministries in our Conference, including all of the different camps that are offered at Foothills camp. Camp is an important part of youth and young adult ministries, family ministries, and now there is even a camp for our seniors.

All summer long, campers and staff worship God, listen to uplifting stories, spend time in God’s nature and play. Many lives are changed and many decisions are made for Christ.

Please give generously to support Foothills Camp through the Alberta Advance offering.

July 2, 2016

Our Local Church Budget

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5).

Solomon defines and exemplifies what he meant by trusting in the Lord. First, he alludes to the “Shema”—also known as the Jewish central prayer. This prayer should be the starting point for all believers. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength (Deut. 6:4–5).

Solomon describes three specific pillars of trust. Believers know they trust the Lord when they honor Him with their possessions (Prov. 3:9). Trust is also built when believers submit to God’s corrections (Prov. 3:11). And finally, believers who trust the Lord use their time to bless others (Prov. 3:27).

Solomon assures Christians that trusting God will prolong one’s life and bring prosperity (Prov. 3:2). Would you trust God today? Trust that He will fill your barns and overflow them. Trust that your vats will brim over as you honor God with your means. Trust that the Lord will use your offerings today to meet the needs of this congregation. Trusting God begins with knowing, and knowing has evidence. “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” (Ps. 34:8).

July 9, 2016

Women’s Ministry

*by Carla Baker*

Today’s offering is for the North American Division (NAD) Women’s Ministries. Since its inception, the Women’s Ministries Department has been engaged in carrying out the mission of the church, which is to proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel.

When Jesus explained what separates the sheep from the goats in Matthew 25:31–46, He made it clear that ministry to others is a primary characteristic of Christian believers. With the theme “A Ministry for Every Woman,” the North American Division Women’s Ministries Department actively encourages every woman to be involved in service to others. According to Ellen G. White, women “can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed” (*Evangelism*, 465).

Among its many resources to help with local church outreach and ministry needs, the Women’s Ministries Department has two DVD Bible study series for women: Journey of Joy with speaker Carla Gober, and Surprised by Love featuring Elizabeth Talbot. These DVD studies make giving Bible studies as easy as turning on the DVD player.

Your gift marked NAD Women’s Ministries Offering will affirm the work of women in the church.

July 16, 2016

Local Church Budget

A young person once confessed after asking for a ride to the mall, “I just got paid and want to get a new pair of shoes. This is my greatest addiction. I purchase shoes, wear them once, and then I display them on my bedroom wall never to be used again.”

Most of us would agree that this young person’s addiction is an unwise use of hard-earned money. What do believers do with their “first fruits”?

In the Jewish culture, the feast of harvest, known as the Feast of the Weeks, was celebrated at the end of May or early June, the time of the early spring harvest. Seven weeks after the barley sheaf was offered, first fruit offerings were brought to the temple priest (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 1, 627).

In wisdom literature, it is common to see the connection between giving and receiving blessings in return. “First fruits are the best the land can offer. When you give the best and are rewarded for that, we would try harder next year.” Similarly, giving one’s best first fruits is applicable in all areas of life: time, talents, and resources. However, “best efforts” is not limited to the 10 percent alone. It affects 100 percent of everything believers are trusted to manage for God’s glory (Douglas W. Johnson, *Tithe: Challenge or Legalism?* 26, 27).

Instead of using your first resources on consuming something, even if it’s not as frivolous as new shoes, put God first by giving Him the tenth of your first fruits and then more according to how God has blessed you.

Today’s offering goes to local church budget, which includes outreach ministries to those who live near us.

July 23, 2016

Alberta Advance

One of the ministries that the Alberta Advance offering supports is “***Let’s Talk”***. ***Let’s
Talk*** is a unique worship experience for young adults who have left traditional church. Over 70% of young people within North America are leaving Church. In order to help retain them ***Let’s Talk*** allows Youth to meet in a safe and warm café style setting. This allows them to connect to Christ and their community while engaged in conversation. It is designed to engage the listener in deep dialogue and discussion of relevant topics that are impacting the young adult culture and church. Participates are blessed by live music, song, poetry, spoken word and fellowship.

With your kind offering you will continue to help support a ministry that is seeking to reach youth who have slipped out of the back door.

Thank you for your generous giving and support.

July 30, 2016

Canadian Native ministries

Thank you so much for your continued support of Native Ministries over the past years. Our mission is to reach our Aboriginal neighbours with the Christ-centered, Seventh-Day Adventist message of hope and wholeness.

One day while I was visiting door to door in a community, an elderly Native lady invited me into her home. I noticed a well worn Bible on her table so I asked her if she was a Christian. She responded with an enthusiastic “yes”. I then showed her a set of the Native New Day Bible study guides. As I leafed through the pages showing her the fine Native artwork and designs, she responded with, “Oh these are wonderful.” I told her that they were designed to help her in her walk with Jesus and that she could have them. “Thank you so much” she said as she continued to leaf through them. I was happy that I had some Native materials to give her.

We now have translated and printed the Native New Day Bible study guides in French. These are the only French materials we have available that are designed for Native people. In Romans 10:17 we read, **“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”** Please help us develop more culturally appropriate material.

May God bless you as you invest in sharing His message of hope and wholeness to the Native people.

August 6, 2016

Local Church Budget

What does money say about a person? “We may not give money away, but money will give us away…. If a man is after money, he is money-mad; if he keeps it, he is a capitalist; if he spends it, he is a playboy; if he doesn’t get money, he is a ne’er-do-well; if he doesn’t try to get it, he lacks ambition; and if he accumulates it after a lifetime of hard work, people call him a fool who never got anything out of life” (Leslie B. Flynn, *Your God and Your Gold*, 12–13).

Although an exaggeration, the paragraph above reflects a lot of truth. A person’s overall expenditures reflect where their interest is. Jesus said it best, “For where your treasure is, there you heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21).

Many years ago in China, citizens of a town were in fearful expectation of an enemy army invasion. Soon, soldiers would go door-to-door getting anything they could grab. Many, in desperation, sought refuge in a mission compound run by English missionaries. Knowing what the soldiers were after, the missionaries welcomed refugees with nothing of value on them. Greedy soldiers would take the missionaries’ word when declaring that the compound was a place of poverty.

Sadly, many citizens walked away from safety because they couldn’t part from their jewels, silks, or silver. They were mastered by money (ibid., 19, 20). Today, believers have an opportunity to serve the Lord by depositing treasures in heaven. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:34). May your heart and treasure be in heaven today and always. Today’s offering will bless our church’s local outreach.

August 13, 2016

Andrews University/Loma Linda University

A research team studied different grade levels to find out how students’ dreams shift throughout their development. The results? The younger the students were, the bigger were their dreams. It seems as though growth kills dreams. Many underprivileged youth even believe that higher education is impossible for them (Leslie Morrison Gutman and Rodie Akerman, *Center for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning*: Research Report).

Many students see Adventist education as impossible due to the soaring cost of private education. Adventist education is only possible thanks to the generosity of former students and faithful church members who believe in Adventist education. “Many graduates will become employed as accountants, pastors, teachers, physicians, nurses, dentists, hospital workers and so forth, in denominational employment” (T. Joy Willey, *How Much Does It Really Cost to Go to an Adventist College?*

What a great opportunity we have today to partner with God and Adventist universities in the North American Division in preparing young people for ministry. Part of your offering today will help students study in Adventist institutions and graduate to serve.

August 20, 2016

Local Church Budget

Human beings are created to worship Someone or something. No wonder the Ten Commandments begin with “You shall have no other gods before me” and end with “you shall not covet” (Ex 20:3, 17). Covetousness is defined as “The wish to have more.” Money, like gods, has many names. As early as 1890, scholars listed no less than 130 English expressions for money (Leslie B. Flynn, *Your God and Your Gold*, 18).

Some people will do almost anything for money. The Bible illustrates this subject. Judas sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Sorcerer Simon offered Peter money for the Holy Spirit, and Felix kept Paul in prison in hopes of receiving money for his release. Money itself is neutral; it is just a means of exchange. It can be used to apply the golden rule or to rule the gold.

The California Gold Rush of 1848 brought more than $400 million dollars into the economy of the United States. Providentially, an interest in stewardship surfaced in many denominations as an antidote to covetousness. It brought revival and an increased giving for missions. “Money invested in spiritual projects provides an entrance into the more abundant life” (Ibid., 16–17).

By contemplation the believer is transformed. May God be the only One we contemplate as followers of Jesus. May the moneymaking talent God has given us be used to advance His kingdom locally, regionally, and to the end of the world.

Today’s offering is for the local church budget, which helps keep our church open and operating and helps fund outreach in our community.

August 27, 2016

Alberta Advance

For the Planned Giving/Philanthropy department, the main goal is to help church members do the most good possible. By assisting through a variety of services and information on wills and planned giving, countless individuals have made positive impacts on the lives of many, many people. Mary Krysowaty is one of those individuals whose partnership with the Planned Giving/Philanthropy department is still touching lives for good.

Mary was a teacher for more than 30 years. In that time she helped kids discover the joy of learning in the classroom. She is still doing that today.

Though Mary passed away on December 2, 2012, the iPad Teaching Library made possible by her Remainder Trust is touching Adventist students today throughout Alberta—and in ways Mary could not have imagined.

Mary used two Planned Giving tools to create gifts to the Conference: a Remainder Trust, and a Will. In her Remainder Trust, she designated the funds remaining when she passed away for education or evangelism.

“[The iPad library] is both education *and* evangelism!” said Elizabeth Tym, Mary’s niece and executor/Personal Representative, when I presented the Conference’s plan to create the iPad Teaching Library, giving teachers and students access to 1.2 million educational apps.

For student Jaise, being able to use the iPad in his education was life changing. Like many people with Aspergers, Jaise is incredibly gifted in some areas (he is working on a now 450 page novel!) but he faces challenges in others. The iPad offered a way for Jaise to connect with the world and show what he can do. As teachers use iPads to adjust to the educational needs of students like Jaise as well as all their students, the quality of their lives are made better by Mary.

A long-time supporter of Adventist education, Elizabeth understands how important it is for SDA schools to serve students with special needs as well as enhance the learning resources available to all students. “It’s important to get our young people thinking right and focused on Jesus,” she said.

The Alberta Conference also helped Mary give intelligently during her life through a Remainder Trust. Mary was able to give to many projects and organizations by simply telling the Director of Planned Giving where to donate and how much. She made the founding gift to establish Mamawi Atosketan Native School, Alberta’s mission school that’s changing the lives of children and families alike. On what is reputed to be the toughest reserve in Canada, hope isn’t always easy to come by, but for MANS student Krista, that’s exactly what she found in Adventist education. “I want a good future,” says Krista, “and Mamawi Atosketan really gives me that hope.”

Like the woman who poured perfume on Jesus’ feet – Mary never wanted to draw attention to herself, but the effect of her generosity couldn’t be contained, and as Jesus foretold, her selfless gift is forever remembered. “Blessed are they that die in the Lord,” said the wise man of Proverbs, “their good works do follow them.”

Thank you for giving generously to the Alberta Advance offering.

September 3, 2016

Local Church Budget

A girl noticed her grandmother’s silver candlesticks that were displayed at her mother’s house. She commented, “I see you have grandma’s candlesticks. Who owns them?” Her mother decided to reply with a rather interesting reflection. “Great-grandfather bought them almost 100 years ago. He thought they were his because he paid for them. When he passed away, grandfather received them.

He thought they were his because he inherited them. When grandfather passed away, the candlesticks shifted owners again. This time, they went to Aunt Sue. When Aunt Sue passed away, my mother inherited them. Mother passed away, and I inherited the candlesticks. Now, you tell me, who is the real owner of the candlesticks?” (Leslie B. *Flynn, Your God and Your Gold*, 37).

Practical theology would have to give an answer to that question. 1 Peter 2:11 (NIV) says that believers are “aliens and strangers in the world.” James 4:14 says that life is “a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” Psalm 24:1 says that “the earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.” Therefore, the believer must conclude that nothing, not even life or the candlesticks, belongs to human beings. Life and things are gifts from God. Solomon concludes, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all” (Eccles. 12:13).

Would you show reverence to God today by trusting Him with His money? Your offerings today will make a difference in our congregation. I challenge you to choose to trust God with your finances today!

September 10, 2016

Fall Mission Appeal

A church member reminisced about her memories of raising funds for mission. Ingathering came to mind, triggering memories of discomfort as well as a smile. “Ingathering was not the most exciting activity for a timid teenager,” she recalled. “However, it sparked sense of community and mission among church members and neighbors alike.”

Ingathering, as it was known for decades, started in 1903 when Jasper Wayne, a nurseryman from Iowa, ordered 50 copies of the Signs of the Times magazine from the publisher. When the magazines arrived at the post office, Wayne opened the parcel and gave the magazines away to people he met. If someone gave him a donation, he gave it to support the mission outreach of the church. The magazines were quickly distributed. Ten days later a second parcel arrived by mistake. Wayne took those copies in his buggy and offered them to customers and friends, asking for a donation for missions. Ingathering, as the project became known, was endorsed by the General Conference in 1908 as a means to raise funds in local communities for both local and worldwide mission work (see R. W. Schwarz, *Light* *Bearers to the Remnant*, 346).

Ellen White highlighted the need for creativity in mission work, as a means to put “new life into old methods” of raising funds to support missions. She encouraged the church to find new methods of awakening the interest of church members in a united effort to reach the world. (See *Counsels on Stewardship*, 190). Ingathering was one example of creativity in the twentieth century.

While we may no longer go from house to house asking for donations for missions, let’s do find new ways to fund the work of mission and finish God’s work!

September 17, 2016

Local Church Budget

It must have been a glorious day, yet uncomfortable. David had passionately planned to build a house for the Lord. He was able to bring the Ark of the Covenant to the city of David after a long pilgrimage that caused several human losses. However, God told David that he could not build a temple because he was a warrior and shed much blood. Instead, his son Solomon would build it.

David made all the preparations, gathered the whole assembly, and led the way to outrageous generosity. “I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver” (1 Chron. 28:3). Next, David made an appeal to the leaders, who responded with a greater free will offering. The people later responded by giving wholeheartedly.

What followed was a spontaneous worship service that reflected David’s theology of stewardship. “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all…. For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You. For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, as were all our fathers; our days on earth are as a shadow, and without hope” (1 Chron. 29:11–15).

What would happen in this church if believers would embrace David’s truth of stewardship as “managers for God’s glory”? How would personal finance be handled? How would outrageous generosity transform your local ministry? May your offering today be blessed greatly for God’s glory!

God’s kingdom in your conference.

September 24, 2016

Alberta Advance

What does Adventist Education mean to you? Have you had opportunity to witness the fruits of the dedicated teachers and administrators who make up our Adventist school system in Alberta? (ASK for a show of hands who has been impacted by Adventist Education either as a student, teacher or administrator.)

One church member and graduate of the Seventh-day Adventist system reflects: “*From my earliest childhood days I longed to go to a “church school”. I lived in a remote part of Alberta and Christian Education was available to no one in my corner of the world. During my middle school years, I had a short taste of what it was like to attend church school. My fellow students knew so much about the Bible. How I envied them. During my high school and college years, I was able to attend Seventh0day Adventist academies and colleges. Those were some of the best years of my life. I had leadership opportunities, travel opportunities through fine arts tours, and educational experiences that have served me well throughout my life. Later, when choosing an education path for our children, we made personal sacrifices to provide the best Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. Today, as we participate in our grand-children’s education, we have no regrets for the past…and praise God for the future He provides for us.”*

Is Adventist education perfect? NO! Perfect does not exist on this earth, but it is the most perfect choice that can be made as we journey together to the kingdom. Whether or not we have children, we are provided an opportunity to participate in shaping children’s lives for eternity. We invite you to dig deeply and partner with God to educate and nurture ambassadors for Christ!

October 1, 2016

Local Church Budget

As new believers in Christ, the Silva household had to meet many obligations. Then a lawsuit summons came in the mail concerning an accident caused by a vehicle Mr. Silva had sold some time earlier. This legal notice added to the financial obligations the family was experiencing and drove them to their knees. They knew of no option but to place themselves in God’s hands.

After hours of prayer, the family rose from their knees. Mr. Silva went to search for the papers that would prove that they had sold the car long before the accident mentioned in the summons. As Mr. Silva paged through the legal papers, a checkbook register fell out. The checkbook was for a long-forgotten loan. Inside was a Bible passage: “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Is. 41:10).

Mr. Silva took the forgotten checkbook to the bank to be updated and discovered that money remained in the account—enough money to cover the family’s needs that month. The family was convinced that the Lord had allowed the lawsuit papers to be delivered in order for this checkbook register to be found. God, once more, supplied for the needs of the family.

As followers of Christ, many hardships, trials, and tribulations will come. It is always safe to trust God, even in the midst of hard times. May God bless your faithful giving!

October 8, 2016

Voice of Prophecy

*by Kortnye Hurst*

Jamie’s enthusiasm for ministry is intoxicating. He shares the ways God changed his life and created a new one—one he could only dream of inside his old world. In 2013 Jamie saw an ad for a series of meetings called “Revelation Speaks Peace.” He was interested, but didn’t think he could make it. “I was in a parked car with my homies. We’d been chillin’,” Jamie recalls with an in-quotes gesture. “It was late at night. Everybody was passed out. I should have been too . . . but I wasn’t.”

Discouragement weighed heavily on Jamie. “I looked around the car, taking it all in. I saw my reflection—maybe on a window or side mirror. Plain as day, a voice asked, ‘Is this what you really want?’” Jamie heard his Savior’s voice that night. He attended the meetings presented by Voice of Prophecy’s Shawn Boonstra, and later pledged his life to God through baptism.

 “In spreading the gospel, people need a guide, not a greasy car dealer. Quality counts,” Jamie explains. “My birth dad was a military man. He taught me to meet the enemy at the front gate. Don’t hide under a bed or wait by the front door. Go to the front gate. Take all the resources with you that your enemy is bringing. Then, do it better.”

As the offering plate is passed down your aisle, consider what financial resources the Savior is asking you to bring to the front gate. Support *Voice of Prophecy* and *Voz de la Esperanza*, two of our church’s leading evangelistic resources

October 15, 2016

Local Church Budget

Like yellow fever, greed is an illness that overtakes people’s lives to the point of doing unthinkable things. For instance, during the 1800s the gold rush fever broke out, and people from around the world traveled to San Francisco with the goal of becoming rich overnight. Many died in the attempt to reach their destination as they were unprepared for multiple dangers, illnesses, and unfavorable environmental conditions.

Money is amoral, which means that it is a tool. Money can be used to build up a community or destroy it. San Francisco, for instance, became a city of greed, moral decay, and crime during the Gold fever era. Money, however, could be used to feed, shelter, and educate a community instead. “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10).

Covetousness, the invisible sin, is deep and private and devastating. In fact, most sins can trace their roots back to it. Coveting money, for instance, can lead to a series of maladies such as stealing, gambling, lying, bribery, oppression, family-breakdown, wrong kind of business, breakdown of the Sabbath, murder, war, muddling the motives of religious workers, and far more (see Leslie B. Flynn, *Your God and Your Gold*, 65–81).

Someone has said, “If you wish to be delivered from the love of money, give freely.” Giving is the cure to the inherently selfish nature of humanity. God instituted the tithing and offering system to help believers keep greed in check. May you love God more than money. May you avoid greed by giving generously.

Today’s offering will go to support our local church and its outreach to others.

**October 22, 2016**

**Alberta Advance**

“Leading our churches to faithfulness in the support of God’s work will bring untold blessing upon the members individually and upon the church as a whole.” Roy Allan Anderson wrote this profound statement (Ministry, September 1961).

Those who have faithfully supported God’s work can testify of the blessings they have received. God has promised to bless, and He always keeps His promises. Our denomination has also been blessed because we have dedicated our resources to the proclamation of God’s message. The Alberta Advance helps support programs at Foothills Camp, Youth programs, Sabbath School programs as well as Evangelism, Singles, Family Life and SAGE to mention a few.

Today, the offering is for Alberta Advance. This offering benefits conference-wide programs and ministries.

October 29, 2016

NAD Evangelism

The Adventist church treasures the three angels’ message as the center of its theology (Rev. 14:6–12). The reader of Revelation 14 knows this is the final message to be proclaimed. It is an imagery of the end of the world as presented by Jesus in the explanation of the parable of the weeds (Matt. 13:38, 39). The implications of this message in missiology are profound for Adventism. It lifts up the centrality of the gospel and its worldwide proclamation preceding the second coming of Christ. Therefore the everlasting gospel and mission are central to the Adventist Church.

The proclamation of the Gospel in North America has encountered many challenges. Growth in many cities has been possible due to immigration. It is not a racial problem, but an indigenous one. As immigrants acculturate and subsequent generations assimilate into the mainstream, God loses relevancy. Science, wealth, and relativism take precedence over truth.

“History and experience also discourage the idea that scientific progress will necessarily lead to a better world. It has become obvious that a rising standard of living does not necessarily result in personal happiness. Wealth has proven to be no shield against dysfunction, addiction, and crime. Instead, increased affluence has led to increased stress and anxiety” (Jon Paulien, *Everlasting Gospel: Ever Changing World*, 49).

Ellen White reminds the church that “new life into old methods of labor is needed” as well as new plans and methods of evangelism (*Stewardship*, 190). Let’s fund the mission to finish the work.

day hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matt. 25:23).

November 5, 2016

Local Church Budget

Words of encouragement are one of the five love languages that Gary Chapman highlights in his famous book by the same title. Furthermore, Chapman believes that God uses those five languages to convey a simple message to humankind: “I Love you” (Gary Chapman, *The Love Languages of God*, 32).

Scripture vastly exemplifies God’s words of affirmation. Believers long to hear Jesus say: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21). This phrase is repeated twice in the context of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. Any churchgoer has heard this parable multiple times. Jesus equated the kingdom of God with a man who went on a journey and left three servants in charge of his property.

Many suggest that while Matthew 24 gives the signs of the end times, Matthew 25 helps the believer know how to be disciples in the context of the end times. Believers must seek the Holy Spirit, realize the talents given, and use them for ministry. Moreover, talents are given according to ability. “This phrase indicates that this is not a parable about talents as abilities but about trusteeship or the use of abilities; it is a parable about opportunities to use abilities” (Charles E. Dietze, *God’s Trustees,* 82).

November 12, 2016

Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)

A missionary couple decided to live among the Sawi, a group of tree-dwellers in Irian Jaya, New Guinea. After becoming friends and learning their language, the opportunity came to present the Gospel to the tribe. Interestingly, no response resulted from a heartfelt, passionate, and clear presentation of the Gospel. However, the tribe connected with Judas, the betrayer. In the Sawi culture, treachery was highly honored. The villain became the hero of the story!

War broke out between tribes. Discouraged and frustrated, the missionaries decided to move on to another tribe, which caused a commotion among the Sawi. They didn’t want to lose the economic benefits that the missionaries had brought. Their solution astounded the missionaries. A warrior from each tribe sorrowfully chose one of his own children to be offered to the other tribe as a gift of peace. A peace child was the only way to stop the betraying and killing among the tribes. As long as the peace child lived, there would be peace among the tribes (Don Richardson, *Peace* *Child*, 175).

Christ is a gift, a true Peace Child. Believers accept the gift of God when they cheerfully and sacrificially give tithes and offerings in symbolic recognition of God’s ownership. “God gave Him to the world, and He graciously takes the gifts entrusted to His human agents for the advancement of His work in the world” (*Counsels on Stewardship*, 198).

Knowing that God sent His son as a ransom for many, what is your response today? The mission is local as well as global! Fund the mission to finish the Work!

November 19, 2016

Local Church Budget

There is a song that combines a simple tune with a timeless truth. The listener can picture Adam in the Garden of Eden discovering the functions of his hands, his heart, and his voice. The song concludes each stanza with this sentence: “my hand/heart/voice is a gift from God to me” (Elly and Steve Kupferschmid, *I Can Love: A Song of Stewardship and Thanksgiving*, 1989).

God not only gave Adam and Eve a phenomenal body, but also a purpose: to rule over creation (Gen. 1:26, 28, NIV). God entrusted the newly created world to His crown of creation man and woman. As good managers, they were to enjoy, as the song suggests, but also to benefit from it tangibly.

After one realizes how good, generous, and merciful God is, “what can I do to thank him?” the song rhetorically asks. The question is difficult. What can be given to One who has it all? The answer is simple: “I can love.” Love brings the believer to Jesus’s summary of the law: “Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind… and love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37–40).

Today, we have an opportunity to express our love to God and our neighbor as we return God’s tithes and our offerings. Our lives, time, and possessions belong to God. What a privilege it is to be able to thank Him through this act of Love.

Today’s offering will benefit our local church budget, which blesses us and the community in which we live.

**November 26, 2016**

**Alberta Advance**

It’s hard to imagine there was a time when Seventh-day Adventists believed the Gospel Commission extended no further than the Atlantic Ocean in the east and the Pacific Ocean in the west. They believed that going to every nation, kindred, tongue and people could be done right at home in Canada and the United States.

Fortunately, it wasn’t long before the church realized its mission was for the whole world and today we see tremendous progress. We’ve scattered literature like the leaves of autumn. We’ve sent thousands of missionaries. We’ve broadcast satellite TV programs. We’ve established work in over 200 countries.

Yet major parts of our Conference still remain virtually untouched by the good news about Jesus. Today we need a fresh and larger vision for the needs of the people in our Conference. Once again, like the early Adventists, we need to move outside our local congregations, our comfort zones and traditional thought patterns, and find new and fresh ways to reach the unreached in our Conference with hope.

The Alberta Conference supports outreach initiative like STORMCO (Service To Others Really Matter). They send teams of trained young people to work for, learn from and encourage individual communities. Sharing God’s love by building bridges to all people through an adventure in service to others. The Alberta Conference also supports the YES! Program. (Youth Empowered To Serve). They believe in active Youth and Young Adults, specifically in regards to Ministries of Compassion. This ministry helps to develop an active spirit of service. Another program is REACH1. With this program we encourage youth to attend an outreach event in their surrounding community and reach out to at least one person for Christ.

The Alberta Advance offering helps to sponsor each of these programs as well as many others. Please give generously to this offering.

December 3, 2016

Local Church Budget

Jacob went through a series of events that prompted his sudden departure from his father’s house. The Lord appeared to Jacob at night with a message of comfort, assurance, and glory. Jacob saw a stairwell with angels walking up and down and the Lord at the top. He called the place Bethel—house of God. Jacob acknowledged God as a giver of material blessings and promised to tithe as the Lord prospered him (Gen. 28).

The tithe acknowledges God as the owner of all, including the ninety percent that is left after tithe has been removed. Believers consecrate the total amount through the act of tithing. With such a perspective in mind, believers should spend, save, and give with reverence.

For instance, money spent for clothing, food, and entertainment should be done in a way that reflects its real owner. The believer should ask, “Am I honoring the Lord with these clothes? Are they modest, affordable, and of good quality? Is this food honoring the Holy Spirit as the One who lives within me? Am I being renewed with this choice of entertainment? Can I be a witness for Christ in this place?”

“The way we earn our money, the way we spend our money, and the attitude we have concerning our money determines whether we are dishonoring Him who gives us the power to obtain wealth or whether we, as faithful stewards, are investing in the Lord’s living causes and bearing fruitful testimony for Him” (Virginia Elly, *Stewardship: Witnessing for Christ*, 62).

Let us be good stewards by acknowledging God’s ownership through our tithes and offerings

December 10, 2016

Adventist Ministries of Compassion Canada

(formerly Canadian Inner City)

Canada is a land of great diversity. In small communities and in our large cities live people who experience great need. Their needs may be for food, for learning English as a second language, for help in healthful living, or for other concerns.

The Adventist Church can and should be a vital part of responding to the needs of people in our communities. Christ’s message of hope and wholeness leads us to serve those around us. In a very special sense, we can become His hands and feet for those in need.

Adventist Ministries of Compassion provides for those of all ages to find an opportunity to creatively minister to those around us. As we plan for the church’s activities throughout the year, let us think of opportunities to provide health instructions, special activities for older adults, support for nutrition awareness and many other creative ideas which may arise.

As we support the offering for Adventist Ministries of Compassion, we are following the example of Jesus and His care for those around Him. Please be generous in your support of today’s offering.

December 17, 2016

Local Church Budget

There is a stretch of water in the Pacific Ocean near Vancouver Island off the coast of Canada that is acoustically dead. It is known as “the zone of silence.” The depths of these waters hold many ships that, oblivious to the dangerous cliffs ahead, crashed and sank. No siren or bell can be heard in this area, so ships cannot be alerted to the imminent danger. The zone of silence is a death trap. Similarly, many professed Christians seem to be uncomfortable with the subject of money and giving. They are acoustically dead on this subject.

On his way to Jerusalem, Paul stopped by Ephesus and called the church elders for a final message. Acts 20:35 captures Paul’s words: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” It has been suggested that this was Paul’s own summary of Jesus’s teachings. Giving is central to the Christian message as opposed to selfishness and greed. Receiving without giving is self-defeating.

Happiness comes when believers are on the giving side instead of the receiving side, regardless of how much or little one has. Believers receive more by giving, since a giving life is a joyous life. It is only by giving that believers come to understand the fuller meaning of the Gospel—and find the fullest joy of life. “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). If believers are skeptics, they should try it sometime! (Charles M. Crowe, *Stewardship Sermons*, 121–130).

What a joy it is to exercise the gift of giving. Your giving today blesses this congregation and helps to fund the mission

December 24, 2016

Alberta Advance

Today is marking an end to another year. Whatever happened during the year, we know that God has been with us, and for that we are so thankful.

The offering today is for Alberta Advance. The Alberta Advance offering provides the opportunity to support priority initiatives within the Alberta Conference which includes assisting with church building programs.

Many of Alberta’s church congregations do not have a church facility and meet in rented locations. The lack of a permanent church home often limits the ability of these congregations to provide a full range of programs or provide a site from which to base outreach activities. The high cost of real estate and construction makes proceeding with a church facility development impossible without additional assistance.

The offering today is your opportunity to assist these congregations in furthering their mission. Please generously support Alberta Advance.

December 31, 2016

Canadian Evangelism

Adventists have a great love for the Bible. On its pages are stories which illustrate how to live. There are also great teachings about life and eternity. Most importantly, the Bible speaks of Jesus, His life and teachings. In Scripture, God shows just how much He cares for every person in the entire world.

In communities throughout Canada there are many who have never really thought about Christ’s message of hope and wholeness. The offering today is for them.

Just before He returned to heaven Jesus said: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:19, 20.

Evangelism takes many forms. Sometimes it means public events where God’s word is preached. At other times it may mean innovative methods to capture the imagination of people groups that we have not generally reached.

One thing is certain, Jesus is coming soon. Events throughout the world are frightening unless you know the story of God’s redeeming power. Evangelism is really about sharing the good news that God cares and that the story of life on this planet ends well for those who are willing to accept Him.

Today, please be generous as you give for this evangelism offering.

**THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERINGS 2016**

South American Division March 26\*

South Pacific Division June 25\*

East-Central Africa Division September 24\*

Inter-European Division December 31\*

**MISSION INVESTMENT PROJECTS 2016**

Atlantic Union Conference\*

Southwestern Union\*

**\* Special Project Development**