

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Ed Reid

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We have all heard folks exclaim, "The church is always talking about money!" or "The church is only interested in my money." Why so much talk about money? I believe that there are two good reasons. First, we all know that if each family was committed to faithful tithing and systematic offerings there would not be a need for offering appeals. And second, with the opening providences of God there are multiplying opportunities that demand a response from us. This second factor adds a little spice to the mix. Apparently, if there were no calls for funds - at least in the area of opening providences - that would mean that our overall goal of taking the gospel to the world was either completed or thwarted. Personally, I am glad that the work is advancing. And I am happy to be able to participate in this great endeavor.

Some have felt that if they are following a regular and systematic offering program that there would be no need to contribute to special appeals. However, there are times when even the most faithful are challenged to make a special effort beyond their regular giving for special needs. The building of the Tabernacle and later the Temple were such occasions in the Bible.

When commenting on the fundraising for these two houses of worship Ellen White states, "There are high and holy objects that require means; thus invested, it will yield to the giver more elevated and permanent enjoyment than if expended in personal gratification or selfishly hoarded for the greed of gain. When God calls for our treasure, whatever the amount may be, the willing response makes the gift a treasure in heaven that moth can not corrupt, nor fire consume, nor thieves break in and steal. The investment is safe. The money is placed in bags that have no holes." (*Review and Herald*, Nov. 15, 1906).

Today we have similar opportunities to do something great for God when special appeals are made for projects supported by the Sabbath School Mission offering, Global Mission projects, and local church needs. These special projects offer rich returns in satisfaction to the investor. In addition, the investment is added to our treasure in heaven!

How can we come up with the money to make sizeable contributions to special projects that we wish to support? Ellen White suggests at least two ways. The first is found in section thirteen of *Adventist Home* in the part that talks about savings as an important part of the family budget. She encourages us to save a portion of our income each pay period. Then this savings account should not be dipped into except when we have an emergency need or to make contributions to advance the cause of God.

The second suggestion that she makes applies primarily to older families - those whose children have already left the nest. For folks in this category who plan to remember the Lord's work in their estate planning she suggests, why not give the gift now so you can personally experience the joy of seeing the results of your contribution. Ellen White counsels, "If you want your means to go to the cause, appropriate it, or all that you do not really need for a support, while you live. A few of the brethren are doing this and enjoying the pleasure of being their own executors." (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 155).

Ask anyone who has become involved in a big way with a special project or has contributed of his own time and money in a short-term mission project how they now feel about their involvement. My personal testimony is that such a venture is very rewarding and even life-changing. It is following one of these special experiences that one can truly say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Some day soon all the special projects will be funded. All will have received the message of warning. God's people know that they will not be taking anything with them from earth to heaven besides their own characters and the individuals whom they have won to Christ. So the goal of the Christian is to be penniless when Jesus comes so that none of their resources will be wasted. Let's thank God for the privilege of working with Him on the last great advance.