



In harmony with God's instructions, the gospel work on earth has always been supported by systematic benevolence. Systematic means that it applies always and to everyone. It is also accompanied by divine promises.

The basic principle of the tithe is expressed in the Scriptures as follows: "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." Leviticus 27:31-33.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10.

God's constant blessings (since He is the Owner of all) have always given His people "power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day." Deuteronomy 8:18. That is why the book of Genesis records that Abraham gave the tithes to Melchizedec (Genesis 14:20) and Jacob promised to return a faithful tenth to the Lord. Genesis 28:22. The tenth portion was given to support those who served in the sanctuary for the people's spiritual well being and God's worship and glory.

But there were also physical necessities that were taken care of among God's people, and there are many other references from the time of Israel showing that these were met by giving a second tithe. Counting everything that the Israelites gave, "No less than one third of their income was devoted

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
REFORM MOVEMENT
AMERICAN UNION
INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

TITHES AND OFFERINGS	Date _____
Tithe	\$ _____
First Fruits	\$ _____
S.S. Offering	\$ _____
Local Church Expenses	\$ _____
Second Tithe*	\$ _____
Other (specify)	\$ _____
Other (specify)	\$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____
NAME _____	

*The consecration to God of a tithe of all increase, whether of the orchard and harvest field, the flocks and herds, or the labor of brain or hand, the devotion of a second tithe for the relief of the poor and other benevolent uses, tended to keep fresh before the people the truth of God's ownership of all, and of their opportunity to be channels of His blessings. It was a training adapted to kill out all narrowing selfishness, and to cultivate breadth and nobility of character."
—Education, p. 44.

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*Church buildings, schools, foreign missions, and other departments (Publishing, Multimedia, Education, Good Samaritan/Poor, Health, Family, Evangelism, Youth, Music).

to sacred and religious purposes." — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 395.

Did this make the people poor? No. Their prosperity in the physical and spiritual realms was dependent on their being generous with the things that God had supplied to them. It will be a blessing for everyone to take the time to study about these holy provisions in the Bible and Spirit of prophecy and to apply them in his or her own life and practice. "As our blessings and privileges are increased—above all, as we have before us the unparalleled sacrifice of the glorious Son of God—should not our gratitude find expression in more abundant gifts to extend to others the message

of salvation? The work of the gospel, as it widens, requires greater provision to sustain it than was called for anciently; and this makes the law of tithes and offerings of even more urgent necessity now than under the Hebrew economy." — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 528.

The American Union has decided to revise the tithe and offerings envelope to make the matters simpler and more easily understood. Here are a brief explanation and some examples.

At the left is a picture of the revised tithes and offerings envelope. There are fewer lines on it, and you will recognize the first four. The line for the Sabbath School Offering (S.S. Offering) can be used for the weekly offering as well as for the Special Sabbath School Offerings that are for projects managed by the General Conference.

But the fifth line—"Second Tithe*"—is different. The previous envelope had many more lines naming offerings, mainly departments. But on this revised envelope, the focus is on the second tithe. It encompasses the purposes and departments listed at the bottom of the envelope, shown by the asterisk (*). In essence, the second tithe is the sum total of all of one's offerings (and even expenses to attend conferences).

To fill out the tithes and offerings envelope, one may

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
REFORM MOVEMENT
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INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

TITHES AND OFFERINGS	Date <u>October 1, 2023</u>
① Tithe	\$ <u>100</u>
② First Fruits	\$ <u>10</u>
③ S.S. Offering	\$ <u>10</u>
④ Local Church Expenses	\$ <u>10</u>
⑤ Second Tithe*	\$ <u>100</u>
Other (specify)	\$ _____
Other (specify)	\$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ <u>230</u>
NAME <u>John Doe</u>	

*The consecration to God of a tithe of all increase, whether of the orchard and harvest field, the flocks and herds, or the labor of brain or hand, the devotion of a second tithe for the relief of the poor and other benevolent uses, tended to keep fresh before the people the truth of God's ownership of all, and of their opportunity to be channels of His blessings. It was a training adapted to kill out all narrowing selfishness, and to cultivate breadth and nobility of character."
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*Church buildings, schools, foreign missions, and other departments (Publishing, Multimedia, Education, Good Samaritan/Poor, Health, Family, Evangelism, Youth, Music).

Example 1

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH REFORM MOVEMENT AMERICAN UNION INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY	
TITHES AND OFFERINGS	
Date: October 1, 2023	
① Tithe	\$ 100
② First Fruits	\$ 10
③ S.S. Offering	\$ 10
④ Local Church Expenses	\$ 10
⑤ Second Tithe*	Family \$ 100
Other (specify)	\$
Other (specify)	\$
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ 230
NAME	Mazy Jane Doe

*The consecration to God of a tithe of all increase, whether of the orchard and harvest field, the flocks and herds, or the labor of brain or hand, the devotion of a second tithe for the relief of the poor and other benevolent uses, tended to keep fresh before the people the truth of God's ownership of all, and of their opportunity to be channels of His blessings. It was a training adapted to kill out all narrow selfishness, and to cultivate breadth and nobility of character."—Education, p. 44.

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Example 2

ed at the bottom and give the entire second tithe amount for one of the purposes listed, in which case he or she would write the name of that selection on the line in front of the amount. See Example 2. And, of course, the designation may be varied as much as one desires.

But the contributor may prefer to select more options from the list at the bottom

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH REFORM MOVEMENT AMERICAN UNION INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY	
TITHES AND OFFERINGS	
Date: October 1, 2023	
① Tithe	\$ 100
② First Fruits	\$ 10
③ S.S. Offering	\$ 10
④ Local Church Expenses	\$ 10
⑤ Second Tithe*	\$
Other (specify)	Church buildings \$ 60
Other (specify)	Family \$ 40
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ 230
NAME	John and Mazy Jane Doe

*The consecration to God of a tithe of all increase, whether of the orchard and harvest field, the flocks and herds, or the labor of brain or hand, the devotion of a second tithe for the relief of the poor and other benevolent uses, tended to keep fresh before the people the truth of God's ownership of all, and of their opportunity to be channels of His blessings. It was a training adapted to kill out all narrow selfishness, and to cultivate breadth and nobility of character."—Education, p. 44.

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Example 3

and enter them on one or two of the lines appearing as "Other (specify)." In that case, he or she would write in the amounts to be given for each choice. See Example 3.

It will be a great joy for each of us to share God's abundant blessings in our generous second tithes for specific purposes and plan our own giving according to what we are most interested in.

While it is still possible, let us join in this Biblical systematic benevolence to support the work of God quickly and generously as the last warning message is being sounded.

A supply of the revised tithes and offerings envelopes will be sent to each church in a few weeks, along with a revised Monthly Church Treasurer's Report form.

A final note: Malachi 3:10 says, "... Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Be-

lievers have experienced this by giving the first tithe of their increase for the support of the ministry.

Now, more so, those who are already giving the second tithe testify that the divine promise is even more applicable to it. They have experienced amazing success by partnering with God in contributing both the first and the second tithes. The financial matters that are so intricately connected with the physical and spiritual prosperity of their families, businesses, and churches have prospered far beyond what they imagined was possible. Now is the time. Maranatha!

Another option is for the giver to select from the list of possibilities printed at the bottom and give the entire second tithe amount for one of the purposes listed, in which case he or she would write the name of that selection on the line in front of the amount. See Example 2. And, of course, the designation may be varied as much as one desires.

But the contributor may prefer to select more options from the list at the bottom and enter them on one or two of the lines appearing as "Other (specify)." In that case, he or she would write in the amounts to be given for each choice. See Example 3.

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INSPIRED BY THE WORD

"In the Word of God is contained everything essential to the perfecting of the man of God. It is like a treasure house, full of valuable and precious stores; but we do not appreciate its riches, nor realize the necessity of equipping ourselves with the treasures of truth. We do not realize the great necessity of searching the Scriptures for ourselves....

"Given by inspiration of God,' able to make us wise unto salvation,' rendering the man of God 'perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,' the Book of books has the highest claims to our reverent attention. Superficial study cannot meet the claims it has upon us, nor furnish us with the benefit that is promised. We should seek to learn the full meaning of the words of truth, and to drink deep the spirit of the holy oracles.... To study one passage until its significance is clear to the mind, and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. We cannot obtain wisdom from the Word of God without giving earnest and prayerful attention to its study. It is true that some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood; but there are many others whose meaning cannot be seen at a glance, for the truth does not lie upon the surface. In order to understand the meaning of such passages, scripture must be compared with scripture, there must be careful research and prayerful reflection. Such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers precious veins of metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the Word of God as for hid treasure, find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the careless seeker." —*The Bible Echo*, October 1, 1892.

SOUND SLEEP

CRITICAL FOR HEALTH

Emil Bainhardt
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In Genesis, when God said "Let there be light," that light was not meant to last 24/7. However, with electricity, light bulbs, and high-tech devices, modern-day people are able to be active around the clock. Hence, fast-paced contemporary life may lead to sleep deprivation, which is in no way conducive to good health. In this article, we will examine some benefits of sound sleep, harmful effects of lack of sleep, and helpful ways to improve one's sleep.

Sleep is a physiological shift that occurs in our 24-hour circadian cycles. It's a period of time that allows the body to go through various cellular changes that contribute to health and healing in every organ system. Following are some of the benefits of sleep:

- Healing and repair tissues
- Removal of metabolic waste products
- Balancing hormones
- Improvement of memory and concentration
- Enhancing athletic performance
- Decreasing risk of type 2 diabetes
- Supporting a healthy immune system
- Strengthening the heart
- Decreasing inflammation
- Increasing energy

While the benefits of sleep are many, the results of sleep deprivation should not be overlooked, because they can be serious, affecting major organs and physiologi-

cal functions. Here are some effects of insufficient sleep:

- Increased risk of high blood pressure and heart failure
- Increased risk of type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance
- Tendency to overeat
- Impaired immune function
- Increased risk of anxiety, depression, and dementia
- Increased chance of motor vehicle accidents

In serious cases of insomnia, a medical doctor may need to be consulted to determine if there are any underlying causes. However, in most cases, sleep hygiene can be improved by taking a few simple steps.

- Shut off screens: Turn off the computer, iPhone, Android, TV, and any other electronic device at least three hours before going to bed. The blue light that these devices emit suppresses melatonin.
- Stop eating or drinking in plenty of time before bed: Not eating or drinking at least three hours before going to sleep will help with any blood sugar changes during the evening (and also prevent multiple trips to the bathroom at night).
- Go outside every day: Expose your skin to natural light daily, especially in the morning.
- Get blue-light blockers: If you must use electronic devices late in the afternoon or into the evening, buy blue-light-blocking glasses, which reduce the amount of blue light that reaches your brain so you can sleep better at night.
- Establish sleep rituals for yourself: Set an alarm to go to bed. Leave your work at the office; and when you get home, start getting into relaxation mode and then bedtime mode. Going to bed at the same time every night will help to reset and maintain your internal clock.
- Sleep in a dark, quiet room.
- Avoid vigorous exercise after dinner. A short, easy walk is sufficient.
- Take a warm bath containing 2 cups of Epsom salts and 10 drops of essential oil.
- Try herbs such as passionflower and valerian root.

A mattress and pillow should meet one's individual needs; therefore, it is not always productive to follow general recommendations. Some mattress companies offer a 30-day exchange option if the first mattress is found to be unsatisfactory. Typical-



ly, the returned mattress would need to be in its original plastic covering. One is well advised to research available options before making a purchase. The current trend in adjustable bed frames offers additional choices for optimal comfort, especially if one has orthopedic issues.

Sister Ellen G. White wrote over a hundred years ago—and modern experts agree—that going to bed between 9:30 and 10:00 p.m. is ideal. The hours before midnight are the most productive for a good night's rest. A short nap in the afternoon may also provide general health benefits.

While seven hours of sleep are considered minimum, some individuals may require as many as nine hours for optimal health.

If after trying these simple strategies, one is still struggling to get a good night's sleep, consult with your family physician to determine whether any medical issues may be interfering with your sleep.

"When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken." Proverbs 3:24-26.

References

Csilla Veress, N.D., L.A.c
Mark Hyman, M.D.
Allan Rechtschaffen
Ellen G. White

Disclaimer: This article is intended to provide helpful information on the subject of sleep. It is offered with the understanding that the author and the publisher are not engaged in rendering medical, health, or any other kind of personal professional services. If the reader requires personal medical assistance, a competent professional should be consulted.

On behalf of the American Union planning committee, we would like to announce the upcoming events that will take place in the remainder of this year, 2023. We strongly encourage everyone to pray earnestly about attending these events to receive spiritual blessings. Formal invitations will follow.

UPCOMING EVENTS

American Union Workers' Seminar

"THE BOOK OF MALACHI"

October 16-26, 2023

Norman College
Norman Park, Georgia

American Union Conference

"BEHOLD THE MAN" (John 19:4)

December 21-24, 2023

Norman College
Norman Park, Georgia

For information:

Pastor Idel Suarez, Jr. 813-310-9350
Pastor Larry Watts 916-834-2195

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SIMPLE, UNADORNED, OLD-FASHIONED HONESTY



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Cameron Park, California

One need not read many newspaper and magazine articles and editorials to come across numerous evidences of the moral decay that is infecting our society. Every gamut has ample coverage, from students cheating on school tests, husbands and wives being unfaithful to each other, and taxpayers being untruthful on their income tax return, to union featherbedding and corruption in the highest circles of business and government. “A commentary on the times is that the noun ‘honesty’ now is preceded by the adjective ‘old-fashioned.’” —*Modern Times*.

Though lacking in glamor (its very badge being simplicity), honesty is still a virtue that is indispensable to the formation of true Christian character. America’s first President, George Washington, considered the possession of the character of an honest man the most enviable of all titles. —*The New Speaker’s Sourcebook*, p. 207. In his *Essay on Man*, Alexander Pope wrote, “An honest man’s the noblest work of God.”

Ever since man first fell into sin, his carnal nature has been at enmity with God. Selfishness, greed, and covetousness breed dishonesty and are the very antitheses to the living, generous, righteous attributes of God’s character. The Bible is very direct in telling how the Most High God looks upon cheating. It is something hateful to Him. “Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and a just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have:... For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.” “A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is His delight.” Deuteronomy 25:13-16; Proverbs 11:1.

Perhaps one may rationalize that the above references are old-fashioned and therefore not applicable today. None of us uses those crude, primitive means of weighing and measuring anymore; and besides, everything is standardized—we are even converting to the metric system. Furthermore, many items come prepackaged, and there are government agencies that endeavor to assure us of honest weights and measures. Yet, as in all the inspired injunctions, the principle of the matter remains the same today. The law of God, the transcript of His nature and character, demands that we live honestly. Am I implying, then, that we, church-going Christians, are possibly dishonest? Let us remind ourselves that honesty should be the ruling principle in every detail of life. Sister Ellen G. White wrote in 1879: “I am pained to make the statement that there is an alarming lack of honesty even among Sabbathkeepers.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 310. Let each one examine himself prayerfully and answer the question for himself.

To be honest with others and with God, one must first be fully honest with himself. Being honest with yourself involves knowing yourself. Are you really what you pretend to be? Are you sincere about your goals in life and your efforts to attain them; or are you deceiving yourself into thinking all is well, when in reality you are straddling the fence that separates the worldly ambitious from the heaven-bound?

“The history of Joseph and Daniel is an illustration of what He [God] will do for those who yield themselves to Him and with the whole heart seek to accomplish His purpose.

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.

“But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature—the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man.” —Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 57.

And so, honesty with oneself is essential for honesty with others and with God, for the golden rule is the true rule of honesty: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Matthew 7:12. If we love others as ourselves, we will put ourselves in their places, identify ourselves with them, and then do to them as we would wish them to deal with us. In order to accomplish this, we need the converting power of God to enter our hearts so there will be no guile found in our lips.

“Men are wanted whose sense of justice, even in the smallest matters, will not allow them to make an entry of their time that is not minute and correct—men who will realize that they are handling means that belong to God, and who would not unjustly appropriate one cent to their own use; men who will be just as faithful and exact, careful and diligent, in their labor, in the absence of their employer as in his presence, proving by their faithfulness that they are not merely men-pleasers, eyeservants, but are conscientious, faithful, true workmen, doing right, not for human praise, but because they love and choose the right from a high sense of their obligation to God.” —Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 153.

Mothers and fathers especially need to realize the great importance of following the Lord’s guidance in being models of truthfulness to their children. Sometimes the parents only preach honesty but do not practice it themselves.

Above all, as we realize our dependence upon God, we will feel the necessity of being honest with Him, from whom come all the blessings of life. We will be faithful in our tithes and cheerful givers of offerings.

Every year, April comes around as the month for filing one’s income tax return. It is a kind of national “honesty test.” I hope you plan all year to pass this test by turning in an honest report, and that you are a true Christian, following the apostle Paul’s counsel: “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” Colossians 3:23, 24.