

Free Will Tithing

(Giving Back to God)

THE CHURCH OF
Jesus
Christ

Submitted April 2010 by:

General Church Executive Committee and
General Church Finance Committee

Reviewed and Approved Sept. 2011 by:

The Church Presidency

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Agenda

- Purpose
- Background
- Scriptural Support

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Purpose

- Having moved from a Fixed Donation Amount to Percentage Free Will Giving, this material reviews the reasoning and support for adopting Free Will Tithing and the importance of educating our ministry and membership regarding our responsibility of giving back to God.

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Purpose – continued

- This material was developed to demonstrate that Giving Back to God is our reasonable duty.
- Despite the fact, that we have been hesitant to teach the concept of tithing, being obedient to His teachings and commandments reaps the blessings of the Lord, for the Church and, in our personal lives.

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Background

- Although our domestic membership and donations have been relatively flat over the recent years, our membership donates generously for projects.

i.e. WCC building project, IMOC specific missionary needs, GLUC / GMBA special projects, Book of Mormon printing projects, church buildings in foreign countries, etc.

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- **Fact:** In a recent year, the General Church received \$651,116 (45% of total donations)
- **Fact:** This calculates to approximately \$1,500,000 in total donations to the Church (local, regional & general – but not special donations)

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- **Fact:** Domestic membership in this recent year was approximately 2,500
- **Fact:** This equates to an average donation of \$600 per YEAR per MEMBER or approximately \$50 per MONTH

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- If we were to assume that the average annual income per member was \$20,000, then the amount donated to the Church is approximately 3.0% of total income.

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- If all of our domestic members donated 10% of an estimated \$20,000 annual income, donations would equal \$5,000,000 (compared to the current \$1,500,000)

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Scriptural Support

- *Tithing originated before the law.*

The first mention of tithing in the scripture is when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek

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- And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth ... And he gave him tithes of all.

(Gen. 14:18-20)

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- Alma also spoke of Abraham's obedience to God's will regarding tithing. (Alma 13: 14-15)
- Jacob knew that God provided all good gifts and he had a duty to give back to the Lord. (Gen. 28: 20-22)

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- *Malachi was also clear on the subject...*
- Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings... 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 3:8-10)

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- ***“Why follow something from the Law of Moses? Shouldn't we look to the New Testament for guidance?”***
- Jesus said in Matt. 23:23 (& Luke 11:42):
Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: **these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**

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- 2 Cor. 9:6-7: But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

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- *If tithing is not specifically noted in the New Testament, should it be considered today?*
- The words of Malachi in the Book of Mormon answer this question because they were so important that Jesus commanded Nephi to rewrite them.

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- 3 Nephi Ch. 24 records the commandment of Jesus to write the words of the prophet Malachi, quoting the entire 3rd chapter. This chapter challenges us to consider why Christ would specifically command this to be written and retained in the Book of Mormon if it was not important for us today. Its presence reflects the need to reinforce the concept of tithing, not under the law, but through our individual desire to give back to God freely.

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- *What happens to those who give?*
– *they are blessed.* (Proverbs 3:9-10)
- Honour the Lord with thy substance,
and with the firstfruits of all thine
increase: So shall thy barns be filled
with plenty, and thy presses shall burst
out with new wine.

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- *Let us remember, in our humble and feeble way, that Giving Back to God of our tithes and offerings, is truly the least we can do.*
- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. (James 1: 17-18)

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- For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind? (Mosiah 4:19)

Additional scripture references:

And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give. And now, if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are condemned; and your condemnation is just for ye covet that which ye have not received. (Mosiah 4:24-25)

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And He called unto him His disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living. (Mark 12:41-44)

Comments:

‘Giving back to God’ is considered our reasonable duty since He owns everything we have and it all belongs to Him. We must keep in perspective that EVERYTHING we have, belongs to the Lord.... We keep 90% and He asks that we return back to Him, 10%.

It was noted, that one way to reach the 10% level is to start with a target in the single digits and then work your way up to 10% over a period of years.