

## October 7, 2017 – Local Church Budget

A father wanted to teach his pre-school son the value of work and money, so he would have his youngster perform simple tasks and then pay him a nickel or a dime. One day, after the father emptied the contents of his pocket on the table, his son inquired about the relationship between the bills and coins. “If I get enough coins, can I have a bill?” he inquired. Proud of his son’s sudden interest in math, his father informed him that either 20 nickels or ten dimes would make one dollar. The following week the son sat at the table in front of his father and displayed all his coins. “Can I have one dollar?” he asked. Proudly, the man handed over a dollar bill. However, the boy began to gather the dimes. The father quickly said, “Son, you don’t get to have both, the dimes *and* the bill.” The little boy broke out in wailing, declaring the unfairness of the situation.

(John and Sylvia Ronswalle, *At Ease: Discussing Money and Values in Small Groups*. (Downers Grove, IL: The Alban Institute, 1994), 45, 46.)

This boy learned a lesson that many adults struggle to grasp. Credit cards, “90 days same as cash,” and lines of credit are examples of acquiring things artificially. When the money is spent, it is gone; but people use credit to artificially feel like they saved the bills *and* the coins.

However, God’s math defies logic. The Lord says, “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” (Malachi 3:10). God can do more with less. Let us partner with the Lord today to meet our local church needs according to His math.

## October 14 – Voice of Prophecy / La Voz de la Esperanza (World Budget)

The radio and TV broadcasts of the *Voice of Prophecy* and *La Voz de la Esperanza* (for the Spanish-speaking population) reach millions of people each year with the Gospel. But how this is accomplished is changing in exciting ways!

For instance, Shawn Boonstra’s new Bible-based weekly program, *Disclosure*, is tackling current issues in a way that sparks curiosity and conversation. Also, an increasing emphasis on programming is readily available on personal electronic devices. The recent four-part Shadow Empire event about the life of Constantine was part of VOP Local. This initiative provides churches with programming, tools, training, and resources to help reach friends and neighbors with the Gospel.

The *Voice of Prophecy* also operates the largest Bible correspondence school in the denomination. The Discover Bible School has affiliate schools across North America and in more than 120 countries, with lessons offered in more than 80 languages and dialects. Other exciting ministry projects include a special church-building project in the Arctic, as well as a rehabilitation home in India, where young girls rescued from human trafficking are given a new life and hope in Jesus.

Your offering today will support the ministries of the *Voice of Prophecy* and *La Voz de la Esperanza*. Thanks to your support, millions of people will be introduced to a loving Savior, and lives will be transformed.

## October 21, 2017 – Local Church Budget

A clerk at the register of a convenience store witnessed a heartwarming situation between two little girls. The girls wanted to buy candy. Each one had her selection and was ready to pay for it. The first little girl put the candy on the counter and then proceeded to count the coins after the clerk announced the amount. She counted once, and then again. Unfortunately, the coins did not match the required amount needed to complete the purchase.

The second little girl, who was just behind her in line, offered the first little girl all her coins. When the clerk got the coins, and completed the sale, she returned the change to the first little girl, who in turn gave it to the second little girl. Now it was the turn of the second little girl to purchase her candy. The same routine was repeated with the same results. The second little girl counted out her coins twice, only to find that she was short. When the clerk figured out what was happening, she said, “I’m buying this one for you.” Loving others can transform all those around us.

(John and Sylvia Ronsvalle, *At Ease: Discussing Money and Values in Small Groups*. (Downers Grove, IL: The Alban Institute, 1994), 60.)

In the simple pure actions of one girl, we can see the reflection of the Gospel. God loved the world so much that He gave.... His giving has displayed a worldwide, unending movement that for more than two thousand years has only become bigger.

May God’s generosity spark in every believer’s heart the spirit needed to not only finish God’s work globally, but also locally, as we collect offerings today for our own local church budget along with returning tithes to God’s purpose.

## October 28 – Combined Youth Ministries (Conference Advance)

It was a typical summer morning. It had been a busy week, so putting gas in the car was put off for a few days. But this particular morning the car needed gas—or else! So, John asked his wife to follow him in her car to the nearest gas station.

Something else had been bothering John, though. He had decided to complete a Master in Divinity degree so he could be a full-time pastor. John knew that going into debt was not an option. If the Lord wanted John in full-time church ministry, He would have to make it very clear.

Two things happened almost simultaneously. A few miles from their residence, a man was exiting an intersection, but didn’t stop to yield to the oncoming traffic. He collided with John’s car on the passenger’s side. It was not a big accident, but it certainly changed John’s day—and life! It turned out that the insurance company totaled John’s vehicle, giving him enough money to pay for school that summer while still able to keep the car. John never fixed the side door. It was a visible testimony of God’s provision.

The second miracle was that John, within days of this accident, received a job offer. This job came with a raise and summers off. The miracle happened! John received the money and the time off to pursue God’s calling in his life.

Our inability is God’s opportunity! May we choose to trust God in every circumstance of life. For He is able to change situations, provide resources, and even allow accidents to happen so His purposes become true for your life, your family, our congregation, and our local conference.