

Readings & *Stewpot* posted on: [www.imsda.org/resources](http://www.imsda.org/resources)

## February 3, 2018 – Local Church Budget

**Attributed value.** One of the churches in the Berrien Springs area was planning a mission trip to the Dominican Republic. About three days before they were to leave, the organizer of the trip, a Spanish pastor in the area, called another pastor and said that something important had come up. He was not going to be able to go as their translator, and would he consider going in his place? This former missionary, who knew Spanish well, said that he would go.

Just three days to pack! As he was preparing his suitcase and thinking about the destination, he remembered a beaten-up old baseball glove that was taking up space in a closet. Baseball is very much in the blood of Dominican boys, and a fortunate few find it to be a ticket to residence in the United States and maybe even to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

During his time there, the pastor prayed and watched for just the right young man to appear. And, sure enough, a 14-year-old caught his eye. He had been extremely helpful at the construction site every day without fail. On the last day of the project, the pastor called him over and presented him with that baseball glove. The boy was thrilled! To him it was worth a million bucks, while for the pastor it was just a throw-away item from the closet.

Worth and value are attributed. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. As you consider your monetary resources, how much are they worth in the light of eternity?

## February 10 – World Budget (Adventist Television Ministries)

**Ignoring the signs.** The town of Ringgold, Georgia, with a population of 3,700, is located near Chattanooga, Tennessee, and sits just about 10 miles from the campus of Southern Adventist University. One of the distinguishing features of this historic place is its old railroad depot at the south end of town, and the underpass next to it on highway US 41. Before the construction of Interstate 75, US 41 was the only road through the area on the way to Dalton, Calhoun, Atlanta, and points south.

The problem was, and is, that the underpass has very low clearance—only 11 feet, 7 inches. Large vehicles, such as semis, cannot pass through. There are warning signs everywhere regarding the detour around it: bright yellow signs, flashing lights, dangling objects, etc. Invariably, two or three times a year a truck driver will ignore or not notice the signage and plow into the bridge. And the result is a heavily damaged truck, a fine of \$10,000, and a blocked roadway for several hours while the mess is being cleaned up!

Our Adventist Television Ministries—It Is Written, Breath of Life, and Faith for Today—do a wonderful job of broadcasting the signs to a largely unwarned world, and they deserve our faithful support. Please uphold these ministries in your prayers, and plan to give a generous offering today.

## February 17, 2018 – Local Church Budget

***Yes, your church has a budget! But the question now comes, “Do you and I have a budget?”***

It is a matter of great personal benefit to be careful about our finances, and a budget can be very helpful in making that happen. If you have not yet discovered this principle, perhaps a pastor or other financial counselor can help. We know that God is interested in our personal prosperity, and has counseled us in Scripture to that effect.

Was Jesus careful about such matters? The Desire of Ages reports to us as follows: “They [Peter and John] saw the shroud and the napkin, but they did not find their Lord.... The grave clothes were not thrown heedlessly aside, but carefully folded, each in a place by itself.... It was Christ Himself who had placed those grave clothes with such care” (p. 789).

If Jesus was careful about even His grave clothes, then we imagine that that carried over into the rest of His life, including being a careful worker in His father’s carpentry shop.

Whether it’s our finances, possessions, relationships, health, or time, let’s be faithful stewards in all that we do. And God will bless. He always does!

## February 24 – Combined Youth Ministries (Conference Advance)

***The new TV.*** One evening during a round of visitation, a pastor decided to call upon one of his church families. As they invited him in, he could tell that this was probably not a good time for quiet discussions of spiritual matters. It was in the early days of high definition, large-screen TVs, and they were gathered around their expensive new set and glued to a program.

The pastor was inwardly very concerned and disappointed. As a member of the church school finance committee, he knew that they were thousands of dollars behind in their tuition payments. The committee had carried them along for a few years, going on their frequent promises to pay.

Fortunately, sad stories like this are few. We can take courage in the fact that Jesus died to set us free, including the blessing of carefulness in our personal finance. There is no feeling like freedom from debt. And achieving that is possible with God’s help.

Today we have the privilege of assisting our local conference with its larger projects that benefit us all. Funds are always needed for continued support of education, camp building projects, conference youth ministry, and so forth. Thank you for your interest and help.