

May 21, 2022. Local Church Budget

Demonstrate Self Denial

Appeal: 1 John 3:16

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”

We worship God with our resources because of His sacrificial love. Jesus left heaven, and He embraced the plight of fallen humanity. He accomplished his mission against fearful odds and dire resistance. Finally, He offered it all, His own life. This is how He demonstrated love. As God’s representatives, a sacrificial spirit is part of our true identity. That was the spirit demonstrated by our church’s pioneers, and J.N. Andrews was a leading figure among them.

John Andrews was a widow with two children when he accepted a call to go to Europe as the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionary. He accepted the call without knowing what his specific salary would be. They agreed to send him money from time to time, but this was not done as regularly as needed. For him to publish tracts, pamphlets, and the French periodical “Les Signes des Temps” he often had to use his own funds, sometimes going without food and other necessities. He contracted pneumonia in 1877, and after the examination, the physician commented: “This man is almost starved to death!” One year later, his daughter contracted tuberculosis. Andrews brought his daughter home to Battle Creek and she was treated by Dr. J. H. Kellogg, but she sadly passed away. The committed missionary nevertheless returned to Europe to continue his groundbreaking work until he died of tuberculosis at the age of 54.

We are living in a time where money and other resources are hard to find. Waiting for surplus or leftover resources to support the mission could be a pious wish. In this context, these words of Ellen White are most relevant: “Those who profess to be one with Christ and indulge their selfish desires for rich and expensive clothing, furniture, and food, are Christians only in name. To be a Christian is to be Christlike.” (Review & Herald, Oct. 13, 1896). This week, may our tithe and regular offerings reflect a spirit of self-denial, the Spirit of Christ.

Prayer: Lord, we praise You for consenting to the greatest of all sacrifices to save us. Help us demonstrate the same sacrificial spirit in our daily lives, including how we use our resources.