

## Union Global Partnership

# Charity is our Luxury

They were an anomaly to my young, ambitious, profit-driven mind—a husband-and-wife team who ran their businesses for God.

Over the years, I studied their financial reports and even helped to structure their network of companies, trusts, and foundations to maximise gifts to charities and ministries. The process allowed me to uncover their deepest values, firmly rooted in 2 Corinthians 8:9, and challenge my heart's motivations.

They came from an era when wealthy Christians didn't flaunt their blessings. They believed that every cent they owned was God's and was reserved solely for His glory, never their own.

They could have lived a luxurious lifestyle, but lived frugally, yet comfortably, on far less than the average household income. They made any evidence of their wealth almost invisible.

On observing the husband making yet another unnecessarily frugal decision, when the selection of the upgraded option could have made their life much more comfortable, I asked the question, "Dad, why don't you and Mum spend more on yourselves? Why not enjoy more of life's luxuries?"

Two decades later, his simple yet life-changing answer is still ringing in my ears, "Charity is our luxury."

**Appeal:** It's now time to return God's tithe and give the Promise offerings, which we are encouraged to pre-plan and set aside as a percentage of our income this week. Let's each prayerfully consider what luxuries we enjoy—large or small—and make a decision to sacrifice some or all of them for the luxury of growing the kingdom of heaven. Thank you for your faithfulness.

## Local Church Budget

# Giving Credit

Oswald Chambers wrote a book titled, 'My Utmost for His Highest.' It has been described as "The most beloved devotional of all time." Chambers' incredible ability to cut to the very heart of Christian living is almost unmatched.

One such example is this insightful statement about our talents and gifts: "We have the idea that we can dedicate our gifts to God. However, you cannot dedicate what is not yours."

It's so easy to think that our gifts, our money, and all that we have are ours, and to then accept any profit, praise, or applause that might come with it, but that's not God's way.

On page 68 of *Prophets & Kings*, Ellen G. White wrote, "Raised to a pinnacle of greatness and surrounded with the gifts of fortune, Solomon became dizzy, lost his balance, and fell. ... Thus it was that the temple of Jehovah came to be known throughout the nations as "Solomon's temple." The human agent had taken to himself the glory that belonged to the One "higher than the highest" (Ecclesiastes 5:8). ... Man cannot show greater weakness than by allowing men to ascribe to him the honour for gifts that are Heaven-bestowed."

Let's find rest and peace today in the joy of giving full credit where it is always due—to God our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.

**Appeal:** As you return God's tithe and give your Promise offerings today, say a prayer to God to thank Him for giving you your talents, gifts, and money, and ask Him to guide you as you seek to be a faithful steward of it all.