

**December 21, 2019**

### **Local Church Budget**

***The Christmas tree.*** Pastor James Hoffer reports: Several years ago, when I was pastoring a church in Michigan, I re-baptized a godly lady who in earlier years had been a faithful member but had fallen away. All went well until Christmas rolled around, and she learned that the decorating committee was going to place a Christmas tree in the sanctuary. She strongly objected and said she would not be returning to church until January. Sure enough, when January came she was back on a regular basis—until the following December! But we respected her opinion. We certainly don't have to think alike on every issue.

Does Ellen White say anything about this? Yes, she does: “God would be well pleased if on Christmas each church would have a Christmas tree on which shall be hung offerings, great and small, for these houses of worship. Letters of inquiry have come to us asking, Shall we have a Christmas tree? Will it not be like the world? We answer, You can make it like the world if you have a disposition to do so, or you can make it as unlike the world as possible. There is no particular sin in selecting a fragrant evergreen and placing it in our churches, but the sin lies in the motive which prompts to action and the use which is made of the gifts placed upon the tree”—Adventist Home, p. 482.

Whether or not we have a Christmas tree in our church, let us bring our special gifts to Jesus today.