

## Ed Smith: The Man Who Couldn't Afford to Tithe

- An article by Herbert W Armstrong

It was late in 1933 — the very depth of the great depression. Ed Smith was a well-driller by profession, but nobody seemed able to afford to have wells drilled.

Ed and his wife, Emma, attended services I was then holding in a one-room country schoolhouse twelve miles west of Eugene, Oregon. Ed made no profession of Christianity until later. But he attended services and went up and down the countryside discussing Bible doctrines with his professing Christian neighbors.

"You've got to pay tithes and obey God," he insisted. "The Bible says so. It's PLAIN!"

One of his neighbors became irritated.

"Look here, Ed," the neighbor exploded, "why do you come around here trying to talk me into these things, when you don't obey the Bible or pay tithes yourself?"

"Because," came Ed's quick and ready answer, "I don't profess to be a Christian, and you do. Besides," he added, "I can't afford to tithe, anyway."

### Thousands Like Him

There are thousands who, like Ed Smith, reason in their own minds that they can't afford to tithe, even though, like Ed Smith, they realize the Bible commands it.

I heard about the above conversation and preached a sermon on the question of whether the unconverted should obey the Ten Commandments and pay tithes, or whether, as Ed had reasoned, these things were only for Christians. I pointed out that God's Law was put in motion for man's good. It is the WAY of life that brings peace, happiness, prosperity; the full, abundant, interesting life; success, joy here and now, as well as eternal life through Christ for the saved.

I showed that it PAYS and is the only sensible way of life, entirely apart from the matter of salvation — and that he who sins little shall be punished with few stripes, but he who sins much, with many stripes (Luke 12:47-48). I pointed out God's promises to prosper the tithe-payer, and that this is a definite law God has set in motion, which operates inexorably and automatically, on the just and the unjust alike.

Ed began to obey the Bible. At the very next service (we were holding services at this little schoolhouse three times a week, and three other nights a week in a hall in downtown Eugene at the time), Mrs. Smith smilingly handed me a one-dollar bill.

"That's Ed's first tithe," she said triumphantly. "We are now down to \$10, and Ed decided to start tithing with what we have on hand."

The very next service she came to me with another happy smile.

"Here's a five-dollar bill," she said. "The very next day after Ed gave God's Work a tenth of all he had, a customer who had owed him \$50 for a year came and paid up. So here's the tithe of that \$50. After paying the total \$6 tithe, we now have \$54 on hand instead of the \$10 we had the other day."

It was beginning to pay — but only beginning. By the next service, as I remember it, Ed had received his first order in one or two years to drill a new well, for which he received cash payment. Before he finished that job, another one was contracted. Soon he had three or four jobs coming in at once and was forced to begin employing men to work for him.

Ed Smith was only one of many I have known who learned by experience that one cannot afford not to pay God the tithe that belongs to Him! I remember Ed Smith did encounter some troubles of a different nature later, when his wife and son were sent to the state tuberculosis hospital, and he finally broke down in real repentance, accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour. He came to me, according to the command of James 5:14, and both his wife and son were completely healed and returned home.

This is a true story, and the name is not fictitious. Ed Smith died several years ago, but I'm happy to remember these incidents in his life, in the hope that they may start many others on the right and profitable, as well as the Christian, way of life.

Why did God ordain tithing? Was it to place increased burden and taxation upon us? Let us not misunderstand God's love and wisdom!

It isn't that God really needs your first tenth. He could have established some different system for carrying on His Work. But to have done so would have robbed us of the blessing that flows back to us if we are faithful in tithes and offerings!

The tither is invariably a prosperous man. I do not mean necessarily wealthy — but one whose actual needs are always supplied. Tithers, if faithful and obedient to the Eternal, are not often found in want. "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account" (Philippians 4:17). God promises that His children will always have something to give (Deuteronomy 16:16-17). It is only when they withhold and misappropriate tithes and offerings that He fails to prosper them. For through John He tells us, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health," (3 John 1:2).

"Honour the Lord [Eternal] with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10). Try it! "Prove me now herewith," challenges the Eternal to us, in a prophecy for our day (Malachi 3:10), "if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it" — financial blessings! Are you behind financially? In debt? Your unfaithfulness in tithing and offerings may be the reason!

### Tithing While in Debt

Yet so many say: "I don't think it would be right for me to tithe while I'm in debt." Yes, it is right, and the other way is WRONG. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). God's

Word tells us what is right, and God tells us to pay to His Work the first fruits of all our income (Proverbs 3:9-10). Regarding our material and financial needs, even debts, God says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

The tithe is the debt that you owe God. This debt is first in time and principle. Pay your debts to God, make Him your partner in your finances, and receive His blessing in temporal affairs. This will enable you to pay your debts, or to get a job, or to have your needs supplied more quickly than if you evade His debt.

Remember your ALL belongs to Him, not to you (Deuteronomy 10:14). You are in the position of a steward handling that which belongs to another. He is your silent partner, and the first tenth, in addition to offerings, is His share. The rest he gives freely to you. But if you appropriate for yourself His share, you are stealing, and robbing God (Malachi 3:8). Would you pay your debts with money another man had left in your trust? If a man working in a bank does that, we call it embezzlement!

The only sure way to know you have God as a partner, and that He is taking care of your interests, is to obey Him in tithing.

When God receives His portion of all your income, God becomes your partner, sharing in your profits. He causes His partners to prosper, so if you are in debt, take God into partnership first, and watch Him prosper you until finally you are out of debt!

Remember the debt you owe God comes FIRST.

#### Your Glorious Opportunity

Some will say, "I never tithed, and I know God never frowned on me, for I have the feeling in my heart that I am His child without having to tithe." God has blessed you according to how you have yielded to Him, according to the light He has revealed to you from His Word! While you have the light, WALK in it, lest darkness come upon you! (John 12:35-36). "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord" (2 Peter 3:18). See also Romans 11:22. If every professing Christian would accept this plain instruction from God, honoring Him instead of themselves with their

substance, the Work of the Eternal would go forth with such mighty power that the world would be shaken to its foundations!

Seek ye first the Kingdom, and your material needs shall be added. Try it! Take God at His Word! PROVE HIM! (Malachi 3:10). See how you begin to prosper! Be a faithful steward; make God your PARTNER! Receive His blessing! God's Work is waiting upon you!

We invite you to learn more about God's Principle of "Blessings Through Tithing", by reading our Bible Study: The Truth About Tithing (at [www.ong.us](http://www.ong.us)).

One Nation Under God Ministries

[www.onug.us](http://www.onug.us)

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Who was Herbert W. Armstrong?

Herbert W. Armstrong, born in 1892, was the founder and Pastor General of The Worldwide Church of God (WWCOG) until his death in 1986. God began to call him in the fall of 1926; he was baptized in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, which began in Oregon toward the end of 1933; God revealed through him, a great many Biblical doctrines, as taught by Jesus Christ and the First Century Church of God. These doctrinal Truths had become lost to most of the world through the centuries since; because men desired to follow other men, rather than their High Priest, Jesus Christ. From the founding of the Radio Church of God in 1934 until it became the Worldwide Church of God in 1968; the church, under Mr. Armstrong's leadership, taught hundreds of millions of people God's Eternal Truths and Gospel Plan - through radio, television, and printed literature. After his death and through the first half of the 1990's; his successors suddenly and un-expectantly, ceased to believe and ceased to teach, virtually every one of the doctrines revealed through Scripture to Mr. Armstrong. These new church leaders were also responsible for capturing and destroying both the corporate and visible church which God had built by Mr. Armstrong's hand (Acts 2:47). Ministers who desired

to remain "Sola Scriptura" (a Christ Follower's life is governed and corrected by Written Scripture alone: Matthew 4:4 / Luke 4:4 / Deuteronomy 8:3), left the WWCOG to pastor their own individual churches as Christ led them (Matthew 10:5-15). About twenty percent of the original WWCOG membership followed their pastors into various "splinter groups", hoping to preserve the Scriptural authority previously maintained, but now discarded by the new church; now named, "Grace Communion International" (or GCI, which officially became effective on April 3, 2009). GCI attempted to rationalize their departure from the practices of the First Century Church of God, and those of the former WWCOG, by stating on April 15, 2009: "After Armstrong's death in 1986, the church re-examined its doctrines and teachings. This process led to a complete reformation to Christian orthodoxy by the mid 1990's. The evangelical denomination is now a member of the National Association of Evangelicals with church president, Joseph Tkach, serving on its board."

Disillusioned, from having placed their trust in these human leaders rather than in Christ, and that their church was now embracing "mainstream Christianity" along with National Association of Evangelicals which "Christianizes" pagan rites (Matthew 7:13-14 / Deuteronomy 12:1-4, 28-32); eighty percent of the former WWCOG membership fell away completely, and left the Truth and the Sanctification of the Church of God (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5)! Most of these, sadly; have themselves also returned to the pagan forms of Christianity from which they had once been set free, or they worship God in seclusion, away from the necessary and unified fellowship they once had been Blessed with.

One Nation Under God Ministries (ONUG) rose up from this church rubble in 2008; as just a very small fold with a few Baptized brethren from the original Worldwide Church of God. Trusting not in human apostles to lead them in a singular global work, sanctioned by the world; but trusting instead on the very Words and Examples of Jesus Christ Himself, to lead His church in

the way that they should go (Matthew 28:18-20 / Mark 16:15-20). God does not change (Malachi 3:6 / Hebrews 13:8); nor does the manner of Worship which a Holy God will accept (John 4:22-24); so it is time for God's people to return to Him by the Example and Words of Jesus Christ (Malachi 3:7-12)!

One Nation Under God Ministries exists today, to preach Christ's Gospel to a fallen world before our LORD returns. We seek to gather as many scattered and lost sheep as Jesus permits, in these last days (Matthew 9:37-38 / Luke 10:1-12) to the Faith and Truth once delivered by Jesus Christ and The First Century Church of God; which was re-established by Mr. Armstrong in the early twentieth century, and is continued on today by the few faithful, but scattered folds of the Body of Christ – of which we are one (John 10:16 / Revelation 2:1-29, 3:1-22). In addition to preaching the Gospel of Christ, as a witness to the world, before the Triumphant Return of Jesus (Matthew 24:9-14, 4:23 / Mark 13:10 / Acts 17:31 / Romans 10:18 / Colossians 1:3-12); ONUG Ministries educates and prepares the Saints of God (1 Corinthians 3:1-3 / John 16:12 / Hebrews 5:12 / 1 Peter 2:2) for the offices they will hold upon the earth at His Return (Revelation 5:10, 20:4, 6)! We hope that you will join us on-line ([www.onug.us](http://www.onug.us)), or in person, and experience The Way Jesus came to show us! You and your children will be glad you did!

One Nation Under God Ministries is Preparing this world for The Return of Jesus Christ; One Bible Study At A Time! Join Them!  
[www.onug.us](http://www.onug.us) **JESUS IS LORD!!!**