

Ancient Church Fathers, Modern Leaders and Encyclopedia Quotes on the Subject of Tithing, Updated February 14, 2008

A survey of all the writings of the Early Church up to A.D. 600 (easy to do with computers) is silent about tithing in the Church being a necessity. In fact, it was the position of the great early Church Father Irenaeus that tithing was a legal obligation in the Law of Moses and therefore is no longer binding. He explains this in chapter XIII of book IV in "Irenaeus Against Heresies"...

Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202)

And for this reason did the Lord, instead of that [commandment], "Thou shalt not commit adultery," forbid even concupiscence; and instead of that which runs thus, "Thou shalt not kill," He prohibited anger; and instead of the law enjoining the giving of tithes, [He told us] to share all our possessions with the poor;

And again in chapter XVIII of book IV he again states...

And for this reason they (the Jews) had indeed the tithes of their goods consecrated to Him, but those who have received the liberty set aside all their possessions for the Lord's purposes, bestowing joyfully and freely not the less valuable portions of their property, since they have the hope of better things [hereafter]; as that poor widow acted who cast all her living into the treasury of God.

Tertullian –c. 150-220 (apology, XXXIX, 1-18)...

Our presidents are elders of proved worth, men who have attained this honor not for a price, but by character. Every man brings some modest coin once a month or whenever he wishes, and only if he is willing and able; it is a freewill offering. You might call them the trust-funds of piety; they are spent... on the support and burial of the poor.

Tertullian (c. 197, W 3.46) Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs (p.9)...

Though we have our treasure chest, it is not made up of purchase money, as of a religion that has its price. Rather, on the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation – but only if it is his pleasure and only if he is able. For there is no compulsion; all is voluntary.

Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church...

It is admitted universally that the payment of tithes or the tenths of possessions, for sacred purposes did not find a place within the Christian Church during the age covered by the apostles and their immediate successors.

The New Catholic Encyclopedia...

The early Church had no tithing system... it was not that no need of supporting the Church existed or was recognized, but rather that other means appeared to suffice.

John Wesley “On the Use of Money” (excerpt from a 1744 sermon)

...give all you can; or in other words give all you have to God. Do not stint yourself, like a Jew rather than a Christian, to this or that proportion. Render unto God not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God’s (be it more or less) by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith and all mankind, in such a manner that you may give a good account of your stewardship when ye can be no longer stewards; in such a manner as the oracles of God direct, both by general and particular precepts; in such a manner, that whatever ye do may be “a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God” [cf. Lev. 8:21], and that every act may be rewarded in that day when the Lord cometh with all his saints.

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association...

...the question as to whether to tithe from one’s net or gross income is not answered in Scripture, nor is the question of whether to give it all to the local church or to include other ministries. We feel that such decisions should be based on personal conviction... It (tithing) is not mentioned in the New Testament except where it is describing Old Testament practices or in the Gospels where Jesus is addressing people who were under the Old Testament law. Note Jesus’ comments to the Pharisees in Luke 11:42... A New Testament teaching on giving which may be helpful to you is found in 1 Corinthians 16:2: “On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.” This passage brings out four points: we should give individually, regularly, methodically, and proportionately. The matter of your giving is between you and God, and He always takes into account our circumstances. He knows when they are beyond our power to direct and control. The important thing is that we see giving as a privilege and not as a burden. It should not be out of a sense of duty, but rather out of love for the Lord and a desire to see His kingdom advanced. Second Corinthians 9:6-7 says: ‘Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.’ The deeper question, you see, is this: What has priority in our lives? Is Christ really first – or do we put ourselves and our own desires first? Make sure Christ is first in your life, and then ask Him to guide you. (Underlining Added for Emphasis)

Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth

The Old Testament is not our testament. The Old Testament represents an Old Covenant, which is one we are no longer obligated to keep. Therefore we can hardly begin by assuming that the Old Covenant should automatically be binding upon us. We have to assume, in fact, that none of its stipulations (laws) are binding upon us unless they are renewed in the New Covenant. That is, unless an Old Testament law is somehow restated or reinforced in the New Testament, it is no longer directly binding on God's people (cf. Rom. 6:14-15).

Walvoord & Zuck, The Bible Knowledge Commentary (p. 1585.)...

While not requiring a tithe of believers today, the New Testament does speak of God's blessing on those who give generously to the needs of the church and especially to those who labor in the Word.

Theologian, Dr. Russell Earl Kelly, Ph.D. (from book "Should The Church Teach Tithing" p.139-140)...

None of the three main hermeneutical approaches to theology today support tithing. First, the advocates of covenant theology divide the law into moral commandments, ceremonial statutes, and civil judgments. They, next, recognize, and dismiss, tithing as a ceremonial statute. Second, advocates of dispensational theology also divide the law into commandments, statutes, and judgments. However, they see it as an indivisible whole, dismiss the entire law, and start over again with God repeating his eternal moral principles in the New Covenant after Calvary... Advocates of a third approach to hermeneutics between covenant theology and dispensational theology also dismiss tithing because of its cultic non-moral usage.

Bruce Metzger, The Oxford Companion to the Bible...

The New Testament nowhere explicitly requires tithing to maintain a ministry or a place of assembly.

Nelson's Bible Dictionary (s.v. "tithe")...

In the New Testament the words tithe and tithing appear only eight times (Matt. 23:23, Luke 11:42, 18:12, Heb. 7:5-6, 8-9) All of these passages refer to Old Testament usage and to current Jewish practice. Nowhere does the New Testament expressly command Christians to tithe. However, as believers we are to be generous in sharing our material possessions with the poor and for the support of Christian ministry. Christ Himself is our model in giving. Giving is to be voluntary, willing, cheerful, and given in the light of our accountability to God. Giving should be systematic and by no means limited to a tithe of our incomes. We recognize that all we have is

from God. We are called to be faithful stewards of all our possessions (Rom. 14:12, 1Cor. 9:3-14, 16:1-3, 2Cor. 8-9).

John MacArthur, Jr., Commentary on Book of Romans 9-16 (p.233)

...Christians are not under obligation to give a specified amount to the work of their heavenly Father. In none of their forms do the tithe or other Old Testament levies apply to Christians.

John MacArthur – Thoughts On Tithing (excerpt from sermon preached at Grace Community Church in Panorama City, CA)...

Tithing, basically, is never, ever advocated in the New Testament; it is never taught in the New Testament – never!

New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia Online:..

In the Christian Church, as those who serve the altar should live by the altar (1 Cor., ix, 13), provision of some kind had necessarily to be made for the sacred ministers. In the beginning this was supplied by the spontaneous offerings of the faithful. In the course of time, however, as the Church expanded and various institutions arose, it became necessary to make laws which would insure the proper and permanent support of the clergy. The payment of tithes was adopted from the Old Law, and early writers speak of it as a divine ordinance and an obligation of conscience. The earliest positive legislation on the subject seems to be contained in the letter of the bishops assembled at Tours in 567 and the canons of the Council of Macon in 585. In course of time, we find the payment of tithes made obligatory by ecclesiastical enactments in all the countries of Christendom.

The Encyclopedia Americana reveals this about Christian tithing...

"It was not practiced in the early Christian church but gradually became common (in the Roman Catholic Church in western Europe) by the 6th Century. The Council of Tours in 567 and the second Council of Macon in 585 advocated tithing. Made obligatory by civil law in the Carolingian empire in 765 and in England in the 10th Century... The Reformation did not abolish tithing and the practice was continued in the Roman Catholic Church and in Protestant countries... (until it was) gradually replaced by other forms of taxation. The Roman Catholic Church still prescribes tithes in countries where they are sanctioned by law, and some Protestant bodies consider tithes obligatory."

The Encyclopedia Britannica points this out about tithing...

"The eastern Orthodox Churches never accepted the idea of tithes and Orthodox Church members have never paid them."

It is important to note that the split between the Roman Catholics and Orthodox occurred in the 6th Century. The Roman Catholics adopted tithing after the split which explains why the Orthodox have never tithed.

Dr. Roger Sapp from his book *The Children are Free*, page 88...

... this doctrine (of tithing) is pieced together from these various passages. Not a single passage in itself teaches what the Church practices today. Spiritualization of the Law is used to teach tithing. Reasoning that is not found in the Bible is used to justify Christian embracing a legalistic practice from the Old Testament. In more than 4000 years of recorded biblical history, there is not a single recorded example of tithing that is similar to what the Church practices today. We recommend that every Christian renounce this unscriptural practice and reject any lingering fear, guilt or condemnation! God's children have no debt to their Father to pay other than thanksgiving and praise. Their elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, has paid in full the debt. Christ will build His Church but only with the truth. He needs no help from a false doctrine that puts the Children of God under bondage and the curse of the Law. The children are free!

www.allnationsmin.org

www.freedomfromtithing.info