

Amazing Grace: Share It
The Grace Partnership
November 24, 2013

**PRELUDE – We Are
Worship – We Are / Your Love Never Fails
Feature – Big House**

Feature – Build Your Kingdom Here

Good morning everyone ... and hello to everyone who is watching online.

Wow, what a great song and a great way to start off the final message in this series! As you know if you've been here over the past several months, we've been talking about the issue of grace and we've tried to look at it from three angles.

First of all, I wanted to be sure that all of us – me included – had a clear understanding of what grace *is* so that we would simply *believe it*, because it's not easy to believe it. In fact, it's almost as hard to believe in grace – that God offers to completely and totally forgive all sin past, present and future and bring spiritually-dead sinners to new and eternal life in Christ in exchange *not* for our promise to try and clean up our act but for nothing more than our confession that we are indeed “sinners in need of a savior” and that Jesus is that savior; that he is Lord and that God literally raised Him from the dead following his death on the cross – it's almost as hard to believe in grace as it is to believe that Jesus *is* Lord and that God literally raised Him from the dead!

- It's hard to believe in grace because that's not how life works in the real world. (It's not even how we want it to work most of the time).
- It's hard to believe in grace because it's quite unfair to people who don't deserve it. (It's actually far better than fair).
- And it's hard to believe in grace because it's completely opposite of what most people have been taught about God or assumed about God or, quite frankly, have been deceived into believing about God by the “father of lies” and his demonic forces.

The second thing I wanted us to accomplish was to understand what it means to live as one who has been “graced”; what it means to live as a person who is right now and forevermore 100% righteous, holy and justified (literally, a “saint”) in the sight of God at the same time as we live out the rest of our days in the flesh as 100% “sinner.” There is not one thing we ever do that is not somehow tinged by our fallen and rebellious-against-God nature. So, we spent four weeks talking about how to deal with that.

And in this final part of the series we've looked at what it means *to share the grace we have received with others*. When you stand back and look at it from a distance, one of the most obvious themes of the story of God (which is one way to describe the Bible) is that *God never blesses or “graces” anyone simply for their own benefit*. He always does it with the intention that whatever He freely gives *to* us will then freely be passed on *by* us to others.

That's why we so often say around here that ...

- Blessed people bless
- Loved people love
- Forgiven people forgive

God gives us those things and we receive them, which then enables us and empowers us to *give* them to others. That's the reality in the Kingdom of God ... which explains why, in His final moments on Earth with his disciples, Jesus said to them:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
Matthew 28:18-20 (NET)

“I’m leaving,” Jesus was saying, “so you’re it. And as you go into the world around you, I want you to offer to others what I have given to you. I want you to teach others what I’ve taught you about how to live a life that is guided and directed by my grace and truth. I want you to be examples of what God’s grace can do in a person’s heart. I want you to be witnesses to the truth about my Father. I want you to help people see that while He is holy and righteous, He is also loving and gracious.”

And they did just that, first in Jerusalem, then in the surrounding villages and towns, and then throughout the rest of the Roman world.

Spreading the Good News

In fact, as we talked about last week, some people actually went to those distant places for the sole purpose of spreading the good news. They quit their jobs so that they could spend full-time sharing the grace and truth of Jesus and, just as importantly, establishing and developing little communities of believers, little families of faith, little outposts of grace – called *church* – who would also take up Jesus’ challenge to be his representatives (individually and collectively) in their community and beyond.

And it just snowballed. People would receive God’s saving grace in Jesus and become part of the family, the church, and they would turn around and share it with others who when they received it turned around and shared it with others who when they received it ... I think you see the point. That’s how the gospel spread. That’s how the church grew and expanded.

Now, obviously, much of what was happening in all of this was relational. However, a key element of that growth and expansion was that those who had *received* also *gave ... financially ...* to make it possible. The people who had *received* the gospel – the good news of God’s Kingdom of grace – became partners *financially* in *sharing* the gospel.

Nowhere is this more vividly illustrated than in the letter Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, which was the capital city in the province of Macedonia.

He wrote:

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. Philippians 1:3-5 (NLT)

These folks loved Paul, they loved Jesus, and loved their church and from the very beginning they gave ... *financially ...* so that the church’s ministry among them, its outreach through them and its spread beyond them could continue.

Now what’s fascinating about this particular group of people is that *they were poor even by first-century standards*. I don’t know if you’re aware of this or not but even the richest people back then would be towards the bottom rungs of the socio-economic ladder by which we measure wealth and prosperity today ... which means that these folks *would be* the bottom rung.

I know some of you are wondering “how do you know that, Rick? And how do you know that what Paul is talking about here is financial? He doesn’t mention money at all. He just says they’ve been his partners in the gospel. Maybe that meant they prayed for him or helped him in some other way.”

I’m sure they did.

But the reason I say it's primarily financial is because the Christians from Macedonia show up all over the New Testament. In fact, they are the catalyst behind the church expanding into Europe. Part of the story is in the book of Acts. And part of it comes through Paul's letters to other churches describing what they've done.

For example, when he writes to the church at Corinth, Paul says ...

Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.
2 Corinthians 8:1 (NIV)

And remember, Philippi is the capital of Macedonia, so Paul is talking about those folks he called his partners in the gospel.

"They've received God's grace" he said "and you won't believe how they turned around and shared it."

He wrote ...

In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.
2 Corinthians 8:2-3 (NIV)

These people were poor and struggling financially and yet because of the great joy God's grace produced in them, they gave financially help out another church that was also in need (which is what Paul goes on to describe in the verses that follow).

We also know that their partnership was financial because of what Paul writes to them a bit later in his letter to them.

As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once.
Philippians 4:15-16 (NLT)

And then Paul goes on to say thanks for *yet another gift* of financial assistance that he had just received from them. Clearly, they loved Paul, they loved Jesus, and they loved their church. And so they gave ... *financially*.

A Question to Considerⁱ

Now, the question I have for you this morning – well, actually, it's not really a question for all of you but for some of you. In fact, what I have to say for the rest of this message is really only meant *for those who say they love this church, North Heartland*. You love what you learn here, you love how we do what we do, you love what we stand for, you love what's happening in the lives of your children and teenagers, you love the people who God has brought into your life through this place, you love that we try to make sure God's grace and truth flow through everything we do.

If you *don't* love this church because, well, *you just don't love it* (and that's fine – NHCC isn't perfect and we know we're not the church for everyone – but you might want to find one that you *do love* for your own spiritual health) ... if you don't love this church because you just don't love it, then what I'm about to say really doesn't apply to you.

And, if you don't love this church because you're new either to Christianity in general or to this church in specific, I'm not really intending what I'm about to say to apply to you either ... although I do hope you will listen in so you can understand more about this "grace partnership" thing. But this is kind of like a first date and you shouldn't go where we're about to go on the first date. ☺

So, in case you missed it, I'm talking in the rest of this message to people who love their church. And that needs to be really

clear or this question I need to ask is going to be taken the wrong way. This is not a question you ask of people who don't love their church. This is not something you get into on the first date.

Here's the question:

What is your *plan* for financially supporting the church that you love?

What is your plan for participating in the "grace partnership" that enables the message of grace *you* have received to be shared with those who have not yet received it and ensures that the church's ministry among us, through us and beyond us will continue?

Now, the reason the question needs to be asked is simple. Most people who love their church *do not* have a plan to financially support it. I don't mean that they never put money in the basket when it goes by. Very few people who love their church will sit in services over and over and never financially contribute. What I mean by not having a plan is that you don't have a systematic approach to your giving.

- You don't have percentage of your income that you give.
- The amount you give is not in your budget.
- If you're not here (which even for people who love their church is one or two Sundays a month), nothing goes in the basket because you don't have an auto-draft set up or you haven't gone online to The City and set up a recurring donation.

Now, if there's a need or a crisis – if I come to you and say, "Hey, folks, we've got to take care of this or that" – you'll respond because you love this church. It's happened time and time again throughout the almost 20 years we've been in existence.

But let me ask you ... what do you call a father who says, "I love my kids, but I don't give them money or provide for them unless they beg me, unless they are down to one sock or something. The only time I'll chip in financially is if it gets really desperate." What do you call a father like that? You call him a bad dad.

So, what do you call a Christian who says, "I love my church; I love what it does for me and my family. But I don't support them financially unless it gets really desperate." What do you call them?

You call them an "average Christian" ... *because that's what most Christians do*. The average Christian doesn't have a plan to support the church they love.

And the average Christian, precisely because he or she has no plan, winds up giving about 2.3% of their annual income to their church.ⁱⁱ

Now, I have to confess to you that I have always thought that our church is way above average in everything. Maybe it's just "proud papa syndrome" (since I am the founding pastor) and you tend to look at your kids through rose-colored glasses compared to everyone else. Again, we have our faults, but there are things about this church and the people involved that are so far beyond what is normal (in a good way!) for most churches.

So, it kind of bothered me a couple of months ago when we did a survey and half of our regular attenders (most of whom I would think are regular precisely *because they love the church*) indicated that they do not financially support NHCC on a planned, systematic basis.

But it really bothered me when one of the stats wizards on our Advisory Council confirmed that discovery by analyzing the contributions from July of 2012 through June of this year.

He found that, of all the people who gave on at least a semi-regular basis in that time frame, over half contributed less than 2.3% of the median income of Platte County which is about \$43K.

And these things bothered me because they say, very clearly, that NHCC is “just average” ... *and I don't want you to settle for average in anything.* I don't want you to be average in your understanding of Christ and his grace. I don't want you to be average in your emotional and spiritual health. I don't want you to be average in your relationships with your family and friends and even your enemies. And I don't want you to be average in this either ... especially because *you love your church.*

Why You Don't Have a Plan

So, why is it that a person who loves a church doesn't have a plan? Andy Stanley, author and pastor of North Point Church in Atlanta says there are three reasons and I think he's right.

1. You haven't thought of it before.

It's just never occurred to you that, “oh, yeah, I should do that. After all, I have a plan for paying my cell phone bill. I have a plan for saving for my retirement. I have plan for how I'm going to go on vacation. And I really do love my church, and I want it to be as effective as possible in sharing the grace and truth of Jesus, so I should have plan for that, too.”

For some of you today, this is all you need to hear. You'll go out of here and come up with something that you follow faithfully.

But there's another reason someone who loves their church doesn't have a plan.

2. You haven't taken the time to create a plan.

The thought has occurred to you whenever you've heard me talk about giving in the past, “You know, I really do need to systematize this. I really do need to set up something with my bank or do something online so that my giving happens when I am not there or when I forget ... because my church goes on when I am not there or when I forget.”

Now, I have some good news about this. We're about to do something in the very near future that's going to make giving on a planned systematic basis a lot easier to do than ever before. But before I tell you about it, I want to make something very clear. If you've fallen asleep during this message, now's the time to wake up because this is really important.

If you have been attending NHCC for any length of time and have heard me talk about money, you know that I don't want you to have a plan just for your giving. I want you to have a plan for your entire financial life. I want you to have a plan for saving, a plan for spending (we call that a budget), and a plan for giving. You know why? Because if you don't have a plan for all of those things, you're going to save too little, spend too much and give leftovers. That is what's going to happen.

Every so often around here we teach Dave Ramsey's FPU class and it's awesome. It's very in-depth. It takes eight to ten weeks to complete but I can boil it down to about 15 seconds. This is the 15-second money management plan for your life.

Are you ready? Here it is:

Give, save, live ... and in that order.

Plan what you are going to do in those three areas and follow through with it and you will be so much better off for it in the long run. You'll have more money, you'll have spent less on dumb things and you will have given more to the God and the church you love.

Now, all of that is to say that when I tell you about this really cool thing we're about to do that's going to make carrying out a giving plan a whole lot easier ... this isn't just about the church getting your money. It's not even about the church *needing* your money. This is about answering in the wisest and most beneficial way the question of "what is the *overall* plan for my financial life?" This is about going far beyond "just average" in how you run your personal finances compared to the culture around you.

Got it? Ok, let me tell you what we're about to do.

- A brand new system for online donations
- Can give money or stuff through website or smartphone app.
- Don't need an account on The City (City finance module – not is going away by Jan 1st so you will need to transition).
- Set up a one-time or recurring donation
- Keeps a record of what you have given

It's just so much better and I'll give you more details as we get closer to launch which will be the middle of December. I hope everyone who loves this church will go online by the end of the year and set it up.

Now, some of you won't do that kind of thing because it makes you nervous. You don't like to give out your credit card number; you don't want to give bank numbers out because you don't think it's safe. And that's fine. For you, the best thing might be to go online to your bank's website and set up a recurring bill that sends a check at the same times each month in whatever amount.

The point is *you need a plan and you need to be disciplined about it*. And over the next month, between now and the first of the year, I'm going to be encouraging those of you who love your church to do this.

- I'll be sending you some things in the mail to talk about how this works.
- We'll post some videos on Facebook and the website
- We'll be talking about it a little bit more in the announcements
- And we'll probably even set up a little kiosk in the commons where someone can walk you through it or give you a demo.

It's time, if you love your church, to make a plan to financially support it.

But there's one more reason why people who love their church don't give. This one might be the biggest one of all.

3. You don't think the church needs the money.

And I can understand why anyone would come to that conclusion. Let's just take what happens here on a typical Sunday morning. Everybody comes in and we sing a couple of songs and there's an announcement that the offering is going to happen soon. But it's kind of buried in with other announcements and it almost sounds a little bit apologetic because we tell people that, if they're new or this isn't their church, they don't need to feel obligated to contribute. And new people really like that (and I like it, too) because we're not pressuring anyone ... *but* ... if you're a person who's been around for a while who loves this church, it makes you wonder: "hmmm ... maybe they really don't need my money."

And then there are those times when we announce that the offering is coming and one of the pastors says something like "we just want to say thanks to all of you who give so we can do this and that in our ministry." And you're thinking, "I haven't given a dime, so there must be *a whole bunch of really generous people sitting around me*. And everything around here seems to be

working fine. They don't need my money."

Then the basket comes around and you look at the \$8.92 in it. And then you look at all the lights and cameras and our staff and our facility. And you're thinking "there's something going on here. There's no way that *this* pays for all of *this*. Obviously, there's a lot of money here and it's coming from somewhere else. This church doesn't need my money to the point where I'm not sure why they even take an offering" ... and so you don't see the need to make a plan to give.

Now, do you want to know what's crazy about that? This is fascinating. No one wants to be part of church where they constantly go on and on about how bad they need money. In fact, people stop giving and eventually leave for precisely that reason. And then they come to churches like ours where we don't beg and we don't make people feel guilty ... and never start giving.

Now, this is the crazy part. You've got to follow me closely on this. If I'm not going to give to the church that begs because I don't think that it's right to manipulate people to give, but I also won't give to the church that doesn't beg because it seems like "they don't really need the money" then *I never will give to a church I actually attend*.

It's crazy, isn't it? It's irrational. In fact, it's so irrational that we wouldn't think about handling money this way in any other area of life.

For example, do you give your business to companies that really need your money or to those that provide great goods and services? You don't buy a \$5 coffee from Starbucks because you think Starbucks needs your money. You don't buy an I-Phone or an I-Pad because you think Apple needs your money. You buy from those companies because they have great products.

So, why would anyone who loves their church give money to all those companies who really don't need it and then come to a church they love and since "they don't need it" you don't give it? That's just crazy. Why would you treat Starbucks and Apple better than your church?

Question: when your marriage hits the rocks are you going to call the barista at the coffee shop? When your middle-schooler won't listen to you and you need another adult pouring into their life, are you going to call the salesman at the Apple Store? No. You're going to show up at the church you love. And we're going to try and help you, even if you don't ever give a nickel because we're the church. That's what we do.

Bottom line ... If you're a Christian and you're going to be part of a church that doesn't need your money, you're going to have to come up with a giving plan to support "the church that doesn't need your money." Or, you need to go find a church that talks about how bad they need your money until you're so tired of it you can't just stand it anymore. Those are the only two *rational* choices you have.

To Beg or Not to Beg

Now, having said all of that, I'm sure that some of you are thinking, "Rick, aren't we coming to the end of a capital campaign? You know *Accelerate* – reach seekers, build a family, plant churches? And from what I've heard, we didn't do so well on that, at least in financial terms. So, are we the church that does or doesn't need to beg? Do we need or not need people's money?"

The answer is yes and no ... which, I know, isn't really an answer.

But here's the deal. We are coming to the end of a two-year capital campaign. And we *are* going to fall short of the original goal which was about \$4M. If giving through the end of the year continues at its current pace, we'll end up at about \$3.2M. Unless someone makes a really big donation or two in the next few weeks, that's a 20% shortfall – by far the worst result of the four

campaigns we've done through the years. So, yeah, we need money.

On the other hand, if the western half of our property which is currently under contract actually closes in January as scheduled, that will make up the shortfall or come very close. Of course, if it doesn't close and the deal falls through, we'll be waaaaay short. And we'll have to go to the bank to work out something on our loan. But that's OK, too. They like us. We have a great loan-to-value on this property which is made even better by the completion of 88th Street. But if they decide *not* to work something out, we'll be ...

Look, the point is regardless of what happens we always need money. It's always an issue! But we're not going to beg because this church has never been about "we need your money." It's always been about vision.

Let me show you something. See that picture? That's what this place looked like when we first bought this building in 2002.

Some people you've never even met – some who are no longer with us on this earth anymore – gave a whole lot of money not because "church needs my money" but because they had vision. They loved this church and what we stand for. They knew that God was doing something new and unique and they wanted to be players in the "grace partnership" so that even more people – non-church people – could be a part of it.

Let me show you another picture – this is from a year ago. That's what this room looked like before the remodel.

It looks the way it does today because of the people who love this church and who, two years ago, decided to increase what they were giving so we could make this place so much more attractive and inviting. As a result of what they did and the publicity we were able to generate, about 250 or so new people have become part of the NHCC family since January.ⁱⁱⁱ And almost half of those folks didn't come from another church. They weren't involved in a church anywhere and that's exactly what we wanted to happen.

And aren't you glad – those of you who have come back to faith through this church ... those of you who have kids who love Adventureland and what they're learning and experiencing ... those of you who have been touched even in recent days by this Amazing Grace series – aren't you glad that all those people decided that the vision was worth their financial investment?

Let me show you one more picture. That's Grace Baptist Church in Bowie, MD, where I grew up.

About 50 years ago, in 1964, a small group of people banded together to form a grace partnership that eventually led to the development of that church. But they didn't do it because the church needed their money. They did it because of a vision for what might happen if the Gospel was preached in that area.

And they had no idea at the time that ten years later a teenager named Rick McGinniss would be invited to play trumpet in one of their youth group musicals and have his life totally shaped by the experience of that church and those people. They had no idea that he would eventually – improbably – one day become *the pastor of the church you love*.

Do you know what that means? It means that all the people who gave to that church have impacted *your* church. It means that by giving to your church, you are going to have an impact all over the world in ways you can't even begin to imagine. So why in the world would you not have a plan for supporting your local church financially?

So, that's what I'm asking you to do. If you love this church and you don't have a plan, I want you to go home and come up with one. I don't need to know what it looks like. I'm not going to ask you to turn in a card. I just want you to do it. I want you to enter into a grace partnership with us because we need to continue what a handful of people started in my living room 20

years ago. We have so many opportunities – the things we could do if everyone who loved this church had a planned approach to giving!

Now, as we close, I want to make some suggestions to help quantify some of the things you could do depending on your situation.

1. If you're not giving at all or don't have a plan, start with 2%. At least shoot for average.

If you make the median salary in Platte County of \$43K, that would be about \$900 a year or \$75 a month or \$17.30 a week. It's not a whole lot of money.

And you may not think that will make a big difference but, according to our stat wizard, if the 50% who love this church and don't give at all *would just do that* – just give 2% - our offerings would increase by at least 20% in total. In fact, if everyone who is currently giving from 1%-5% would go up by 2%, and everyone who is currently giving from 6%-10% would go up by 1% our offerings would increase *by another 20%*.

And I know that's way too many numbers but the point is that it only takes a little bit by a lot of people to make a big difference.

2. If you made a pledge to Accelerate but have fallen behind, the first thing I want to say to you is thank you. Thank you for trying and thank you for making that commitment. And, I want to suggest to you that December might be a great time to catch up.

Officially, the campaign ends at the end of this month. But, the need is still there. So, if you want to give in December, we'll count it.

And if you can't complete it – don't beat yourself up. It's okay. I love you. God loves you. There's grace. Just do what you can do.

3. If you made a pledge to Accelerate and fulfilled it, first of all, way to go! Feel free to continue giving at the same level.

Someone asked me the other night if it's OK to do that. Absolutely. In fact, a lot of people who are now among the 50% who give regularly and systematically today started out by giving to a campaign and just kept doing it.

4. If you made a pledge to Accelerate and need to drop back to your previous level, feel free to do so. But would you consider adding 1 or 2% for the reasons I explained earlier?

If we all increase just a little bit it will make a huge difference.

Jetta and I are in that situation. We doubled our giving from about 11% of our income to almost 22% percent. But we can't keep doing that. In January, we're going to come back down closer to where we were before, to somewhere between 12-13%.

5. Finally (and this is more of an FYI than a suggestion), 10% of all giving in December will go to the "Christmas Blessing" fund.

Usually, we have a Giving Tree set up for that purpose where you can go out and pick up a tag that shows a specific amount that is needed for a specific individual or family. However, we decided not to do it that way this year because we felt like catching up on *Accelerate* (for some of us) and getting into the habit of just giving in a regular, systematic and perhaps automatic way to the church we love (for a whole lot of us) needed to be the main focus.

So, we're going to accomplish the same goal we always do in December – we're going to take care of the less fortunate among

us this season – but we’re going to embed it into these two goals. Next year we might go back to the Giving Tree approach or we might not. We’ll see how this works out.

And, of course, if you really need to the individual or family thing, we’ve once again invited the Clay-Platte Foster Family Association to set up a tree and you’re certainly free to help in that way.

Ok, I think that’s enough for today. Let’s pray together.

God, this is a weighty subject and I want to pray that the main thing we walk away with from here today is that there’s grace even in this area. You don’t look at any of us and go “what a bad person you are.” God, there is grace because you’ve given us grace even when we fail in this area. Jesus covers that sin for us.

But, God, we don’t want to be people who are just covered. We want to be people who are like you. We want to be people who give what we’ve received because that makes us like you and there’s great joy in that.

God, I want to pray for those today who’ve heard this message and they haven’t given anything because they just didn’t know there was a grace partnership. Or, people who don’t have a plan because they haven’t gotten around to it. Or, people who mistakenly believe “well, the church doesn’t need my money.” God, change our hearts and change our minds on these things and do what you will in our lives.

God, thank you so much for the people in this church who, over the years, had the vision and didn’t give because it was something they *had* to do but it was something they *wanted* to do. We thank you for them because that is why we’re here today. And, I want to thank you for my home church where I grew up. I want to thank you for all those people who poured into that church and poured into me. I pray that you would bless them and bless that church. I pray that someday people will be praying that about our church, as well, that we would be the most generous church in the Northland. We ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Feature – Motion of Mercy

CLOSING COMMENTS

Just a couple of things before we go:

1. I have talked a lot this morning about loving this church ... and some of you listening are going, “this is the first date. I’m really not sure I love this church yet. I need to learn more about you; we need to get more acquainted.” So, I just want you to know that in two weeks from today at 4pm on Sunday afternoon, I will be teaching the Church 101 class. It’s the introduction to North Heartland and the membership class. It’s everything you ever wanted to know about why we do what we do. So, I just want you to be aware of that. I’d love for you to come and learn more about us.
2. Next Sunday we kick off the Christmas season (did I hear a groan? That was your wallet groaning) we kick off the season with a very creative service, sort of a “welcome to Advent” service, and if you’re in town next Sunday, you don’t want to miss it.
3. And if you are out of town next week, I hope you have safe travels and a great Thanksgiving. I hope you remember to be thankful for the material and family blessings God has given you. Most of all, I hope you’ll remember to be thankful for the Grace that God has given you in Jesus because it changes everything.

Thanks for being here today – go watch the Chiefs!

Endnotes

i Note that the framework and many cool phrases in this section are from Andy Stanley's message "Don't Make Me Come Back There" 10/27/13. <http://northpoint.org/messages/dont-make-me-come-back-there/>

ii <http://www.religionnews.com/2013/10/24/report-church-giving-reaches-depression-era-record-lows/>

iii Average attendance is actually up by only 150 but because many people only come to church twice a month, the increase actually represents twice that number.