Investment

Be generous: Invest in acts of charity. Charity yields high returns. Don't hoard your goods; spread them around. Be a blessing to others. This could be your last night. -Ecclesiastes 11:1-2

We live in a blessed time and in a blessed country that we can talk of financial planning and retirement. Of having money to put away now so there will be great things later. When you do, you won't make it far into the conversation without hearing the following word: Investment.

If you aren't quite sure what that word means, it is just like it sounds. Investing an agreed upon amount to be purposed at a later date. Sometimes, it is short-term like a vacation or a cruise. Sometimes it is long-term such as retirement and assets. But one thing that is true of both these investments is that you only put your money into something you trust and believe in. If you don't trust nor believe in a person or purpose, you don't invest. But if you do trust in the person and/or the purpose, you are willing to even sacrifice for that cause. Going with less now so that there is greater benefit later.

Which brings me to the Church. NCC as well as the Church as a whole. According to research, 80% of the monetary giving for church ministry is given by 20% (or less) of its members/attenders. So the conclusion is that the Kingdom of Jesus is functioning with the investment of 20%. What other business would use such a strategy? I know God is in control and "owns cattle on a thousand hills" but what does that say to us, His Body and what does it mean?

One thing it means is that we expect others to provide what we expect the Church to do. And what confounds me is that these same people expect the same blessing. It's like going to the grocery store and expecting the people behind you to pay so you'll be blessed with food. Sounds crazy doesn't it?! But isn't that what some do when they expect others to supply the investment for the kingdom and then demand to be blessed? It makes no sense in investing for retirement and it makes no sense in His Kingdom. "God loves a cheerful giver…" so aim for that blessing.

Another thing it reveals which is much more serious in my opinion is that they don't believe in the place where their membership is located. If this is you, you need to pray and possibly talk to the leadership and ask questions. None of us know everything about everything, and we show ourselves to be a fool when we think we do. If you have questions about investment in the Church, and that is keeping you from giving, get involved so that you can (1) find answers and (2) be a part of any solution necessary. But to keep your money, especially to "prove a point" is not supported anywhere in scripture. In fact, we see the opposite in the Church of Acts where they shared everything. If this is you, seek resolution and not excuses.

A third reason you may not be investing in the Church is that you see it as an institution and not a cause. Institutions just sit there by the road and bring no change to anything (and perhaps keep change from happening). But a cause is established for a specific course to bring "New" to an old or failing way of existence.

The Church was not established to be seen by passing cars. It was established to bring Jesus to people and communities that need life; Jesus' life. The Church is for meeting needs, physical and spiritual. The Church is for reaching out to those who are living in sin and bring them to Christ. The Church is an active CAUSE in whatever community it is located. If you see the Church as an institution, it could be because you are about as active as a driver in a car just passing by.

Do you believe in the life-changing power of Jesus? Do you believe that the Church is the answer for the world? Do you believe that the Church is light, salt and city on a hill? Do you believe Jesus can take 5 loaves and 2 fish and feed the multitude?

Do you believe in INVESTING in the Church?

From My Heart,

Billy