

**Topic:** “Growing In Grace Giving” **Text:** II Corinthians 8:1-9; 12-14 HPC 5/9/10

**INTRO:** God’s blessing of growth at HPC is a denominational anomaly. We are overflowing our educational space with noisy babies, crawling infants, active children, engaged youth, and mission minded younger adults. With this blessing comes the challenge to add the space we so desperately need - Youth space, SS space, classroom space and ministry space. *Connecting...Growing...Serving* is a capital campaign to raise funds to double the space we now have. Our feedback on CGS is that many of you still do not understand what this is all about. Let me give you an overview of the past 6-months.

## I. OVERVIEW OF CGS

### A. Time Line

- Because of the sour economy CGS was delayed 1.5 years.
- Groundwork for CGS began last fall by recruiting team leaders.
- It was announced during stewardship season last Nov. that we would have a Capital Campaign over and above our regular giving to God’s Financial Mission at the Patch for 2010.
- In early Jan. about 15 team leaders began to recruit, work and organize teams for their part in the CGS campaign. (show picture)
- In late Jan. CGS was kicked off with this Case Statement, a Sunday morning message by me and Steve Green showing the vision, the pictures, and the statistics of the Vision Team and an Ignite/Town Meeting with a detailed report by Vision Team member Robin Poythress and Q & A of a Vision Team Panel.
- In February a letter went out from me summarizing CGS.
- Periodically this year the messages have had application points regarding CGS.
- In March we had some home meetings bringing together some legacy members and newer members from all walks that served as focus groups to answer questions and learn what was on your minds and what you did or didn’t understand about the campaign. Once these members grasped the challenge and began praying about them, many responded with an early commitment.
- Some persons are not able to give over and above now but are including the church in their will. The Session Finance Team has a Permanent Funds Ministry instrument for doing this so that the Finance Sec. knows your wishes. In this case it can be designated for new space first and if the building is complete and paid for at one’s passing, other items of their designation.
- In April a Video about CGS created by Joey Hodge and Melinda Myers was posted on our HPC website.
- In April you received this packet with brochures designed by Tracy and Beth Bynum’s Team, 20-Day Prayer Guide and glass cross provided by Carolyn Wright’s Prayer Team as a reminder to pray about your part.
- April 25 we kicked off a 5-week sermon series on CGS. For 3 of these weeks Lisa Spivey and Josh Gray are producing small group packets for our Life Groups joining us for this sermon series.

- Bab Westall and Jody Kerns shared one way folks could donate jewelry they no longer were wearing. For some of our families without jobs and sustainable incomes, this was a way for them to participate. For others, this over and above campaign is not an option because there is no over and above. For some there is no under either. Some of these persons are giving their time and talent to God's work here at HPC and his mission to our community and Haiti.
- This past Monday and Tues. you were invited to events similar to IGNITE in the FLC only much more elaborate planned by Sue Burek and Gail Bloxom and their Advanced Commitment team. Austin Palmer and Ann Dulin had some great *hors d'ourves*, Gail Gale decorations, and Shannon and Emily provided musical ambience. Those attending had a chance to learn, fellowship and ask questions and be challenged to pray about their response to CGS.
- In the coming weeks you will receive a letter and a pledge card asking you to fill out what God is asking you in your 20-days of prayer to put down.
- In these hard times some with no jobs and income have given generously of their time and talent to this effort. Others have donated the value of old jewelry. Shucks, our CGS consultant Mark Blackmore told us of one person in a church he served that donated a Rhino that was worth \$20,000 when sold to a zoo! People give what they can give!
- Al and Meg Bright created a pictorial overview on the CGS Bulletin Board.
- On May 23<sup>rd</sup> this CGS series will end on Commitment Sunday as you have the opportunity to give your "Grace Gift" pledge to the CGS campaign. The All Church Event Team is planning a great brunch for us between services in the FLC n lieu of SS/LIFT/refreshment time.
- Later this month you will receive a letter from me with an envelope to place your first portion of your pledge amount in the offering plate.
- The BRIDGE team will continue to follow-up with New Member Classes over the next 3-years.
- Your Leadership Team, the Session will have to discern the best path forward on space as they face a fork in the road.

**B. Fork in the road** - We are at a fork in he road. In the coming weeks, the Session will have to discern God's will, way, and timing about space. (Picture)

1. **Left fork** – it is better to wait until we have enough funds on hand and cash flow to borrow so we can build all the space in a seamless process with one permitting/construction event over the course of a year. Obviously this is ideal and would save money. Once we get the CGS results, we will know how far down the road this might be. Find other options to add space while we raise funds for the new space.
2. **Right fork** – it is better to add the space in two phases. Call a cong. meeting and recommend building the future Youth Building now. It is the smaller of the two buildings in the picture and we would have the cash to put it up. If approved by the cong., it would take another 4-5 months for the Building Team to be trained, work with our design firm to generate the actual

architectural, building, and engineering drawings and specs and get them permitted. During the fall the changes to the play area needed to accommodate the footprint could be modified. As early as this winter a building could begin and be completed by sometime in the summer of 2011.

This would cost more going through permitting twice, but might save that amount by getting started while builders and contractors are looking for work and costs are down.

- Meanwhile it could give us critical growing space until the larger building could be constructed.
- It would also be tangible evidence our CGS giving is making a difference even as we give over these next 3 years.
- It would be incentive to keep working toward the 2<sup>nd</sup> building.

## II. HPC GROWTH IS EMPOWERED BY GRACE GIVING

**A. Believers respond to God’s grace** – For the past two weeks we have shown this diagram. God loves us, bestows grace upon us, we respond, he asks us to go where He is already working, we have a crisis of belief, align and adjust our lives to his will and experience the joy of partnering with Him in his work. For the apostle Paul, giving is a grace, not an obligation. In v. 1 he says: “...*we want you to know about the grace that God has given to the Macedonian churches*”

1. **Macedonians model this grace giving response** – These Macedonians in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea are an example to all of us in hard times. Tested by multiple circumstances of persecution, poverty and privation, these Gentile background Christians gave generously to a need in the Jerusalem Church with mostly Jewish backgrounds. Moreover they beg Paul to do it, to do it joyfully and do it sacrificially over and above what they need to sustain their own churches. **Why?** What accounts for this we ask? Key is in v. 5 “*they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.*”

**Quote:** “It is not what we have, but what we do with what we have that makes the difference.”

2. **Macedonians give themselves first to the Lord** - they had an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. This is key in Paul’s teaching, the Blackaby diagram and the Bible. In *Men’s Fraternity* it took us 17-weeks to begin to answer the question about real manhood. Robert Lewis taught us about the two Adams. Adam in Genesis 3 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam, Jesus. Below is a summary: (Ladies bear with me – you might have different words but you will get the concept). One is based in the flesh and the other in the spirit

**Adam's Manhood Becomes...**

Conventional manhood

Which focuses on:

1. What a man does
2. Competition with other men
3. Temporal power
4. Personal rewards
5. Self
6. Success

**Jesus' Manhood Becomes...**

Authentic manhood

which focuses on:

1. What a man is
2. Community with other men
3. Transcendent Power
4. Eternal rewards
5. Others
6. Significance

When we profess our faith in Christ, our walk with Him leads us as men to authentic Manhood in Christ and as women to authentic womanhood in Christ. That means we leave behind our flesh-driven lives and begin to lead Spirit-led lives manifesting the Fruits of the Spirit. We live out the example of Jesus as authentic, born again in the spirit not flesh, believers. **Ex.** Kristy and I had this moment in 1969 and it took root in our giving during our first teaching from the Bible on stewardship in 1974. This is the Macedonian Christian example.

3. **Macedonians keep in God's will** – They are an example of *praxis* – *praxis* is the point where our faith and our actions intersect as shared in Day 12 of your 20-Day Prayer guide. Praxis is where what we believe and what we do come together with God's will and work. The Macedonians are an inspiration to the Corinthian Christians to go and do likewise by being transformed and generous. **Why?** Their Lord was an example who became poor for their sake.

**Summary:** So what happens here? These Gentiles encounter the living Christ preached by Paul, leave behind their old flesh ways of the First Adam, and enter an intimate faith relationship with Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit. They then focus on others and not themselves by going where God is leading them – a work in Jerusalem. Along the way these Gentile Christians had that **God moment** crisis of belief, a change in priorities, aligned themselves with God's will and generously and joyfully gave to partner with what God was doing in of all places, the old church at Jerusalem full of Hebrew Christians.

**III. TAKE HOMES FOR CGS**

- A. **God expects us to give sacrificially** - This is why he uses the Macedonians as our example. The joy is in the sacrifice for whom and what it is given. They didn't have much, but wow - what they did with it. Those in hard times best understand the cost of doing God's work in hard times. V. 12 says it nicely:

**II Cor. 8:12** - "For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."

- B. **God expects us to give spontaneously** – As one preacher put it:

**Quote:** “The grace of giving is not so much the result of outward expulsion as the consequence of inward propulsion.”

When a **new affection** enters one’s life, it has the enormous power to expel competing interests with no sense of loss at all. Think about teenage boy who lives, works, and breathes his car and hanging out with his fellow gear heads. Then suddenly he discovers “the girl” – he’ll suddenly give up much time with his peers to be with her. For me it was water skiing in 9<sup>th</sup> grade that became my “**expulsive power of a new affection!**” No cost was too high to get better. The same is true for the Christian whose **new affection is Jesus Christ**. When he or she aligns with what God is doing. They gladly give up to partner with our Lord.

**CLOSE:** Friends, the red rose today reminds us of yet another wee one God wants us to build growing space for in the coming years. Pray about your part.