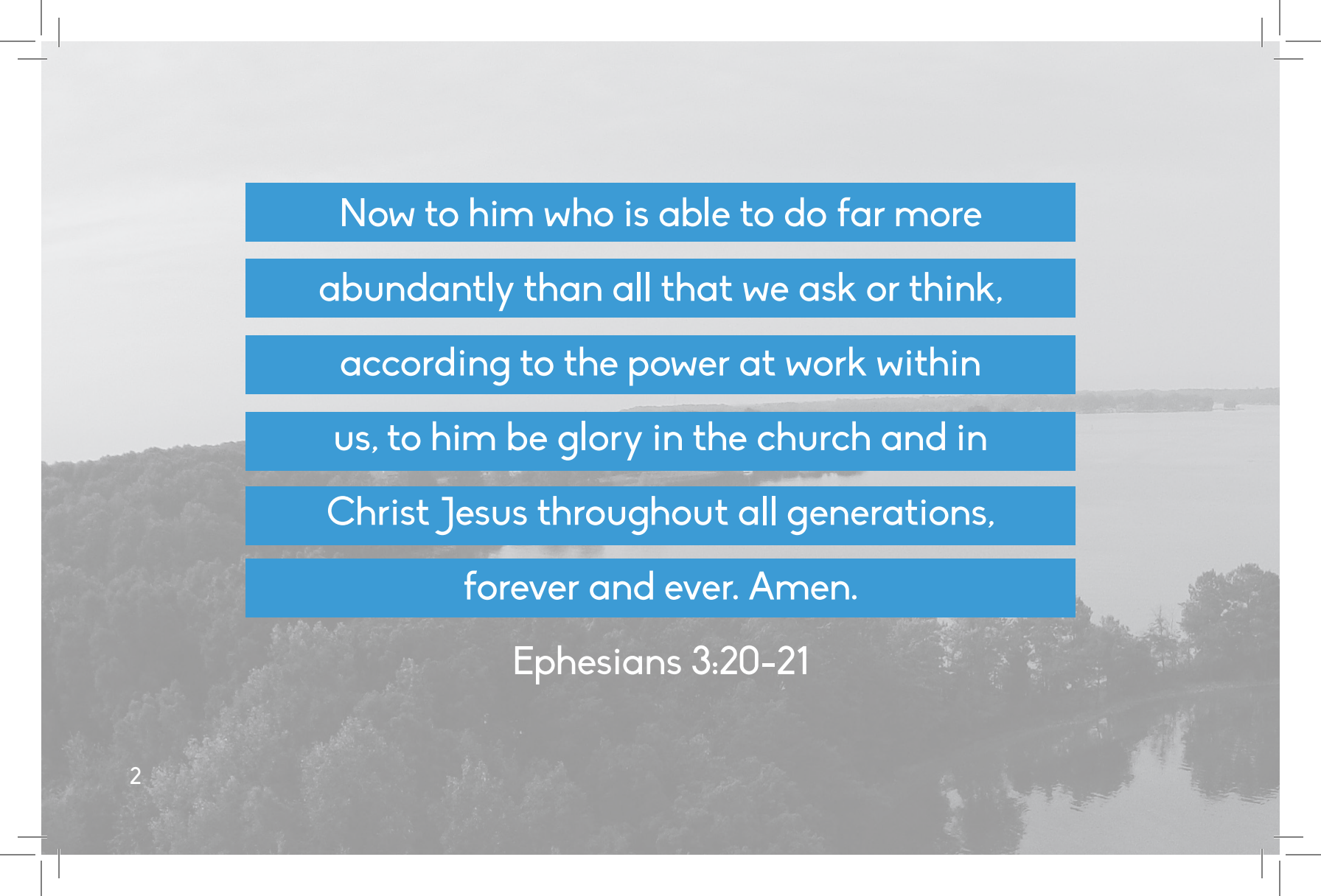


next  
NORTHCROSS CHURCH



Now to him who is able to do far more  
abundantly than all that we ask or think,  
according to the power at work within  
us, to him be glory in the church and in  
Christ Jesus throughout all generations,  
forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21

From the beginning, the story of NorthCross Church has been focused around the formation of authentic Christian community. During the past three years it's been a joy to watch our community flourish with an influx of new families. Our congregation has almost doubled in size! However we have also felt the pains of this growth in trying to find a seat on Sunday morning and dealing with classrooms that are not quite large enough for the growing number of children of all ages.

In a strategic effort to be good stewards of this growth and to realize our vision of becoming a church that reaches more families in Lake Norman, last spring we added to our staff an Assistant Pastor of Congregational Life and a Children's Ministry Director.

As Fall 2016 arrives we will continue the implementation of our strategic plan with the important funding phase. Throughout the summer a steering team of dedicated volunteers has been working behind the scenes to prepare NorthCross for NEXT.

NEXT is the name of our generosity initiative that kicks off in September. This will be a season focused on expanded giving over the next two years to fund the Next steps in our growth as a church community.

The Next steps are:

» THE NEXT FACILITY » THE NEXT TEAM » THE NEXT OUTREACH

Please take time to read the enclosed material and prayerfully commit to taking these NEXT steps with NorthCross. Together let us trust God to work through us to provide the resources we need to realize the vision God has given the community of NorthCross Church.

Sincerely,

*Chip*

Chip Sneed  
Pastor, NorthCross Church

## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

During the summer of 2015 we completed a strategic planning process named “Expanding the Story.” It is a detailed road map to realize a vision of becoming a medium sized church. This plan identified key ministries within the church that were essential in a movement towards greater ministry excellence: Worship, Children’s Ministry, Communication, Adult Life and Leadership Development, Outreach, Facilities. Of these six ministry priorities the session concluded that Worship, Children’s Ministry and Facilities were the current priorities to our success.

This vision to become a medium-size church was the result of surveying the congregation of NorthCross. This centered around the question of vision and the characteristics of NorthCross

that our people loved the most and desired to maintain. It also addressed the areas of weakness in our church that our congregation wanted to see strengthened and improved.

The conclusion of this feedback was the desire to maintain the culture of intimacy and the value of our strong relational community while at the same time moving towards excellence in key ministries. To accomplish this goal we decided that a church of 250-300 people was as large as we could grow without losing the intimacy of community that we all love while also providing the resources to realize greater excellence in ministry. And with this size congregation we could renew our vision to plant churches and establish kindred worshipping communities throughout Lake Norman.





## FACILITY

Though we have always been a church that believed in investing in people over property, we realize that our present facility has been and will continue to be a limiting factor in growth.

The Next Facility will be able to accommodate 300 people in worship and equally important provide space to grow our expanding ministry to families.

## NEXT TEAM

Our strategic plan prioritized the hiring of two additional staff members to ensure the leadership needed to support strategic areas of ministry.

NEXT will continue to help fund our newly hired team members: the Assistant Pastor of Congregational Life who oversees the development of key ministries; and the part-time director of Children's Ministry to oversee the development of a ministry that facilitates spiritual formation and growth for our children.

## OUTREACH

A grayscale background image showing a group of people, mostly men, working on a corrugated metal roof. They are wearing hats and work clothes, and some are carrying boxes. The scene is outdoors with trees in the background.

Two years ago we began a faith promise initiative that resulted in \$50,000 for outreach and missions. Through NEXT our commitment is to grow not only resources to benefit the ministry of NorthCross, but expand our giving to outreach that enable us to partner with more ministries that are growing God's kingdom in the Lake Norman area and around the globe.

To be a community built upon the love and redemption of Jesus with the goal of sharing that love with those around us in the Lake Norman area and around the world.

## TWO-YEAR GOAL: \$1,000,000

NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS	AMOUNT OF EACH	TOTAL AMOUNT	CUMULATIVE TOTAL
1	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
1	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$250,000
1	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$325,000
2	\$60,000	\$120,000	\$445,000
2	\$48,000	\$96,000	\$541,000
3	\$36,000	\$108,000	\$649,000
5	\$24,000	\$120,000	\$769,000
6	\$18,000	\$108,000	\$877,000
6	\$7,200	\$43,200	\$920,200
7	\$4,800	\$33,600	\$953,800
10	\$2,400	\$24,000	\$977,800
ALL OTHERS	< \$2,400	\$22,200	\$1,000,000

THIS CHART IS ONLY A GUIDE FOR QUICK CALCULATIONS OF GIVING.  
PLEASE DO NOT FEEL CONFINED TO THIS SCHEDULE.

## ONE FUND

NEXT is a One Fund initiative which means that all our regular giving and expanded giving will go into one unified fund. During the past two years the congregation of NorthCross generously gave approximately \$500,000 in regular congregational, missions and benevolence giving.

**\$500K**

Average Giving  
Over Two Years

**\$500K**

**+** Expanded  
NEXT Giving

**\$1M**

Total NEXT Giving  
Over Two Years

In order to fully implement our strategic plan through NEXT our goal is to raise over twice that amount of money ... about \$1,000,000 over the next two years.

## NEXT CHALLENGE

To make NEXT a reality, everyone at NorthCross will be challenged to participate and contribute in a new way.

Consider making sacrifices that would allow you to give over and above your normal giving.

Then make a comprehensive two year pledge total which will include your regular giving and expanded giving for NEXT.

## THE GENEROSITY LADDER

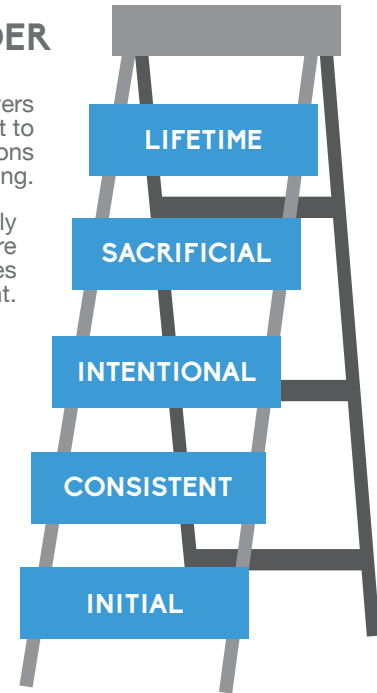
Much like the sacrificial givers, these givers make a lifetime or long-term commitment to evaluate and govern their financial decisions through the lens of generous giving.

These givers' commitment to giving actually shapes their lifestyle in ways that require them to adjust the rest of their expenditures to meet that commitment.

These givers make the intentional choice to rearrange their spending in order to make giving a part of their monthly budget.

These givers decide to give something on a consistent basis. This requires planning and discipline to give regularly.

These givers decide to give for the first time and trust God with their gift.



\*ADAPTED FROM NELSON SEARCY



## TWO-YEAR COMMITMENT TO NEXT

We are asking you...

to journey with God and our church during the next two years.

to join together in prayer as a church during this next season.

to determine how God might be calling you to grow in your generosity and be a part of our expanded investment in God's kingdom through NorthCross.

**MY TWO-YEAR COMMITMENT TO NEXT**  
PLEASE CALCULATE WITHIN THE WORKSHEET BELOW

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

+

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

=

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

What I normally give in one year  
(regular giving, missions, benevolence, etc.)

My expanded annual generosity for NEXT

x 2 years =

Optional: stored resources gift  
(stock, securities, bonus, refund, etc.)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

+

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**MY TWO-YEAR COMMITMENT TO NEXT:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### ^ SAMPLE COMMITMENT CARD

This sample commitment card can be used as a worksheet as you consider your commitment to NEXT.

# COMMITMENT SUNDAY | OCTOBER 23, 2016

## WHAT YOU CAN DO



For wisdom in the next steps; growing love for our community; the gospel to go forth; that God would be glorified.

For unity among us as we move forward together.

For your own involvement in the work and mission of the church.



To consider what it looks like for you to give sacrificially.

To give boldly and serve in new ways.

To pray regularly for these plans, the church and the leadership.



In God's provision, for he is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think.

In God's faithfulness and promises, not in your own abilities, to give joyfully.

In God's power that his name may be known in all the earth.

# TO HIM BE THE GLORY IN THE CHURCH AND IN JESUS CHRIST

# THE NEXT JOURNAL

**JOINING WHAT GOD IS DOING THROUGH PRAYER, PERSONAL STUDY, AND THE PURSUIT OF GENEROUS LIVING.**

The NEXT Journal is a tool to help us understand what generosity looks like in our lives, to assist in processing some of the topics discussed in our sermon series and ultimately aid in unpacking what it looks like for us to live out of the generous grace God has given us in Christ.

## **THIS JOURNAL IS YOUR JOURNAL.**

We want you to keep it, refer to it and reflect on the thoughts you have as you study both personally and with your life group. Some questions in this journal may be easy to answer; others may take some time; still others may not apply to you at this stage of your life.

Our hope is that this simple notebook will become a catalyst for meditation:

- On what God has provided for us in Christ.
- On how the world in which we live crowds that out of our lives.
- On how God wants to work through you and your resources to reproduce in others what you've experienced with Christ.
- On next steps to take as your faith in Him expresses itself through love and generous living.

Thank you for all the ways you already participate in NorthCross. We pray that God uses your time in study to encourage and equip you to join with NorthCross in this NEXT phase of our life together.

## AND THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS

## STUDY 1

### » YOUR STORY AND YOUR WORLD

#### YOUR STORY

1 JOHN 4:9-12

<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

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\* How does John describe God's generosity to us?

\* In what specific ways has God has been generous in demonstrating his love for me personally?

\* Can you think of a time when God was generous with you in one or more of the following areas?  
Spiritually – Relationally – Circumstantially – Materially

\* Are there specific ways that God has used the people at NorthCross to be generous to you?

## YOUR WORLD

### 2 SAMUEL 24:24

<sup>24</sup> But king David said to Araunah, “No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

Leading up to this story, David displays a trust in physical strength through his ordering of a census of his people, specifically asking how many fighting men he had (2 Sam. 24:1-10; 1 Chr. 21:1). As a result, God punished David through a pestilence on the land, which killed 70,000 people; then the Lord had mercy and stopped the judgment. David was advised to build an altar and sacrifice to the Lord for having mercy and removing the pestilence, and he did, but the section of land desired for the altar was owned by someone else. The owner insisted on simply giving, or donating, the land to the king for the purpose of sacrificing to the Lord. Verse 24 (printed above) is David’s answer.

READ ALSO: MARK 4:14-20

- \* How was the subject of money handled or discussed in your home growing up? How is it handled or discussed in your home now (in your adult life)?
- \* Are there specific things you’re being told by Satan, by society or by yourself about how to handle wealth that seem to contradict what God says of wealth? Do these things tend to choke out or enhance what God wants to do in your life? How?

- \* In 2 Samuel 24:24, how does David’s response relate

to your normal attitude when giving something to God?

- \* What significant experiences, people or teachings have influenced my thinking and attitudes about generosity?
- \* Are there specific ways that God has used the people at NorthCross to be generous to you?
- \* What, if anything, gets in the way of me having a generous heart?



## STUDY 2

### » YOUR FATHER

ROMANS 8:31-32

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

MATTHEW 19:28-30

Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup> But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

\* Discuss the idea of “sacrifice” in Romans 8:31-32.

\* Based on our understanding of sacrifice (i.e. giving up something, loss that creates a void or gap for something greater, etc.), how was giving up Jesus a “sacrifice” for God? Can God feel the burden of sacrifice?

\* Why would God undergo the burden of sacrifice?

\* What does Matthew 19:28-30 say about the result of sacrifice for the sake of Jesus?

\* To what extent have my thoughts and attitudes on generosity been guided by God’s Word and the Holy Spirit?

\* Do you believe your giving is a meaningful act of worship? Why or why not?

\* What would it look like for me to live as God’s adopted child who is one day going to inherit the entire earth?

## STUDY 3

### » YOUR HEART

MATTHEW 18:21-35

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup> “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

<sup>24</sup> When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup> And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

<sup>26</sup> So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup> And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup> So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup> He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup> Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy

on you?’<sup>34</sup> And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.<sup>35</sup> So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

## 2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

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\* What are the potential dangers or pitfalls for you emotionally and spiritually of having material things and increased wealth? Do they activate any idols for you?

\* What giving experiences – time, talent, treasure – have brought you the most joy? Has one of these brought me more joy than the others? Why is that? What if anything does this suggest about God’s purposes for me?

\* From 2 Corinthians 8:9, describe the work of Jesus and what it means for you.

\* Have I asked God why He has provided me what He has - materially - and how He wants me to use it? Do I do this consistently?

\* Are there things in my life I need to let go of in order to create space for others? For God?

## STUDY 4

### » YOUR AIM AND YOUR PART

#### YOUR AIM

1 THESSALONIANS 2:19-20

<sup>19</sup> For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? <sup>20</sup> Indeed, you are our glory and joy.\* How does John describe God's generosity to us?

\* In 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, what was Paul's primary investment during his life, what he referred to as his "crown?" Based on his expressed value in these things, what was Paul willing to give up in order to gain such a "crown?"

\* What do your spending habits point to concerning the priorities for your family?

\* Have you thought about God's will for you when it comes to giving both spiritually and financially to

others? Do you see your assets as a sacred trust from God?

\* What are you modeling concerning handling material resources and living simply? To whom are you modeling this?

\* How intentional have I been developing strategies to leave behind not only a financial legacy to my loved ones, but also a spiritual one?



## YOUR PART

### PHILIPPIANS 1:3-7

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace.

### PSALM 127:1

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stays awake in vain.

### READ ALSO: PSALM 139

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\* What in Philippians 1:3-7 shows us that Paul did not do his ministry on his own? How does the church's ministry function the same way Paul's does?

\* Discuss the interaction of God's sovereignty with your influence/participation in decisions and choices in life.

\* Are there things you need to ask God to begin to work in your heart through His Spirit:

- Fears to overcome?
- Lies to refute?
- Sins to confess?
- Spiritual fruit to grow in?
- Good works to accomplish by faith?

\* How can you take one step forward in your financial partnership with the church?



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