

October 8, 2022. 37. Broken Arrow Ranch – Kansas-Nebraska Conference

Appeal: Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

We worship God with our tithes, offerings, and donations because God loves His Church. The Church, as the community of believers, was founded by Jesus (Matt. 16:18). He “gave himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25). He is the Head (Eph. 1:22) and Chief Cornerstone of the Church (Eph. 1:20), which is His body (Col. 1:25). And she has the beautiful title of the “bride of the Lord” (Rev. 9:7,8). To her, He gave a special assignment, “to serve as the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1Tim. 3:15). Ellen G. White made this affirmative comment about God’s Church: “Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.” —*Acts of Apostles*, p. 12.

In response to God’s love for His Church, the believers of the Early Church supported both the local church community (Acts 2:45) and church communities far away. Following a severe famine throughout the Roman empire, Luke reports the compassionate response of God’s Church: “The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea” (Acts 11:29). In his writings, Apostle Paul regularly appeals for the collection of funds for the Church, the Lord’s people, in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-9:15; Rom. 15:14-32). Besides that, there is clear evidence of believers supporting with wages those “whose work is preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17-18). Paul endorses such practice by quoting Jesus: “The worker deserves his wages” (Lk. 10:7). The Early Church believers applied the general principle of love and generosity by caring for God’s Church.

The church is not without flaw; it has never been, but it is loved and has a unique purpose. This week as we worship with our tithe and regular offerings, we can respond to the call to love and support the One that Jesus loves?

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for establishing the church in the world and our local communities. Please help us emulate the love that You have for the church by cheerfully supporting those who are part of it and its mission.

December 31, 2022. Evangelism for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference**Appeal:** James 5:20

“Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”

Our first home in Council, North Carolina, began its life as an old army barracks. Decades before we arrived, the building was transported from Fayetteville, North Carolina, and turned into a small but sturdy home. By the time we purchased the house in 1995, it was badly in need of paint inside and out. During the two years we spent in that home, we spent our spare time scraping and painting. The old flaking outside paint had been scraped away and replaced by bright and pleasing modern colors when we finished. The interior had been transformed from a dark and foreboding place to a bright and cheerful living space. After two years, we sold the home for almost a 3rd more than we had paid for it. It took money and a lot of hard work, but the reward was substantial.

Discipling people into a living, saving relationship with Jesus through evangelistic efforts requires a tremendous amount of dedicated labor combined with sufficient funds for materials, advertising, and other supplies. Our desire to improve our old army barracks home would have come to nothing without an adequate outlay of means to buy paint and supplies. But with the proper supplies, the dark, ugly contours were covered over and transformed into a beautiful place to live.

Your donation today will provide the necessary funds to fuel the evangelism efforts in Kansas and Nebraska. Hundreds of volunteers and pastors will receive vital resources to make their labor effective in transforming lives through the beautiful message of the love of Jesus and His soon coming to take His children home. With your donation today, the last day of the year, a multitude of dark sins will be covered as people all over Kansas and Nebraska give their hearts to Jesus. When Jesus comes, your giving and sacrifice will seem like no sacrifice at all when you realize the fantastic return on your small investment.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, move upon our hearts to give to your work, in the sure knowledge that you bring an increase that is beyond our current ability to comprehend fully. Thank you for the opportunity to give of our means to forward the great work of Grace in these last days of earth's history.