

## Executive Analysis 1 of 4: Issues Raised by the Findings in *The State of Church Giving through 2011: Highlights from Chapter 8*

Chapter 8 considers the trends in the earlier chapters of the new book, for example the declines in giving and membership, and explores possible reasons for them. Following are some of those chapter 8 points, in broad strokes, with selected quotes from the book. This entire chapter is available as an excerpt at [www.emptytomb.org/scg11chap8.pdf](http://www.emptytomb.org/scg11chap8.pdf).

While on earth, **Jesus Christ carried out works within a defined geographic area and set the entire area abuzz about God's agenda. Now the church in the U.S. has access to the whole world but is not loving people at a similar scale that sets the globe abuzz about God's agenda.**

“Jesus’ miraculous works of healing showed love to people, and gained their interest in what Jesus had to say about the kingdom of God” (p. 124).

“Church members may suspect that the pursuit of the kingdom of God should be less like only supporting and maintaining church structures, and more like being a football fan” (p. 125).

**Jesus prayed for “oneness” among those who would believe in Jesus in the future (John 17:20-23). That oneness among Christians in the U.S. could produce power in the present age of affluence to carry out “greater works” than Jesus did, as Jesus promised in John 14:12-14.**

Church leaders, at the national, regional, and local levels, have tended to **focus on the needs of their own institutions rather than mobilizing a broad combination of Christians for action.**

“That is not to say that what is going on through church institutions is not commendable. It is. The issue is that it is not sufficient” (p. 139).

“In the past recent decades, church leaders have not worked through their institutions to build on the great amount of information available about global need, and to mobilize more of the resources resulting from increasing incomes through voluntary giving, to address global needs at a scale to solve, rather than cope with them” (pp. 124-125).

“In another context, John Kenneth Galbraith, Harvard economist, identified a helpful concept that may be useful in describing the submerged mass that is impacting the church. Whatever one thinks of his economic theories, Galbraith’s construction of ‘**uncorrected obsolescence**,’ in his book *The Affluent Society*, is most useful in describing the difference between current economic reality and the mindset of those making decisions.

“**Church leaders** seem to function in a state of uncorrected obsolescence, as if they are **unaware of the practical potential of the affluence** that has spread through U.S. society since World War II. Christians in the U.S. have been living in widespread affluence that has not ever before been typical of an entire society” (pp. 128-129, emphasis added).

With church giving and membership in decline, the church could “lose its life to find it” (Matt. 16:25) and **mobilize church member giving at a scale similar to that of Jesus helping people, focusing on the points of their greatest needs. Two global triage needs identified are: (1) reducing global child deaths and, (2) engaging unengaged unreached people groups as a priority within global evangelization** (pp. 143-158).

**What national leaders could mobilize 100 million Christians to increase giving by \$50 a year each, through their own church delivery channels, to reduce global child deaths?**

“God’s selection of the leadership will be essential. However, to prime the pump, so to speak, a list of potential mobilizers—one might even use the term ‘dream team’—follows” (pp. 160-161).