

Steven Furtick Says House Is From God, Apologizes for Controversy

Amid controversy surrounding his 16,000-square-foot home and questions about his salary, pastor Steven Furtick apologized to his congregation Sunday—not for the house, but for any uncomfortable conversations they may have had as a result.

“My wife and I made a decision, and we built a house,” the founder and pastor of the 12,000-member Elevation Church in Charlotte, N.C., said at a service in Blakeney, N.C. “It’s a big house, and it’s a beautiful house, and we thank God for it. ... We understand everything we have comes from God.”

Furtick was open about the house—which he described as 8,400 square feet of heated living area, with the rest consisting of basement, attic, garage and porch space, according to an Associated Press report.

Critics say the \$1.7 million home does not reflect the heart of a servant.

“The pastor should be the servant of his people. He should be the one that is most transparent,” said Ole Anthony of the Trinity Foundation, a nonprofit that monitors and investigates religious fraud, in an investigative report from NBC Charlotte. “It saddens me to see what the church is becoming.”

The Elevation Church pastor told his congregation he was most worried about how the attention from the media affected them.

“I’m sorry for the uncomfortable conversations you had to have this week,” he said, according to the *Charlotte Observer*. “I have always tried to make this a church where you could be proud of your church.” The congregation responded with a

standing ovation.

Furtick, author of best-sellers *Greater* and *Sun Stand Still*, insists that he paid for the house with money from book sales—though he has not revealed how much he makes from his books and speaking engagements. He has also not divulged his salary from the church, which has been determined by an appointed “board of overseers” rather than the congregation.

The megachurch pastor thanked his members on Sunday for “what you’ve prayed, what you’ve said and what you haven’t said. ... We appreciate knowing that you have our back.”

Furtick also added that the media is not an enemy, noting that news outlets can report what they want. “I do not call this an attack,” he said. “This is a news story, and the media is not our enemy.”

In his 10-minute address preceding the sermon, Furtick concluded that he looked forward to continuing his ministry in Charlotte “for the next 50 years,” adding that “the best is yet to come.”