

ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE: 2017 AND BEYOND

What does God have for Grace Community in the days to come? What does God want from Grace Community in the days to come? What does Grace Community's future look like and what part will each of us have in it? These are exciting questions and they are the kinds of questions churches often ask under the banner of VISION. The result is frequently a plan described as something like this: "Here is our 1 year plan, our 3 year plan, our 5 year plan and our long term plan." Strategies and tactics to reach those goals are identified and devised and then it is presented as the church's VISION. After that comes the implementation, or, to use simple terms, the plan is put into action. Done properly, a VISION plan can be very helpful and it is something about which the Pastors, Staff and Deacons of Grace Community spend a lot of time talking and praying. As you read this article, my prayer is that God will speak to your heart and fill you with a passion to be part of what God is doing in and through Grace Community Church.

**WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT WHAT GOD WILL DO THROUGH GRACE
COMMUNITY CHURCH TO GLORIFY HIS NAME!**

We can envision many exciting opportunities for ministry and growth here at Grace in the days to come. However, we must also be careful not to allow VISION to be about man's thoughts instead of God's thoughts. I fear that many churches fall into the trap of thinking they are following God's lead when, in reality, their VISION is man-centered and is little more than an imitation of the American business model sprinkled with a few Bible references to make it seem spiritual.

*Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city,
spend a year there, carry on business and make money.'
Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life?
You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.
Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'"
(James 4:13-15)*

In view of James' precaution about making assumptions about the future, Grace Community's vision for the future must be based upon what God has revealed in His Word (the Bible) about His will for the church. The Bible identifies six primary functions God has willed for the local New Testament Church. One could say this is God's vision for Grace Community Church and our job is to implement it. They are:

1. Preaching/teaching God's Word
2. Discipleship of believers
3. Evangelism
4. Prayer
5. Worship
6. Service

These six things are God's will for Grace Community Church and they are permanent. They

will never change nor can they be replaced. They are our future. Do you know what is exciting about this?



Based upon the certainty of these truths and the promises of God's Word, we echo the sentiments of the great pioneer missionary of two centuries ago, William Carey, who said:

**EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD
ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD**

Grace Community will always be exploring and identifying strategies and tactics as we move toward the future God has for us. New possibilities include, but are not limited to, developing a comprehensive addiction ministry ... expanding our building facilities to maximize the effectiveness of our children's and youth ministries ... finding new ways to use technology to spread the gospel, disciple believers and connect people to each other. But as you hear about strategies we are exploring, and plans/preparations we are making for the future, always remember that the vision for Grace Community Church is not for us to invent or create. It is revealed to us by God, in His Word, and it consists of six primary elements.

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| 1. Preaching/teaching God's Word | 4. Prayer |
| 2. Discipleship of believers | 5. Worship |
| 3. Evangelism | 6. Service |

We are always looking for ways to improve and grow so that Grace Community can do these things more effectively in the future. We are grateful for Grace's past, we are active in Grace's present, but we are looking to the future God calls us to.

As God, in His kindness and love, grants us success in these six areas we will fulfill our ultimate mission:

To glorify God by building biblical relationships
with God, with each other, and with our neighbors
so that we might reflect Christ."

With this in mind, you are warmly invited to join us as we:

**EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD
ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD**