

## Grace Baptist Church Vision Statement: An Explanation

### Abstract

This paper seeks to explain the vision statement of Grace Baptist Church in order to provide a clear understanding of the vision for the church to work towards.

### Introduction

The vision statement was jointly crafted by both the English Congregational and Chinese Congregational leadership and announced on Oct 2013. The vision states that Grace Baptist Church is a disciple-making church that transforms lives with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ. The vision statement is the desired vision of the church: it serves as a state that the church is to progress towards; and serves to guide the life and ministries of the church.

### Explanation of the Vision Statement<sup>1</sup>

***Grace Baptist Church is a disciple-making church that transforms lives with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ.***

What does the “gospel of Jesus Christ” mean?

*Matt 4:23; Luke 4:18-19, 24:44-49; Rom 1:16-17, 8:19-22; 1 Cor 15:1-3; Eph 1:20-23.*

**The gospel is the proclamation of the good news – of the forgiveness of sins for sinners, accomplished by Jesus Christ’s crucifixion and death on the cross, his burial, and subsequent resurrection.** The gospel of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is good news for the Church because it speaks of redemption for sinners, and reconciliation between God and man. **The gospel is good news for all because it speaks of the restoration of all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ when God’s kingdom fully comes.** In grateful response to the gospel, disciples are to proclaim the message of the cross and in obedience do the works that accord with the gospel. Good works do not save but serve as a testimony to the transformative power and wisdom of the gospel. The gospel should inform and permeate the life and ministries of the church as the Church makes disciples.

What is a “disciple”?

*John 20:21; Acts 11:26; Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 11:1.*

**A disciple is an imitator of Jesus Christ. Disciples are to learn from Jesus Christ and grow to be like him.** A disciple (Gk. *Mathetes*) is basically the pupil and

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<sup>1</sup>The following explanation is an articulation of the vision statement for the English Congregation of Grace Baptist Church.

learner of a teacher. Jesus' disciples – all Christians – are called to a life of learning from and following the Lord Jesus Christ. This is done in community – a church. No man is an island and it is in the community of disciples that we progress with one another in our faith journey. As his disciples, we are sent to make disciples, bringing others into fellowship with the community of disciples in a local church.

What is “disciple-making”?

*Matt 28:16-20; Mark 13:10, 14:9; Acts 1:8; 2 Tim 2:1-2, 4:2.*

**The Great Commission to all disciples** is to:

**A. “Go and make disciples”** – This commands us to be prepared to make disciples wherever we are, as we evangelize and disciple others; and also to the nations as we participate in Missions.

**B. “Baptizing”** – This commands us to call people to identify with Jesus Christ, calling them to repentance and faith and entering into a relationship with the triune God; and

**C. “Teaching them to obey”**. This commands us to instruct disciples in the gospel faith, and teach them to obey Jesus Christ's teachings. Disciple-making occurs under the Lordship of and is empowered by the presence of Jesus Christ until the end of the age.

**Disciple-making comprises being a disciple, discipling, and evangelism.** We are first and foremost called to be a disciple actively learning from Jesus Christ. Discipling involves helping a disciple to follow and grow in Jesus Christ, maturing in the faith. Evangelism involves proclaiming the gospel to bring someone to a relationship with Jesus Christ. Disciple-making occurs in the context of a community of faith within the church.

What is a “disciple-making church”?

*Acts 2:42-47, 26:16-18; Rom 10:17; Eph 4:12; Phil 2:16; Col 3:16; 2 Tim 2:1-2; 1 John 1:1.*

The Church of Jesus Christ is a people created by, sustained by, shaped by and empowered by Jesus Christ. Disciples are joined to Jesus Christ by faith and are joined to each other in Christ as members of the local church. It is the proclamation of the gospel through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God that is at the heart of the church's life and ministry. Our disciple-making should be Bible-centred.

**The task of the church, and thus church members, is to glorify God the Father. This is done by going into the world and making disciples – declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and building a community of faith that worships the Lord and obeys his commands.** The church member is the one who does the work of disciple-making. The leaders and teachers in the church are responsible to model, train, equip and support the church member for the work of disciple-making. This task is primarily accomplished by the leaders' and teachers' instruction and

modelling of disciple-making. Every member is then responsible for participating in creating a culture of disciple-making in the church.

What does “transforms lives” look like?

*Deut 6:5; Mic 6:8; Matt 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; John 3:3, 5-6; Rom 12:1-2; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 4:15; Col 1:28.*

A transformed life signifies one that is dead to its previous trespasses against God and is born again into the new life and hope that is in Christ Jesus. This is primarily the work of God in the disciple. God grants the Holy Spirit to dwell in the disciple and regenerates the disciple.

**The end product of disciple-making is the maturing of the disciple in this new life in Christ.** A disciple that abides in Christ will become more Christ-like – it is a continual process empowered by the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit transforms lives by the renewal of the whole person – heart, mind and will. The primary means of transformation and renewal is through the Word of God which reveals the gospel and love of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God working through the Word of God results in renewed minds, changed hearts and conformed wills. Transformed lives look like Spirit-filled disciples who know God, love God and do His will as they make disciples.

What does the “love of Jesus Christ” mean?

*Matt 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; John 13:34-35; 1 John 2:7-11, 3:11-18, 4:7-12.*

**The gospel of Jesus Christ shows clearly the love of Jesus Christ. Compelled by the love of Christ, disciples are to love God, love their fellow disciples and love their neighbours.** The love of the Father in Jesus Christ is revealed most clearly by Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross as a propitiation for the forgiveness of our sins. It is because God first loves us that we love others. The love of Jesus Christ is expressed in works of love towards other disciples in the church, especially in helping them grow to become like Christ; and also in sacrificial works of compassion to our neighbours. Good works of love are a living-out of the gospel. The greatest love is to share the gospel.

How does the process of transforming lives “with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ” occur?

*Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37.*

**The transformation of lives primarily occur when the Word of God is preached, taught and applied in community.** Ultimately, transforming lives is the work of God the Holy Spirit. However, God often works through means. Lives are changed through the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible. Good works serve as a witness to the power and ethos of the gospel, and a demonstration of the love of Jesus Christ. Good works are an application of the Word of God.

## What is our response and responsibility as members of Grace Baptist Church?

**In response to the gospel and love of Jesus Christ, each and every member of the church is to be a committed disciple and disciple-maker – they are to be imitators and followers of Christ.** In response to the gospel and love of Jesus Christ, each disciple is to be a *growing* disciple progressing to maturity in Christ. They are to proclaim the gospel and evangelize the lost. They are to live lives that increasingly demonstrate the power and ethos of the gospel and increasingly love one another across any barriers, e.g., age gap, socio-economic gap, ethnic differences, etc. They are to sacrificially help fellow Christians grow to maturity within the community of the church. They are to participate in the life of the church at Sunday services, prayer meetings and members' meetings.

**In response to the gospel and love of Jesus Christ, each and every leader and teacher of the church is to be intentional and deliberate about enabling disciple-making.** They are to be disciples that make disciples. They are to equip the church for disciple-making through instruction and modelling. They are to raise and develop new Word-centred, Christ-imitating, Gospel-proclaiming mature leaders who would in turn carry on the task of disciple-making. And they are to create a culture of disciple-making that permeates the life and ministries of the church by aligning the organisation, structure and processes of the church to support disciple-making.

## **Conclusion**

As we progress towards our vision of a disciple-making church that transforms lives with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ, **we will as a church increasingly portray God and picture the gospel to the surrounding watching world.** In doing so, we will continue to bring honour to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and glorify God.

*Disciple-Making Framework Taskforce 2015*  
*On behalf of the*  
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