

Sunday, October 25, 2009—State of the Assembly Address 2009

### Introduction

- Welcome to our annual meeting and two year anniversary celebration.
- On Sunday, October 27, 2007 a group of saints from West Side Grace Church in Muskegon Heights, MI were joined by saints from a Bible study that had been meeting in Cedar Springs, MI in forming what would become Grace Life Bible Church.
- From that first meeting of 30 in the cafeteria at Apex Spring and Stamping we have become the assembly you now see in this room.
- I want to do three things with you this morning:
  - Remind the congregation of our overall ministry strategy.
  - Recognize the accomplishments of our assembly over the past year.
  - Present the board's goals for year three.

### Paul's Core Strategy

- When we first meet two years ago I presented Paul's core ministry strategy as the model for how we were going to attempt to do things here at Grace Life Bible Church.
- Between Acts 13 and 20, a period of 10-12 years, Paul established churches in four Roman provinces: Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia.
- In Acts 13 there were no churches in these provinces; by Acts 20:1-3 (when Paul wrote Romans) Paul could speak as if his work there was done and could plan extensive journeys into the far west without anxiety that the churches he left behind would perish in his absence.
- Romans 15:14-24
- How did Paul accomplish this amazing feat? What was his strategy?
  - He **evangelized** strategic cities to establish a beachhead of believers.
  - He **edified** the new believers in sound doctrine.
  - He **established** the communities of believers into organized local churches.
  - He **enlisted** key men that could be trained to carry on the work and lead the churches in his absence.
  - He used the local churches as a base from which to **expand** the gospel into outlying communities.

- At our first meeting the last Sunday of October in 2007 I spoke about Paul's pattern of ministry:
  - Establish local churches in urban centers that could reach into the surrounding areas. Acts 15:36, 16:12, Acts 17, 18:10, 19:35
  - Ordained and established elders that would be responsible for the care and oversight of the local churches. Acts 20:28, Titus 1:5
  - Duly appointed elders are instructed to follow and teach the Pauline design for the edification of the believer.
  - Paul's desire for the saints was to lead the Grace Life in their homes, at their jobs, and in the local church.
  - Paul needed fellow laborers to partner with him in the ministry. In order to be successful every ministry needs people to share of their time, talents, and finances. Philemon 24, Colossians 4:11.

### **Accomplishments From Year Two**

- Before I list all of the things we accomplished together I must acknowledge that none of this would have been possible without the help of faith fellow laborers.
  - Kitchen Staff
  - Nursery Staff
  - Children's Church Teachers
  - Music Department
  - Sound and Audio Visual
  - Greeters
  - Conference Workers
  - Buildings and Grounds
  - Bulletin
  - Treasurer
  - Board Members
  - Members
- The following is a list of what we have accomplished by striving together for the faith of the gospel:
  - Moved into our new facility
  - Christmas program and fellowship dinner
  - Right Division 101 Sundays
  - Collaborated with Shorewood Bible Church for a Teen Winter Retreat

- Test drove an adult Sunday School class
- Hosted Eastern morning fellowship breakfast
- Launched the Just Grace It Marketing Campaign
- Started the Grace Life Mug Club
- Updated our Music Program
- Launched the Grace Life School of Theology
- Began a contemporary evening service
- Seasonal Woman's Bible Study
- Hosted our first Teen Lock-In
- Grace Life Grill Out
- Revamped the churches websites
- Successfully hosted our second conference
- Expanded the Children's Church by adding the Tween Class
- Organized and printed and updated church directory
- Opened a small book store
- Had at least one visitor every week we have been in the new building
- Grew the our fellowship from about 60 to around 90 saints

### **Board Goals for Year Three**

- We have already grown by bucking the conventional wisdom about church growth within Grace Circles. We will continue to preach the gospel of the Grace of God, teach the Pauline design for the edification of the believer as well as the principals of the Grace Life. This will continue to be done in an atmosphere of grace that allows people time and space to learn and understand without being judged or condescended toward.
- Focus on Evangelism
  - Personal evangelism
  - 4 organized intentional evangelistic events
- Retention of Visitors
  - 8 week New Believers Class
  - Better follow up procedures
  - Exit Survey
- Young People's Advisory Board
  - Quarterly Meeting with the 20-40 year olds (all others welcome) to discuss better ways to reach people in this age bracket.
- Continued Improvement of Current Ministries
  - Finished Child Care Procedures and Guidelines
  - Begin writing comprehensive Children's Church Curriculum from ages 3-16
  - Recruit substitute teachers for the Tween and Teen classrooms
  - Ect.

- Stabilize our Financial Situation
  - Financial Report to Follow
- Immediate Needs
  - Nursery Supervisor
  - Audio Visual workers for rotation
  - Teachers/Subs for the Tween and Teen classes

### **Conclusion**

- At our conference a couple of weeks ago Brother David Reid encouraged and challenged the congregation regarding the potential our ministry has to make a difference for the truth of grace.
- Privately Brother Reid told me that he could see our assembly being one of the premier grace churches in the country if our people caught the vision and chose to support it.
- All of our out of town visitors were amazed at our facilities, layout, and location within the city.
- I agree with Brother Reid, as an assembly we are positioned to make a significant difference for the truth of God's grace in West Michigan for years to come.