

## Understanding and Fulfilling our collective stewardship as a church.

1. What specifically would it look like for Grace Church to become an Ephesus type church? A CityChurch?  
*A network of simple churches and church clusters within or across a key city/cities, that together function as a strategic hub for the work (church multiplication) throughout a regional area.*
2. What are some things we can do right away to continue moving us in this direction? How can we accelerate our growth and development in following this tradition? Investing in the simple things of life? Leaving ourselves the time to engage in deep relationships with nonbelievers? Structuring our households, activities, resources for that purpose?
3. Gifted leaders are to continue to lay the foundation and frame in the structure (Eph 4:11 type leaders). The saints are to live in it as it grows filling it with the life of Christ, community by community, church by church, family by family. Thinking about our lives as a house, a temple that God is constructing.

### Quotes:

“They were to return to their first love. Somehow they had strayed away from the very things that Paul had been teaching them and the passion that they had originally. Yes, they had an orthodox faith Jesus said in that first letter, but they had forgotten their first love. The flame had gone out, the passion had gone out, they needed to remember what all this stuff was for. What was all this teaching and instruction for? So they could be passionate about God and his plan for the world and be working together towards it. It’s not enough fill them up with knowledge. That knowledge has to turn into action. Love is an action word. You see if someone loves you by the way they treat you and the manner in which they relate to you. So the call back to their first love is not a fuzzy warm feeling. It is a call to action. Go back and do the things you’re supposed to do. Your first love. Respond to Christ we’ll. Fulfill your role. Fulfill your stewardship. That’s what the apostle John, one of Jesus’ 12 disciples, was calling them to. His letters talk about that. He was working there in the Ephesus region in the mid-90’s. Ephesus was a strategic church for several reasons. **1.)** Paul spent 3 years there. **2.)** There was a convergence of key leaders there Apollos, Priscilla, Aquila and then eventually Paul. Paul invested heavily in the eldership at the foundation, more than in any other church. When Paul gathered the Ephesian elders there on his last pass through and he was saying goodbye to them (Acts 20) he told them I have taught you the whole counsel of God. Don’t forget how for three years, day and night, I taught you going house to house. He spent considerable time with the leaders of this church making sure they understood this VISION, this PLAN, this ADMINISTRATION and that they would follow through on it. **3.)** Then he stationed Timothy there to solve problems with the eldership that emerged a dozen years after he trained them. So it’s an ongoing relationship because it’s a strategic church, one that God had designs for in that region. John also heavily invested in the Ephesian churches as seen by his letters in Revelation.”

- By comparison, Kevin spent 7 years at Grace Church beginning to lay a foundation. Bill Burns spent 5 years here, completing the foundational work. Steve Galegor spent 13 years here building some transitional habits, intended to start moving us from our traditional mindset & habits, toward a radical new way of living together. Steve continues to visit and engage with us. He continues to teach and train leaders here in our context. Steve has also stationed me here (I am an Eph 4:11 type leader with a global focus, participating locally), with a couple of other young leaders (who have a local focus, but participate globally), in order to bring us the rest of the way

and complete the journey we've been on for the last 27 years and see us fully embrace Christ's plan, shape our lives and habits around it, and mature into a strategic Ephesus-type church.

"We could compare Grace Church with these criteria for what it would mean to be this type of church. It's not one large church, but a cluster of multiplying churches. It's missional. It's not about building one huge megachurch as we've come to understand it in the United States today. It's the idea of a multiplying cluster of churches that could spread out through a whole region, that are tied together by a common vision and a team of leaders that are working together. It's dependent on everyone actively growing in their stewardship. In other words, everyone becoming established. It's not a matter of size, facilities, money or any of those kinds of things. It's a matter of everyone in the church becoming established and doing the work of service, the work of the ministry. Strong families are key. Not a strong preacher. Not a strong radio ministry. Every family being a strong family. That is the key. Some resident Eph 4:11 type leaders are present and working from a church base. You have leaders present in the church like Paul, Timothy and Titus and are working with the leaders in that church."

- When you realize that Jesus' plan is to multiply simple home-based churches by means of our deep, meaningful relationships with nonbelievers, it suddenly makes sense why households are so important. Why family order is so critical. Why we talk about households as mission centers. Why we need to trade off our church activities for time to invest in relationships with coworkers, acquaintances, friends and family members. And why we need to rethink how we refer to ourselves (Grace CityChurch)... how we refer to the property and buildings we have (resource center)... and how we steward and use those buildings in a way that reflect Jesus' actual plan, and not merely the comfortable traditions we've grown up with (a base for training leaders)... and how we support Eph 4:11 type leaders, so they are free to do the work and fulfill their calling.

#### Does Grace Church meet any of the criteria for thinking of ourselves as this type of church? A CityChurch?

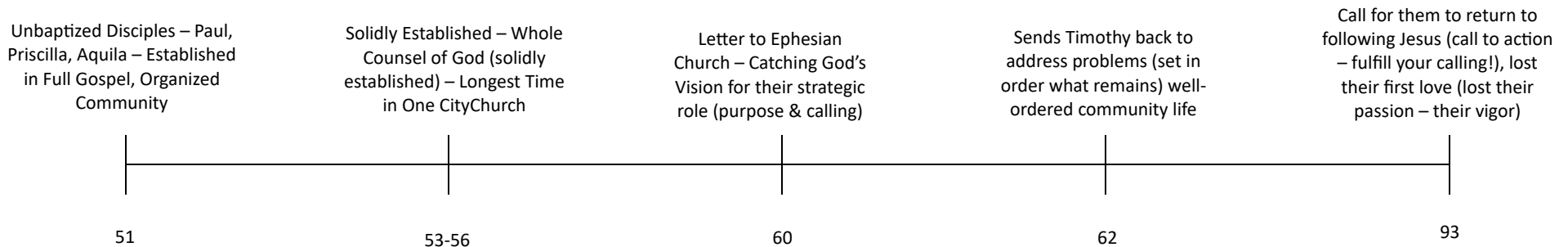
- We have a good initial foundation in understanding the first principles of Christ. Twenty-five years of working through these ideas and thinking about them.
- We have a mixture of Eph. 4:11 and local elder/deacon type of leaders
- We have made the move away from the idea of a senior pastor. As an Eph 4:11 type leader, my role is to train leaders within the context of Grace Church, and beyond Grace Church as a part of our regional apostolic team, Metro Equipping Coalition. My role at Grace Church is not to prepare a message and organize a service each week, but to equip heads of households to lead their families well, and so we can all participate well in the mission of Christ.
- We have a growing connection locally, nationally and globally with a truly church-based network. Locally – Scott as Eph 4:11 type leader; Regionally – connected to MEC apostolic team; Nationally – with BILD & Michael Voss and the Accelerating Church Planting initiative. Globally – with Steve Galegor and the Global Center for CBTE.
- We are located in an incredibly strategic area, where the global population has come to us. Nearly 150 unique languages and cultures represented by the population across Passaic – Clifton – Paterson area.

We need to have everyone completing the final session of each first principles booklet, which culminates in a mini-plan for reshaping some part of our lives around what we have learned. And we need to all engage in maintaining journaling and a portfolio of our work and habits, so that we can all self-assess our progress and clearly see where we need to go next. Without these two pieces, we will continue to feel like we understand the ideas, but our lives will not be transformed and our habits will not be built around Christ’s plan. However, another reason this has been difficult until now is that we had not made the move to gathering as simple churches in homes. Without that context, it is nearly impossible to understand the first principles. Trying to understand the first principles while maintaining a traditional Evangelical church model, is like trying to fit square pegs in round holes. We had to change our framework first, and now I hope things will continue to make sense more and more.

A Case Story: Canton Church

<https://bild.org/stories/united-states-developing-a-benefactor-church-that-makes-a-global-impact>

Timeline of the apostles’ investment in the strategic church (CityChurch) in Ephesus



# Grace Church Shepherding Meeting

August 31, 2011

Topic: What is the larger picture of our stewardship as a church and how does it inform the development of our church and the particular decisions and direction we need to set as a leadership team?

We are strategically placed within an emerging larger complex network internationally, nationally and regionally through the BILD network. Our task is primarily to determine and work within a stewardship in our own area (geographically and ethnically) in order to build such a network.

This will require that Grace church embody and pattern itself after the 'Way of Christ and the Apostles' as a model for the larger network.

This means that we need to develop and shape ourselves around these component parts of the complex network:

Small nodes (churches)

Clusters (groups of churches within a city or locale)

Hubs/Connector churches (like Ephesus or Antioch)

Apostolic network (teams of sodality/modality leaders, communication, publishing, etc)

A definition of each within our situation:

## Small nodes

1. This is under development at Grace Church. We are not yet patterned after the simple branding of the early churches but remain with a foot in two worlds: that of traditional attractional church and that of a set of relationships rooted in the Kerygma and Didache.
2. We have a good sense of the social structure but do not yet practice it well at the level of multiplication with the home or smaller gathering around a meal, lead by elders/co-workers, and the place where evangelism and growth (physically and spiritually) primarily happens. This is what we need to come to call church - this gathering. Our larger gathering together would then be for edification, training, and strengthening the cluster of churches, but not "church."
3. The church can grow at this level ad infinitum and go into any place. This is the grassroots level of the network and requires leaders (elders) and fathers well-trained in the first principles.

4. This size makes us shaped for mission and can include particular ethnic nodes without forcing conformity to a larger model.
5. Coworkers and sodality leaders move around among these churches.
6. First Principles and life development and identity are key.
7. What are the issues which will help us better develop this practice?

### **Groups of Churches (Clusters)**

1. This is a small network of small churches. They are held together primarily by their leaders and relationships which must be maintained across all the 'churches.'
2. This could extend well beyond Clifton.
3. This cluster of churches might require a central office space to serve a certain number of churches as they multiply and expand.
4. BILD's Leadership Series is an important resource here in developing the leadership team which oversees the churches and deals with issues that keep them all on track.
5. A building may be necessary at this level to service the cluster of churches, but it may be accomplished through rented office space and an occasional larger space for gathering the whole cluster of churches (quarterly? More Often?)

### **Strategic City Churches (Hubs)**

1. This is a larger regional network of churches who may not ever meet together, but will know of each other via network leaders that ties the churches together.
2. We have an emerging team of leaders and churches in the region that will form this level of network.
3. The Antioch School is designed to service this level of network development in order to produce a wealth of type 3 and 4 (Timothy-Titus) type leaders for the network and its multiplications.
4. This level of network will be very multi-ethnic by nature and can continue to expand as such.
5. We might be involved in specific tasks and projects that other churches in the region through training or relief efforts, etc.
6. A building or resource center is absolutely necessary to service the network here.

### **Apostolic Networks**

1. This is the team that is shaping and establishing the churches (the faith, the teaching, meeting strategy, sound doctrine, core social structure, passing on the deposit)
2. There are all kinds of leaders at this level developed within the churches or as a cohort among the churches (Grace's Ethnic network)
3. We might engage in larger efforts together to assist other networks worldwide.

4. These leaders are all well-developed in the 'Way of Christ' in order to shape and expand the current network and potentially start new ones where there are none present.

### **From the BILD Encyclical 'The Churches of the First Century'**

There are three tasks for apostolic type leaders to accomplish as the essence of their stewardship in leading church-planting movements.

1. Establish the churches correctly: solid DNA of the —way of Christ and His Apostles.||
2. Invest in strategic hubs, shaping the churches, building them into strong networks of churches, committed to serving the whole; and a series of Pauline teams based among the strategic hubs, moving amongst the church clusters and across the network, respecting the sodality/modality balance of leadership.
3. Design a complex network, including current and future apostolic leadership; shepherding the movement with network wide communication; recognition of leadership; writing of key papers, books, and letters; and the convening of —Jerusalem councils|| as needed.

BILD is a tool to build a complex apostolic network designed to serve your movement of churches.

1. The First Principles system to establish your churches—the nodes.
2. The BILD learning system Type I–V, the Leadership Series I and II, and the Certification System to build your apostolic teams.
3. Paradigm papers, encyclicals, and the Antioch Manifesto to lay foundations for your communication system, councils.