

Philosophy of Ministry

It has been said that if you aim at nothing you will hit it every time. To approach ministry without proper and accurate aim is to miss the intent of the Scripture's clear admonition to set things in order in the church (Titus 1:5). This booklet is intended to define and direct Crossroads, Grace Community Church's college and career ministry. In these pages, our leadership team has endeavored to lay a foundation upon which our ministry can find its mandate and mission.

Our goal has been to outline our approach to ministry in a way that honors God and accurately reflects His Word. First, we set forth our theology of ministry. In this section, we have sought to articulate the biblical convictions that determine and control our approach to ministry. These, we believe, must be the starting point to guide a proper understanding of what are to be and do in the ministry that God has given us.

Next, we communicate our strategy of ministry. Here we address the three spiritual relationships that Scripture calls us to cultivate as priorities in our ministry: our relationship with God, with other believers, and with unbelievers. The Bible not only specifies these relationships as priorities; it also gives us clear direction regarding how to honor the Lord through them. This section seeks to articulate these truths.

Last comes our methodology of ministry. This consists of some of the practical components that constitute the implementation of our theology and strategy of ministry. In other words, this is what we do. In this section, which rests upon the foundation of the first two, you will find applications of our theology of ministry fleshed out in specific programs and events.

The relativistic nature of postmodernism has unfortunately found a welcome mat at the door of the modern church. Our prayer is that this "philosophy of ministry" will serve as a compass for Crossroads and continue to point us toward God and His truth. Our programs and events may change and grow, and come and go, but the framework of theology laid out in these pages is to be the plumb line that keeps us on track for the glory of God.

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THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY

The biblical convictions that determine and control our approach to ministry

The Foundation of Scripture

The Bible is the very word of God (2 Tim 3:16) and is therefore without error and completely trustworthy in all that it asserts. In a world of no absolutes, God's Word stands as absolute truth to be known and applied in every area of life. Scripture is the very foundation upon which the church is built and comprises not only the content of the message that the church proclaims, but also the methods by which the church operates. Every decision and aspect of ministry must be submitted to the scrutiny of relevant biblical data. A ministry void of the teachings of Scripture will also be void of the blessings of God.

The Authority of Scripture

God is the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice because of who He is. Therefore, He has the right to establish and command the standard for belief and practice. Since Scripture is the very Word of God, its message is absolutely authoritative for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). As Wayne Grudem states, "The authority of Scripture means that all the words of Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God" (Systematic Theology, 73).

The ramifications of the authority of Scripture upon a ministry are manifold. For example, the church is never to stray outside of the boundaries given in the Word of God. Every aspect of ministry (whether a sermon, Bible study, program or activity) must be motivated by an understanding of the authority of Scripture and must bring that Scripture to bear upon the lives of believers. Furthermore, since the Bible is completely authoritative for belief and practice, the church need not derive its methods from the culture of the day nor conform its message to that which is acceptable in the eyes of the world. Rather, ministry must be dictated by principles taught in Scripture itself.

The Sufficiency of Scripture

The Scriptures are not only authoritative over every aspect of life and ministry; they are also sufficient for the same. Second Timothy 3:16-17 states, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." The implications of this verse are astounding, for it asserts that the Word of God is sufficient for all areas of ministry, including preaching, teaching, and counseling believers unto godliness. Therefore, the primary focus of every sermon, Bible study, or counseling opportunity must be the teaching of Scripture. Any time the church gathers, the emphasis must be on the proclamation of God's Word and the exhortation to obey it (1 Tim 4:13).

A ministry that believes in the sufficiency of Scripture will do everything possible to bring the Word to bear on the lives of the congregation. The sufficiency of Scripture demands that individuals as well as ministries be devoted to and trusting of the Word of God. In other words, a proper view of Scripture demands our obedience and our belief. It demands our affections, our faith, and our understanding.

The Glory of God

The chief end of God is to preserve and display His infinite and awesome greatness, namely, His glory. In Isaiah 48:11, the Lord proclaims, "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another." God's supreme purpose is to manifest His glory. God is jealous for His own glory and will not share it with anyone.

The glory of God is shown in at least four ways. First, God reveals His glory in creation. Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.” Second, the glory of God is revealed in His Son, as taught in Hebrews 1:3: “And He [Christ] is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature” (cf. 2 Cor 4:4). Third, the glory of God is manifested in salvation. Every aspect of salvation is “to the praise of the glory of His grace” (Eph 1:6, 12, 14). And fourth, God’s glory is revealed in His people. The apostle Peter urges believers to exercise their gifts in such a way “that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever” (1 Peter 4:10-11).

If the ultimate goal of God is to preserve and display His glory, this too must be the ultimate goal of the church. The glory of God thus becomes both the motivation for and the goal of a biblical ministry. When contemplating any aspect of ministry, the most pressing question must be, “Will this glorify God?” In this way, the glory of God becomes the limiting factor for the activities and programs of any ministry and is the primary criterion in making decisions. Furthermore, if a ministry is to display the glory of God properly, there must be the highest level of excellence in its operation and in the programs it offers. With God as the audience and the glory of God as the goal, the activities of a ministry must always reflect the excellence of His name.

The Preeminence of Christ

The Christian faith is inextricably linked to the person of Jesus Christ. Having existed eternally with God (John 1:1-15), Jesus is both the Creator (Col 1:18) and Preserver of all things (Col 1:17). In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form (Col 2:9), because He is the exact representation of God’s nature (Heb 1:3). In His incarnation, the second person of the Trinity became flesh (John 1:14), and in His death and resurrection, He defeated sin and death (1 Cor 15:54-57). Having purchased sinners with His own blood (Acts 20:28) and ascended in glory to the right hand of the Father (Eph 1:20), Christ was exalted as head over all things, including the church (Eph 1:20-23; Col 1:18). He lives today as the way, the truth, and the life, and the only way to the Father (John 14:6), for to know Him is eternal life (John 17:3).

Because of who He is and what He has done, Jesus Christ is to be preeminent in the life of the church. Not only is He the sole means of salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12), He is also the primary focus of sanctification. Christ is to be obeyed (Matt 28:20), He is to be emulated (1 John 2:6), and He is to be proclaimed (Col 1:28; 1 Cor 2:2; 2 Cor 4:5). The church must submit to His headship and exalt Him in all things (Eph 1:20-23; Col 1:18), whether through worship of His person, conformity to His character, or proclamation of His name. Simply stated, the church must have a single-minded and passionate focus on the person of Jesus Christ.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

In addition to His work of regeneration in the heart of the believer (John 3:6; Titus 3:5), the Holy Spirit serves as the Agent of at least six ministries in the life of the Christian. First, He indwells the believer and thereby serves as a pledge of the believer’s future inheritance (Eph 1:14). Second, the Holy Spirit fills the believer in that He influences and enables him to live an obedient and God-pleasing life (Eph 5:18). Third, the Spirit brings comfort to the hearts of those who are downcast (Acts 9:31). Fourth, He intercedes for believers when they don’t know when to pray (Rom 8:26-27). Fifth, the Holy Spirit produces in the believer love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). And sixth, He personally equips individual believers with gifts for service in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:11).

In light of the Spirit’s various ministries, the church must proceed with the humble awareness that the Holy Spirit is the One who produces obedience in the lives of believers. He is not only at work to bring sinners to Christ, but He is also the One who produces in them the Christ-likeness that is the goal of every Christian. Therefore, one’s own pursuit of holiness, as well any efforts to shepherd others toward holiness, must be permeated with a genuine and prayerful dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit, for He alone is able to produce the character for which all believers are to so diligently strive.

The Depravity of Man

The Bible teaches that man is not born into this world morally neutral, but rather that he is totally depraved. According to Scripture, the unregenerate man is unable to understand or accept the things of God (2 Cor 1:18; 2:14), his mind is depraved (Rom 1:21, 28; 3:11) and defiled (Titus 1:15), and his understanding is darkened (Eph 4:17-18). His heart is continually and exclusively evil (Gen 6:5; Eccl 9:3), he is an enemy of God and a lover of wickedness (John 3:19-20; Rom 5:10; 8:7; Col 1:21), and his intent is to carry out the desires of Satan himself (John 8:44). The unbeliever finds himself enslaved to sin and its various lusts (Rom 6:17, 20; John 8:34; Titus 3:3) and unable to please God or do that which is truly good in His sight (Rom 3:12). He seeks not after God on his own (Rom 3:11) and therefore has no hope of doing anything to bring about his own salvation.

That man is depraved means not that he always acts as wickedly as possible, but rather that wickedness so permeates his entire being that he is enslaved to it and is therefore inherently unable to respond to the Gospel in faith and repentance. This reality has profound implications for the ministry of the church, particularly in the area of evangelism. Because the unbeliever is spiritually dead (Eph 2:1; Col 2:13), no amount of eloquence on the part of the evangelist is able to grant him life. Because he is spiritually blind, no amount of human logic or reason is able to open his eyes to the truth. And because he is spiritually enslaved to sin, no amount of evangelistic persuasion is able to free him from his unbelief. In light of these truths, the evangelist must depend not on his own rhetorical ability to convince the sinner to come to Christ, for this ability simply does not exist. He must look instead to the One whose power supersedes his own in drawing sinners to faith in the Savior. Simply stated, the evangelist's hope as he seeks the conversion of the lost is found in the sovereignty of God.

The Sovereignty of God in Salvation

Understanding the sovereignty of God in salvation first involves looking back into eternity past. Scripture teaches that before the foundation of the world, God unconditionally chose certain individuals to be saved (Eph 1:4). This choice, which was not based on God's ability to look into the future and see who would some day choose Him, was entirely unconditional (Rom 9:11; Eph 2:8-9) and was designed to bring Him glory (Eph 1:5-6) as the One who graciously bestows mercy upon whom He desires (Rom 9:14-24).

Scripture also teaches that those individuals who were elected unto salvation in eternity past are then drawn to Christ in space and time by the sovereign work of the Father (John 6:44, 65). As the apostle Paul writes, "whom He predestined, these He also called" (Rom 8:30a).

This inward calling of God is effectual and thus never fails to bring His chosen ones to belief in His Son (Rom 8:30). Therefore, the sinner who comes to Christ does indeed come in faith and repentance, but only because God has first convicted him of his sin (John 16:8), opened his heart (Acts 16:14), and granted him that faith (Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim 2:25) and repentance (Acts 13:48; 18:27; Phil 1:29; 2 Pet 1:1). In salvation, then, God sovereignly takes the initiative by both choosing who will be saved in eternity past and calling those chosen ones to Himself at the point of conversion.

A right comprehension of the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners has its most direct impact in two areas: worship and evangelism. With regard to worship, the church with an appropriate appreciation for God's sovereign work of salvation is one which exalts the Lord and gives Him alone the praise and glory for what has taken place when someone comes to Christ. The salvation of a sinner is designed to demonstrate and magnify the gracious character of the sovereign Creator, and the church is to grant Him this rightful honor when He puts His power on display in this way.

As for evangelism, when the church proclaims the message of the Gospel to depraved sinners, she does so with the recognition that God is the Savior and that salvation is His work and therefore a demonstration of His power and sovereignty. Faithfulness to clearly and accurately proclaim the Gospel is a must (Rom 10:14), but this proclamation is made with the comforting awareness that the Lord is the One who opens the heart of the sinner to respond to the message. The hope and confidence of the evangelist, then, is to rest not "on the wisdom of

men, but on the power of God” (1 Cor 2:5), the One who both predestines the elect and calls them to Himself in accordance with His good pleasure.

The Priority of the Church

In Matthew 16:18, Christ said, “I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it,” and He has done just that! The church, which is comprised of all who have repented of their sin and placed their faith in Christ, is a living organism made up of true believers who “offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). Christ so loved the church that He died for her (Eph 5:25) that He might sanctify her and present her to Himself in all her glory, blameless and without spot or blemish (Eph 5:26-27). Christ both nourishes and cherishes the church (Eph 5:29), and exists as head over His bride (Eph 5:23). The church, having been “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Eph 2:20), is to function as “the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). It is through the church that believers are equipped to mature into the likeness of Christ (Eph 4:11-16) and unbelievers are presented the Good News of the Gospel (Matt 28:19-20).

Because the church constitutes God’s primary vehicle for working in this age, it is vital that all believers identify with, function in, and submit to the leadership of, a local church (Heb 13:17). Believers are to edify one another with their spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11), regularly assembling together (Heb 10:24-25) that they might devote themselves to the teaching of God’s Word, fellowship, celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and prayer (Acts 2:42). Because of the premium that Scripture puts on this kind of involvement in the local church, a given ministry must seek to foster in God’s people a deepening love for and commitment to the church, as well as a biblical understanding of what it means to function as the church.

The Imminence of Christ’s Return

The Second Coming of Christ is well-attested throughout the New Testament. Those present at Christ’s ascension were told that He would return in the same way in which He went into heaven (Acts 1:11). As a result, believers past, present, and future eagerly await His literal, bodily return to earth (Matt 25:31; 1 Cor 1:7; Phil 3:20; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; 1 Peter 1:13; Rev 1:7). Although the return of Christ will occur as promised, the exact day and hour of that return are unknown (Matt 24:36). Because the Lord could return at any moment, believers have possessed an earnest hope and expectation that He might suddenly return to gather His people to Himself (Col 3:4; James 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:7). In fact, Scripture often likens Christ’s Second Coming to that of a thief who comes in the night when people least expect it (Matt 24:43; 25:1-13; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10).

In light of the imminence of Christ’s return, believers must be ready and on the alert (Matt 24:42-44; 25:1-12), living each moment as if Christ was returning that very day. They must live faithfully (Matt 24:45-51; 25:14-30), diligent in prayer, love, hospitality, and service of one another, that God may be glorified (1 Peter 4:7-11). Above all, the imminent return of Christ should cause God’s children to live holy and godly lives (2 Peter 3:11-14). Mindful of the imminence of Christ’s return, the church must place a premium upon the preparedness, godliness, and Christ-likeness that is befitting the bride of the One who is coming soon.

STRATEGY OF MINISTRY

The spiritual relationships to be cultivated as priorities in our ministry

Upward Relationship (God)

The believer’s upward relationship with God is to be one of worship, which is attributing to God the honor and glory due Him through proclamation of His worth and presentation of one’s life.

Worship through Proclamation

Every believer is given the mandate and privilege to worship God by proclaiming His infinite worth (Deut 6:13; Matt 4:10). In fact, the apostle Paul lists worship as one of three characteristics of a believer (Phil 3:3), and Jesus declares that true worshipers worship “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). This kind of worship occurs in a heart quickened by the Spirit of God and which understands His truth as revealed in Scripture. True worship involves sincere and genuine affection rooted in biblical truth, as the believer’s whole being joins in joyful praise of God.

God’s Word makes it clear that although the corporate worship of the church is a unique time when believers gather to declare as one body the greatness of the Lord and to offer undistracted devotion and adoration to Him, worship is not to be limited to these times. Rather, grateful corporate worship is to be an overflow of one’s personal life of devotion and adoration of God and is evidence of being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18-20).

Although the primary emphasis in Scripture is the state of the worshiping heart, the form of worship is also quite significant. First, our forms of worship must provide channels for the mind to apprehend the truth of God’s reality. Therefore, a worship service must seek to ignite the affections with biblical truth as taught from the Word of God. Second, worship must offer outlets for the heart to respond to the beauty of that truth. Thus, our services must provide the opportunity to express these affections with biblical passion.

True believers will display a desire to worship God both personally and corporately, both through prayer and songs of praise to the Lord. If a church or ministry does not provide times for individuals and the body to express adoration to God, then those individuals may abandon biblical worship for empty forms that seek to fulfill their inherent desire to worship. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the leaders of a ministry not only to consistently teach the saints what it means to worship biblically, but also to provide opportunities for the flock to worship in response to the truth of who God is and what He has done for His people.

Worship through Presentation

While there is a tendency to view worship as something that takes place only during church services, the apostle Paul calls believers to worship the Lord as a way of life: “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom 12:1). This kind of worship begins with an appropriate appreciation of the mercies of God and expresses itself in the presentation of oneself to God as a living sacrifice. While the Old Testament saint was to come before the Lord with various animal sacrifices, the New Testament believer is called to come and present himself. This involves coming before the Lord and surrendering oneself to Him and understanding oneself to be His possession and to exist for His purposes.

According to Paul, this placing of oneself at the Lord’s disposal is to flesh itself out in two ways. First, the believer is to refuse to pattern himself after the ways of this present evil age. Simply stated, Paul says, “And do not be conformed to this world” (Rom 12:2a). In other words, this kind of worship involves refusing to buy into the world’s philosophy, to live according to the world’s standards, to make decisions according to the world’s priorities, to pattern one’s heart according to the world’s affections, to form convictions according to the world’s beliefs, and to plan one’s life according to the world’s values. Second, the believer is to continually renew his mind to the truth that he might be transformed and grow in righteousness. In the words of Paul: “be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2b). The key here is for the believer to continually renew his thoughts so that they line up with the truth of God as expressed in His Word. This mind-renewal, says Paul, will bring about an inner transformation in which the believer progressively becomes more and more righteous in who he is, what he thinks, and what takes place in his heart, and it will ultimately result in obedience to God’s will. This kind of continual presentation of oneself to the Lord as a living sacrifice is worship that is acceptable and pleasing to God.

In recognizing the priority of this kind of worship in the life of every believer, a biblical ministry must be committed to spurring on the flock in this direction. This equipping of the saints will take place primarily in two ways: serving as examples and ministering the Word. As examples to the flock, it is incumbent upon the leadership to begin by presenting themselves to the Lord in worship and living lives before the people that are worth imitating (1 Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:3; 1 Cor 4:16; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 1 Cor 11:1). In ministering the Word, the leadership must follow in the footsteps of the apostle Paul and minister the Word both publicly and privately (Acts 20:20), always seeking to impart spiritual truth (“teaching”), expose sin and error (“reproof”), restore those who have fallen spiritually (“correction”), and cultivate righteous living (“training in righteousness”) (2 Tim 3:16).

Inward Relationship (Believers)

Edifying the Saints

In considering the kinds of relationships that God calls us to have with other believers in the church, it is essential to realize that every member of the body of Christ is called to full-time Christian ministry. Not all have been called to pastor in the church, but all possess God-given ministry responsibilities in the body of Christ, and these ministerial mandates chiefly concern the relationships between believers. Specifically, these take the form of living out the “one-anothers” and exercising spiritual gifts.

Throughout the New Testament, God has made it clear that how we treat one another is of the utmost importance. Believers are exhorted to

- contribute to one another’s needs (Rom 12:13)
- spur one another on to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24)
- love one another (John 13:34-35; Rom 13:8; 1 Pet 1:22; 4:9; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7-12; 2 John 1:5)
- be devoted to one another in brotherly love (Rom 12:10; 1 Pet 3:8)
- give preference to one another in honor (Rom 12:10)
- accept one another (Rom 15:17)
- admonish one another (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 5:14)
- be united with one another (Rom 12:16; 1 Cor 1:10; 1 Pet 3:8)
- serve one another through love (Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 4:10)
- show forbearance to one another in love (Eph 4:2)
- be kind to one another (Eph 4:32; 1 Pet 3:8)
- be tender-hearted to one another (Eph 4:32)
- forgive one another (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13)
- speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph 5:19)
- teach one another (Col 3:16)
- encourage one another (1 Thess 5:11, 14; Heb 3:13; 10:25)
- build one another up (1 Thess 5:11)
- help one another (1 Thess 5:14)
- be patient with one another (1 Thess 5:14)
- be hospitable to one another (Rom 12:13; 1 Pet 4:9)
- be sympathetic toward one another (Rom 12:15; 1 Pet 3:8)
- restore one another (Gal 6:1)
- bear one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2)
- be humble toward one another (Phil 2:3; 1 Pet 3:8; 5:5)
- look out for one another’s interests (Phil 2:4)

In addition to practicing the “one-anothers” within the body of Christ, all believers are also to be faithful stewards of their God-given ministry by exercising their spiritual gifts (1 Peter 4:10). According to Scripture, a

spiritual gift is a special, supernatural spiritual ability given to every believer (1 Cor 12:7, 11b) by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:11a) for the purpose of serving (1 Cor 12:7) and edifying the church (1 Cor 14:12, 26). The spiritual gifts listed in God's Word include apostleship (Eph 4:11), prophecy (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10; Eph 4:11), the distinguishing of spirits (1 Cor 12:10), wisdom (1 Cor 12:8), knowledge (1 Cor 12:8), faith (1 Cor 12:9), healing (1 Cor 12:9), miracles (1 Cor 12:10), tongues (1 Cor 12:10), the interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10), evangelism (Eph 4:11), teaching (Rom 12:7), pastor-teacher (Eph 4:11), exhortation (Rom 12:8), service (Rom 12:7), mercy (Rom 12:8), giving (Rom 12:8), and leading (Rom 12:8). Although not all of these spiritual gifts are still existence today (i.e., those which were revelatory and confirmatory in nature ceased toward the end of the first century), it is imperative that every member of the body of Christ know the way in which the Lord has gifted him and that he is diligently exercising that gift to the glory of God (1 Peter 4:10-11) and the edification of the body of Christ.

Equipping the Saints

While the New Testament commands believers to practice the one-anothers and exercise their spiritual gifts, it is the responsibility of the leadership to equip them to do so. In Ephesians 4:12, Paul writes that gifted church leaders are given for "the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." The church is edified when each individual believer is taught and instructed how to function in it properly. Thus, one priority of the church and church leaders must be to train and equip believers to practice the one-anothers and exercise their spiritual gifts.

This equipping takes place in many ways. First and foremost, believers are equipped to function in the church when they are taught what Scripture teaches regarding their ministerial responsibilities (i.e., the one-anothers and spiritual gifts). Through the faithful teaching of God's Word, believers are trained in righteousness and equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17), namely how to relate to other believers and serve them with their God-given giftedness. Thus, the teaching of God's Word constitutes the core of the church's equipping ministry.

Second, believers are to be encouraged and exhorted to respond to such teaching in obedience. Equipping Christians to function properly in the church occurs not merely when they hear the Word, but when they obey it (Luke 6:46-49; James 1:22-25). They must be exhorted to treat others in the body of Christ as outlined in Scripture, to recognize how God has gifted them, and then to put that giftedness into practice within the body. Therefore, exhortation to obey what the Word says is a necessary complement to the teaching of the Word.

Third, equipping the saints occurs when those in leadership model the practicing of the one-anothers and the exercising of spiritual gifts (1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet 5:3). Since much of godliness is caught, not merely taught, leaders must ensure that their lives and ministries serve as a model for what is expected of all believers.

Fourth, the church must constantly hold before the people the need for every believer to be involved in full-time Christian ministry. Ephesians 4:12 indicates that the work of the ministry lies not only with the leadership, but with all believers. Therefore, the tendency to leave the ministry to those paid to do it must be resisted. Instead, the expectation that all believers be engaged in the work of the ministry must be constantly communicated.

Central to an effective equipping ministry is the realization that equipping is a lifestyle and not a specialized program, for it involves the impartation not simply of information but also of one's very life (1 Thess 2:7-8). The key is for those who are mature in the faith to develop relationships with younger believers that can serve as avenues for them to be equipped in their walk with Christ and taught how to conduct themselves in the body. Thus, it is vital that this process not be limited to merely a formal program, but that it also include an informal process in which mentoring relationships facilitate equipping.

Outward Relationship (Unbelievers)

Evangelism through our Walk

God purposes to save each believer in order that they might be to the praise of His glory (Eph 1:6, 12, 14). Because believers can better glorify God in heaven than on earth, why would God leave believers on earth after their conversion? One reason is found in the fact that they are to serve as His witnesses to the unbelieving world. In Acts 1:8, Christ told the disciples that they were to be His witnesses “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” In a similar sense, each believer today is to bear witness concerning the salvation that only Christ offers.

While recognizing that unbelievers cannot be saved apart from receiving the Gospel in faith, Scripture also puts a premium on the way that believers live before an unbelieving world. One of the primary ways believers testify about Christ is through living holy and godly lives. Since God has prepared good works for each believer to walk in (Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14), they are to conduct themselves as children of light (Eph 5:8), thereby adorning the doctrine of God in every respect (Titus 2:10). They are to live as aliens and strangers in this world, keeping their behavior excellent among unbelievers, in order that some might be led to Christ (1 Peter 2:11-12; 3:1-2). For this reason, Christ requires that all believers let their light shine in such a way that the world sees their good works (Matt 5:16; cf. Phil 2:15).

Through living holy lives in a godless age and building relationships with those without Christ, believers serve as powerful witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Their sacrifice for others, commitment to integrity, meeting of needs, hatred of sin, and love for God provide affirming testimony of the saving power of God.

Evangelism Through Our Words

There exists in contemporary Christianity a growing mind-set that unbelievers can be saved apart from hearing the Gospel. In contrast, however, Scripture makes it clear that

The proclamation of the Gospel is indispensable to the salvation of the lost. As Paul writes, “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom 10:14; cf. 1 Cor 1:20-25; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23). As God has ordained the end, He has also ordained the means, and that means is the communication of His Word, for “faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17).

The responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel to the nations falls on the shoulders of the church. God has ordained that every believer be engaged in faithfully communicating the Gospel and making disciples of the nations (Matt 28:19-20). In this ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19), believers have been commissioned to plead with sinners to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus (2 Cor 5:20). This divinely ordained role of serving as ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 5:20) is not only a command but also a privilege. To neglect this stewardship is to refuse to join with Christ in His purpose of coming to earth: “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

The mobilization and strategy for reaching the nations in fulfillment of the Great Commission begins with those in leadership serving as a model of personal evangelism. In addition, the leadership is to train each believer to understand and be able to clearly articulate the Gospel. Finally, the leadership is to trust that through a high view of God, a bold desire to share their faith, and a willingness to obey the commands of Scripture, each believer will embrace with joy the personal privilege and responsibility of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

METHODOLOGY OF MINISTRY

The practical components that constitute the implementation of our theology and strategy of ministry

Methodology (or “what we do”) is in some ways a dangerous part of articulating a philosophy of ministry. It is “dangerous” in the sense that it is easy to let what we actually do in the ministry be the defining feature rather than what we believe. Pragmatism is the stealthy enemy of putting a program on paper. And the temptation to measure the effectiveness of ministry by activity must be avoided. So, in turning attention to the program and events of our ministry, the previous two sections must be understood to conceive, inform and direct every nuance and detail of what we do. This section of our philosophy is constantly being evaluated to ensure that it is the result of our theology and strategy, not the cause.

Our methodology is broken down into three levels: corporate, Bible Study, and leadership. The corporate level involves those programs and activities that involve Crossroads as a whole. The Bible Study level includes ministry components that affect the individual studies. And the leadership level addresses the features of our program that identify and train leaders for all levels of Crossroads. It must be stressed again that all the constituent parts of our methodology are to be the direct result sound theological convictions.

The Corporate Level

Sunday Mornings

Sunday morning is the primary rallying time for the entire Crossroads ministry to gather for worship. Our service is contemporary and energetic, and it consists of worship through singing, prayer, and the reading and proclamation of God’s Word. Sunday morning sermons can be downloaded from the Crossroad’s website.

Music Ministry

The primary purpose of our music team, which consists of a contemporary band made up of individuals from our ministry, is to lead in worship through music at our Sunday morning service. The team carefully selects songs that are both biblical and God-centered and practices weekly to ensure that the quality of the music is excellent.

Prayer Ministry

As a ministry, we seek to encourage and model prayer. Once a month, our Sunday morning bulletin contains a perforated prayer card which contains prayer requests for the ministry. Crossroaders are encouraged to tear off the card and keep it as a reminder of ways to pray for the ministry.

Assimilation Ministry

Every Sunday Crossroads enjoys numerous guests and visitors. At the beginning of the service, new visitors are publicly welcomed and given a silver colored welcome bag. The bag contains information about our ministry, a flier that communicates the gospel, a small gift and a visitor information card. In addition to a public welcome, Crossroads has a booth called Crossroads Connection that helps minister to guests and those who have questions about the ministry. A team of men and women warmly greet visitors and are equipped to answer questions about the ministry. Crossroads Connection contains information about our Bible studies, ministry teams, Crossroads events, and anything else pertinent to the ministry.

In addition to Crossroads Connection, we have several ushers on our assimilation team that are very intentional about looking for and helping guests feel welcomed. They help people find seats, answer questions, and are easily identified by nametags. The assimilation team is also responsible for following up with the new visitor information cards. They call new visitors, answers questions, and help people get involved in the church, at Crossroads, and in the Bible studies. The assimilation team works closely with key individuals from each Bible study to ensure every person is cared for and able to easily get involved.

Activities

Each fall we have a ministry-wide event that takes place on a Saturday afternoon. This provides students an opportunity to get to know students from other Bible studies and enables the ministry as a whole to build unity. During the spring, Crossroads hosts an annual volleyball tournament which raises money for missions, provides opportunities for evangelism, and allows Crossroads to enjoy a time of fun and fellowship. During the summer we hold a 4-6 week "Super Study" where all the Bible studies get together on Thursday nights at church for a special series on a designated topic. We sing, listen to preaching, and enjoy fellowship with food afterwards. Topics of past series have included the "Solas" of the Reformation and biographies from church history.

Missions

Because Crossroads is dedicated to seeing the gospel spread not only on our college campuses, but also around the world, we work with Grace Ministries International in sending Crossroaders on summer short-term missions trips. People travel to different parts of the world to work with churches, Grace Church missionaries, youth camps, and various other groups, assisting in various activities such as building projects and evangelistic outreaches. Each summer we generally send 100-150 people overseas. Funds raised during the Crossroad's volleyball tournament are used to help offset the cost for those participating from Crossroads. Individuals raise money to play in the tournament. This tournament is held in April and often raises more than \$30,000.

Resolved Conference

Each summer Grace Community Church organizes a conference originally aimed at students and young adults. In the 18th century, young Jonathan Edwards wrote 70 resolutions that he was determined to live by for the glory of Jesus Christ. This conference has taken its queue from Edwards and aims to motivate those who attend to live passionate lives grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The first Resolved Conference in 2005 took place in Garden Grove, CA and has since found a home in Palm Springs. The conference provides an opportunity to be immersed in truth through preaching and signing. The conference enjoys several well known key note preachers, including our own pastors John MacArthur and Rick Holland. The preaching is accompanied by the music ministry of Enfield which makes for a wonderful weekend of worship.

The Bible Study Level

Small Groups

Within each Bible study, the people divide up into even smaller groups. These groups take a variety of forms and formats depending on the Bible study, but the consistent purpose and emphasis of the groups is discipleship and accountability.

Discipleship

Formal and informal discipleship in Crossroads primarily takes place at the Bible-study level. Through small groups and individual relationships we attempt to cultivate an environment in which older believers are ministering to younger believers. The staff serving at each Bible study play a crucial role in helping to facilitate discipleship relationships.

Preaching

Because the proclamation of God's Word is vital to our ministry and to the lives of our students, the Scriptures are expounded every week at the individual Bible studies. This consists of either consecutive exposition of a book of the Bible or topical exposition of passages concerning issues that our students face. While the shepherd of each student does the bulk of the teaching, others who are also gifted to teach share in this privilege.

Retreats

Every fall, each of the Bible studies leaves for a weekend retreat consisting of Bible teaching, fellowship, and the building of unity among those in the study. These retreats set the stage for the school year by allowing the shepherd and leadership team of each study the opportunity to get to know the students, encourage them in their walk with Christ, and cast a vision for the coming school year.

Campus Outreach

Our ministries on the UCLA, COC, USC, and CSUN campuses, each known as “Grace on Campus,” provide a unique opportunity for outreach to unbelieving students. These range from evangelistic events to cold turkey evangelism on a personal basis. For a description of Grace on Campus at UCLA, see the appendix, “Grace on Campus at UCLA: A Portrait of a Campus Ministry.”

Prayer Ministry

Prayer is both encouraged and modeled at each individual Bible study. Most of the Bible studies take prayer requests each week and provide a complete list for the students to pray through during the week. In addition, prayer is an integral part of the meeting time of each of the studies.

Activities

All of the Bible studies in Crossroads engage in a wide variety of activities other than their weekly meetings. These can include things such as cookouts, sporting activities, or over-night camping retreats. The purpose of such activities is to strengthen relationships and enjoy one another.

The Leadership Level

Training Shepherds

“Shepherds” are chosen by the pastor and elders of Crossroads to lead the different Bible Studies in the ministry. The shepherds have regular meetings together with the pastor on Tuesday mornings at 6:00 to have a time of prayer, equipping, accountability, and fellowship. There is also the summer retreat for the Shepherds where vision is cast for the coming school year and the state of the ministry is evaluated.

Training Undershepherds

Each of the shepherds chooses several men to assist him in the weekly operation of the Bible Study. Undershepherds come alongside the shepherd in the leadership of the Bible Study, assist in shepherding the students, teach at the study, and help in its administration. Undershepherds regularly attend the Tuesday morning meetings that are held at 6:00 to be equipped and held accountable to one another. The shepherds are also held responsible for equipping and overseeing the undershepherds their Bible studies.

Training Teachers

There are two primary ways in which we train teachers in Crossroads. First, at the Bible study level, undershepherds (and sometimes other men) are given the opportunity to teach the Scriptures during a weekly meeting. Some time after he teaches, the shepherd takes the opportunity to give helpful feedback and insight regarding growth in his teaching ministry.

Second, at the corporate level, every fall we begin a training program called Cutting It Straight. Consisting of four levels, Cutting It Straight is designed to help the students in Crossroads both to accurately interpret and clearly communicate the truths of God’s Word. Level one focus on hermeneutics (how to interpret) and levels two and three focus on how to communicate (homiletics). Training manuals have been written for all three levels and serve as the basis of this training time, which takes place on a Sunday afternoon. After being trained, the students involved in the program are given time to complete an assignment. The students come back and present their findings at a second gathering. Those in levels one walk through a given passage together and discuss how various hermeneutical principles apply to the text under consideration. Those in levels two and three present a twenty-minute message to a team of evaluators who provide both oral and written feedback designed to help the students become more effective in their teaching.

Small Group Leaders Training

Every Fall, Crossroads provides a daylong seminar to train small group leaders. The seminar lays out a biblical philosophy for small groups and deals with topics such as shepherding, discipleship, components of a small group, and preparing a small group discussion.

Aspire

Aspire, taken from 1 Tim 3:1, is a ministry focused on helping identify and train men interested in eldership, the pastorate, music ministry, and missions. Meetings take place three times a year and focus on discussing character, ministry skills, and biblical/theological issues. During the meetings missionaries, pastors, and elders are brought in to speak on various subjects (counseling, missions, preaching, music ministry, etc.). The majority of this time is spent in Q&A time. This gives the men opportunity to ask questions about ministry and keeps it more personal. Reading and ministry assignments are given at each meeting and discussed at the next meeting. Those who attend the meeting also work with their shepherds in their Bible studies as they explore future ministry options.

Grace on Campus at UCLA

A Portrait of a Campus Ministry

Although it is part of Crossroads, Grace on Campus (GOC) at UCLA possesses some unique features that warrant further explanation. This appendix serves to highlight those features to present a model for a campus ministry. Although it is impossible to replicate this exact model at other campuses since there are elements unique to UCLA, the basic principles can be used in any campus ministry.

Since its beginning in 1984, GOC has had a significant impact at UCLA. Numerous factors make the ministry at UCLA effective. First, UCLA is primarily a non-commuter campus. The fact that nearly all the students live on campus creates an environment that facilitates an effective campus ministry. Students who live together, study together, eat together, and recreate together form a close-knit community. The relationships that develop in this context provide a firm foundation upon which a campus ministry can be built and the Gospel can go forth.

Second, the fact that GOC meets weekly on the campus of UCLA promotes its effectiveness. Meeting in a lecture hall on campus makes it possible for students without a car to be a part of the ministry. Further, meeting on campus ensures that the students of UCLA are the primary focus of the ministry.

Third, GOC is primarily a student-led ministry. Although older adult leaders provide the oversight, instruction, and vision, the students who attend GOC are the ones who do the work of the ministry. Students lead ministry teams and small groups, organize ministry events and play a significant role in Friday night meetings. Because a student-led ministry is a student-owned ministry, they work hard to ensure that what is done honors God and is done excellently.

Fourth, as an extension of Grace Community Church, GOC has access to its many resources. Being part of a church provides the necessary doctrinal foundation, the biblical leadership of elders, a pool of people to assist the ministry, and practical aspects like rooms, equipment, etc.

The following constitute the core elements of Grace on Campus:

Leadership

The “shepherd” is the one who provides the primary pastoral oversight and leadership for GOC. His responsibilities include preaching on Friday nights, shepherding students, training small-group leaders, casting vision, and generally overseeing all aspects of the ministry. Because GOC is part of Crossroads, the shepherd works closely with the Crossroads pastor in determining how GOC should function on the campus and how it fits into the larger Crossroads ministry.

Men who are called “undershepherds” assist the shepherd in the day-to-day operation of the ministry. Their responsibilities include, training specific students for leadership, shepherding small group leaders, teaching equipping classes, overseeing various aspects of the ministry, and assisting the shepherd in the overall purpose and direction of the ministry.

Adult leaders from Grace Community Church, called “staff,” also provide leadership to GOC. The staff members build relationships with the students by interacting with them during the Friday night meetings and making themselves available to answer questions. They specifically develop relationships with the small group leaders offering support and counsel. These adults are invaluable to the ministry as they model godly lives and marriages. Their example and counsel help develop maturity in student’s lives, giving them a picture of godly living in future stages of life.

In addition, approximately 40-50 UCLA students serve as small group leaders within the ministry. Their job is to shepherd the other students within GOC in a smaller setting where Bible study, prayer, and accountability are possible. Because these small group leaders are intimately involved in people’s lives, they are able to serve as liaisons between the small groups and the leadership of GOC. Then men and women are affirmed and equipped by the leadership of GOC and are all members of Grace Community Church.

Finally, various ministry teams serve to meet specific needs within GOC. Nearly all of these teams meet separately each week to plan and strategize how to fulfill their team responsibilities. There are five areas of ministry in which these teams fall under: Administration, Music, Service and Helps, Outreach/Evangelism, and Welcome/Follow-up. Each of these areas has a leader who provides leadership for the various teams under his care. For example our Service and Helps ministry has several teams that fall under its umbrella such as care team, childcare team, prayer team, rides team, and our skid row ministry. There are over 15 different ministry teams. For a complete list of all the ministry teams and their descriptions see graceoncampus.org.

Friday Night Fellowship

GOC meets weekly on Friday nights from 7:00 to 9:00 for singing, teaching, and fellowship. A typical meeting begins with announcements and welcoming the new visitors. This is followed by a time of singing led by the music team. The shepherd will then preach for approximately 45 minutes. Recently, such series have included studies in The Sermon on the Mount, Romans, and Humility. A short time of singing closes the evening. Additionally, skits, videos, testimonies or staff interviews are sometimes part of the evening. This Friday night meeting constitutes the main meeting of GOC on the campus of UCLA.

Equipping

Although the preaching times on Friday night serve as an important part of GOC’s equipping, many other aspects contribute to this essential part of the ministry.

The small group ministry of GOC functions as the greatest avenue for shepherding and equipping the students. As noted previously, small groups are GOC’s way of ministering to the needs of people in a smaller setting. They are primarily led by junior, senior, or graduate students and usually consist of 4-6 students each, all of the same sex. The groups meet weekly for discipleship, accountability, prayer and Bible study. Each small group leader has the freedom to lead his or her group as best fits and can choose their topic of study accordingly. Each Friday night, new visitors or those not in a small group yet have the opportunity to sign up for one and are contacted soon thereafter.

Small group leader meetings take place monthly on Saturday mornings. The shepherd and undershepherds use this time to train the small-group leaders on various aspects of shepherding, teaching, and leading their students. Subjects covered during this training time include the purpose of small groups, how to lead a biblical discussion, the character of a leader, how to disciple, the role of a shepherd, shepherding the heart, counseling, training new leaders, and how to confront those in sin.

Each fall and spring, GOC takes a weekend away for a retreat. These retreats provide unique opportunities for both equipping and building relationships. During the fall retreat, the teaching times focus on preparing the students for the upcoming year of ministry. While some time is given to discussing program changes and calendar events, much of the weekend is devoted to discussing attitudes to be cultivated during the year. The goal of the fall retreat is to start the year on the same page and to call the students to commitment, excellence, and a passion for God's glory. In addition, plans for promoting GOC during the first week of school are discussed and the aforementioned ministry teams are formed. During the spring retreat, the weekend focuses on looking back on the past year, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, and rejoicing in what God has done. GOC also offers several seminar classes throughout the year on various topics and subjects. The classes range from half day forums to weekly meetings that continue for the entire quarter. Classes include topics such as systematic theology, how to study the Bible, Old Testament survey, Theology Proper, Small Group Leadership Training, finding a church after college, finances, and evangelism training. These classes are normally taught by the shepherd, undershepherds, or staff.

In order to ensure that all students in GOC possess a proper understanding of the Gospel, each year a course entitled "A Theology of the Gospel" is taught. Although primarily geared for incoming freshman, this 8-week class is open to anyone desiring to understand the Gospel more clearly. It focuses not only on an academic comprehension of the facts, but also on the practical aspects of presenting the Gospel to an unbeliever. The students are required to memorize key verses, complete weekly homework assignments, conduct periodical surveys, and engage others with the Gospel.

Evangelism

Since GOC is a campus ministry, its primary goal is to reach the campus of UCLA with the Gospel. While the most effective evangelism takes place through relationships, numerous events also occur to facilitate the spread of the Gospel. The table team, fisherman team, evangelism class, and welcome/follow team comprise some aspects of GOC's commitment to evangelism.

During the summer, orientation sessions at UCLA introduce freshmen to the campus and the many opportunities available to them. One aspect of the summer orientation program is a club fair. This fair occurs during each session of orientation and is an opportunity for incoming freshman to become acquainted with the various students clubs on campus. GOC provides information about the ministry during each orientation session. Those incoming freshman that sign up to receive information are written a personal letter by someone already in GOC telling them more about the ministry from a student's perspective.

Undoubtedly, the biggest evangelistic push during the year occurs during the first week of school as students are looking into the various campus ministries. Each night of that week an event occurs geared toward informing the incoming freshman about GOC. Events include a tour of the nearby campus town, a themed event such as a luau, and a praise night at an outside amphitheater on the UCLA campus. The first Friday night Fellowship culminates the events of the week. At each of these events, students use the time to build relationships, share the gospel, and introduce GOC. Someone in leadership will also take a few moments to explain the purpose of GOC and its distinctive.

Many other evangelistic activities also occur during the year. Every fall, GOC hosts a barbecue that is open to the entire campus. Students invite friends for free food and to stay for an outreach service. GOC also hosts a quarter cookout where a hot dog and soda are sold for a quarter and students in the ministry meet people in line waiting for food to share about the ministry and the gospel. The fisherman team helps facilitate random evangelism on the campus throughout the week where pairs of people will go onto to campus to initiate conversation with individuals in order to share the gospel.

Along with campus evangelism, GOC is committed to helping students develop a heart for missions around the world. Students are encouraged to join short term ministry teams at Grace Community Church during the summer months. GOC also has three adopted missionaries that are closely related to Grace Community

Church. Small each commit to caring for one missionary family. They pray for the family, send birthday cards, care packages, and get regular updates about the missionaries.

Special Activities

Many special activities happen weekly in GOC. For example, each Friday night after the meeting many of the students gather at an apartment for “After Fellowship Fellowship” to cap off the night and unwind from the week. Also, on Tuesday nights those students who live in the dormitories meet to eat dinner together. This encourages fellowship with one another and provides an opportunity for the students to bring their unbelieving friends. Additionally, each Saturday morning some of the students meet to play basketball.

Many other activities occur more occasionally. For example, after finals week each quarter, there is a large get-together called the “Survivor’s Party” to celebrate the completion of finals. Normally, this takes place at the home of one of the staff and is a great time of fellowship. “Dinner for 8” is another quarterly activity in which those living in apartments provide a dinner for eight other people. This encourages people to get to know others in the ministry that they might not normally interact with. Groups are put together randomly to encourage meeting new people.

While much of the tangible ministry occurs on the UCLA campus, many other ministry opportunities occur at the church. Numerous GOC students, serve in the nursery, help with communion cleanup, volunteer at church wide events, minister to shut-ins, and enjoy all the other ministries Grace Community Church has to offer. This type of church involvement accompanied by discipleship from church members and oversight from Crossroads and church leadership helps GOC continue to grow and mature as individuals and as a ministry.