

Dear Friends and Family

Thank you for considering partnering with Ruth and I, and my apprenticeship at Grace Seattle. I would love to talk to you one-on-one about how the Lord is calling us to serve in Seattle. In the meantime, the document that follows seeks to answer 4 questions that I hope will give you a good sense of what this church and this internship are about:

What type of mission field is Seattle?

How is Grace Seattle ministering in this mission field?

How does this internship fit into the mission of Grace Seattle as well as my personal calling?

What is the financial need, and how will it be met?

After reviewing this, please feel free to call me or email me with any questions that you have that you might like to discuss.

In Christ,
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WHAT TYPE OF MISSION FIELD IS SEATTLE?

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

- Seattle is now one of the 15 largest markets in America
- The population of the greater metro Seattle area is roughly 1.7 million people
- The population grew by roughly 230,000 people between 1990-2000
- Sixty percent of Seattleites moved here from out of state.
- From 2003-2005 42,000 immigrants moved into the Seattle area from other nations
- Between 1995-2000, Seattle was one of the top 10 cities to which 25-34 year olds migrated (27,201 moved here)
- Seattle has less children under age 5 per capita than any other city besides San Francisco (2000 Census)
- 20% of Seattle households have someone under age 18
- Seattle has less children than dogs (75,000 vs 150,000)
- The cohabitation rate is 250% higher than the national average (2000 Census)

FAITH IN PARTICULAR

Though many in Seattle would consider themselves spiritual in some sense, those who subscribe to a particular religious affiliation or attend regular religious services are in the minority. In fact, The Pacific Northwest is the least churchd region in our country. In one recent analysis of religion and public life, the Pacific Northwest was dubbed the “None Zone”, because “None” was the most common response to the question “What is your religion?” As the leading city of this region, Seattle definitely sets the tone. Approximately 8% of all Seattleites attend evangelical churches (by one count, there are more dogs than evangelical Christians in Seattle; 150,000 vs. 136,000).

To give you some idea of how this translates into life in the city, consider this. At a local public school with an enrollment of over 300 children, a group of parents decided to get together a group of people to pray for the school and the children. Three people participated (and one of them wasn't even a Christian!). Seattle needs the gospel in the worst way. Consider these additional statistics:

- Nationally, 50% of people go to a church, mosque or synagogue; Seattle only 33% (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 10.15.02)
- Researcher David T. Olsen states that Seattle church attendance may actually be as low as 13.9%
- The average church in Seattle claims 100 people in weekly attendance (Hartford Study)
- Among the 1.7 million Seattleites, their regular church attendance according to David Olsen breaks down as follows:
 - Evangelical 8%
 - Catholic 4%
 - Mainline Protestant 2%
 - Absent 86%**
- Seattle is largely comprised of younger people who are less likely to attend church (George Barna)
 - 31% of all 20 year olds attend church nationally
 - 22% of all 25-29 year olds attend church nationally
 - 42% of all 30 year olds attend church nationally
 - 49% of people 40 and older attend church nationally

HOW IS GRACE SEATTLE MINISTERING IN THIS MISSION FIELD?

VISION

The vision of Grace Seattle is:

*Because of the power of the Gospel, in and through our lives,
the city of Seattle will begin to look more and more like “the city of God.”*

What does this look like?

1. The City of God is defined by worship and is filled with worshippers from every tribe, tongue and nation. (Revelation 5:9-14; 7:9-11)

Our dream is that the city of Seattle would become more and more defined by the worship of the triune God. Our prayer is that our church would be the catalyst and continual agent in the transformation of our city because people from every tribe, tongue, and people group are coming to faith. Our vision is that our church would be a model for and agent in bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bear on the Pacific Northwest, the United States, and the world.

2. In the City of God, the renewing presence of Jesus Christ permeates every aspect of society. (Revelation 21:1-5, 22-27)

We envision so many believers in the city of Seattle that the presence of Jesus Christ is felt in every aspect of our society. We envision training people of every stripe: doctors, lawyers, business people, artists, students, the street cleaner and ditch-digger, to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bear on, and within, their spheres of influence. Our witness to the city of Seattle will be incomplete if we do not proactively seek to incarnate the gospel among the poor, the AIDS victim, and other marginalized elements of Seattle. We are called to bring the merciful presence of Christ to people whether or not they recognize him as Lord.

3. In God's city there is no curse, allowing for the full redemption of relationships and vocations. (Revelation 22:1-5)

At the end of Revelation, John sees a remnant of Eden—the tree of life. After the Fall, Adam and Eve were barred from its presence and all creation was cursed. In the City of God, all nations have access to the healing of that tree, and the curse, which brought toil and thorns, is lifted. We envision Grace Seattle being a catalyst for and promoter of the true reconciliation offered in the Gospel.

We also envision the city of Seattle filled with people for whom the curse has been, and is being, lifted—enabling them to see their vocations not as toil and misery, but as service and worship. Only as more and more people become followers of Jesus Christ and subsequently, begin to view their vocations as legitimate callings from God, will the city of Seattle see true cultural and social transformation.

VALUES

At Grace, we intend for the gospel to define and shape everything we do. What do we mean when we use this word "gospel"?

The gospel (or "good news") is both an announcement and an invitation. The gospel is the announcement that through Christ the power of God's kingdom has entered history to renew the whole world. The gospel is also an invitation to believe this announcement. When we believe and rely on Jesus' work and record (rather than our own) for our relationship to God, that kingdom power comes upon us and begins to work in and through us in every aspect of life.

At Grace, we believe that God works powerfully through the gospel. We have experienced this transforming work as well.

Though this is by no means an exhaustive description of how God works, we want to emphasize the following implications of the gospel in our life together.

1. The Gospel Changes Everything

The gospel is the "good news" about what God has done and is doing through Jesus Christ. It is not a law that we must do or achieve. Because of this, we seek to motivate one another with grace, not with guilt and shame.

Since the gospel is not only how to begin a relationship with God but also how we grow as Christians, we preach the gospel to Christians and non-Christians alike. Building our lives around the gospel allows us to serve with authenticity, hope, and confidence.

The gospel changes every part of our lives (i.e., life is not divided into the sacred and the secular). All of life is being healed and restored by God. This pushes us to try and figure out what it means to integrate our faith with our jobs, our art, our neighborhoods, our city, our music, and our relationships.

2. The Gospel Changes Lives

Religion makes nice people; the gospel makes new people. Religion reforms you on the outside; the gospel transforms you from inside out. For this reason, we tend to focus on the heart and motivation rather than a concrete set of behaviors.

Religion says: "If you live a good life, then God will love and bless you," leading to a deadly combination of pride and despair. The gospel says, "None of us is good. In fact, we are far worse than we think (this creates humility and authenticity). But the gospel also says that through Jesus Christ we are far more loved than we ever dared dream (this creates confidence and hope)."

To be a Christian means that you have been given a new identity, a new Father, and a new family. It also means you have a new source of power for your life. This creates deep, lasting change in us and an expectation of change in the community.

3. The Gospel Turns Our Faces Outward

The church is to be a community that is not exclusively focused on itself. Part of this means that we should do everything in our power to be welcoming. We desire for our church to be a place where non-Christians are expected, welcomed, and respected, with all their questions, objections, struggles, and doubts.

With respect to inviting non-Christians to follow Jesus, we are friendship-oriented, not combative. We take a process approach, not a crisis approach. The gospel allows freedom to love those who do not have the same convictions with the hope that in time, they too will follow Jesus.

The bottom line is that the church should be a place that empowers Christians to be missionaries in Seattle. The gospel should be making us a community where Christians say, “This is a community where I can bring my non-Christian friends. This is what they need to experience and life is lived out here in a way they can access.”

4. The Gospel Creates a New Community

Jesus came into the world not just to save individuals. Rather, Jesus came into the world to create a community. That community is the church. To be a Christian means to be a part of Jesus’ church.

Since the church is to be based on the gospel, the church should be marked by authenticity. We are a group of people that admit that we do not have it all together. This creates a deep authenticity in the community and a great openness towards non-Christians. Nobody is expected to be perfect. All of us, both inside the church and outside the church, need the same thing—the grace of God in Jesus.

The church is a historic entity. Our goal is not to create something utterly disconnected and separate from the historical church. Rather, we are to apply the gospel to the historic church—both forgiving its sins when needed and valuing its wisdom whenever possible.

5. The Gospel Creates a Movement Mentality

God is at every moment building and spreading his healing presence in our world.

God’s movement always trumps our agenda. Therefore, the people of God must be willing to step out of something established and comfortable in order to start something new. This involves everything from starting new small groups, pioneering new ministries and planting new churches.

God also gifts every single member of the church to take part in this mission. This means that we are to be actively recognizing the gifts of everyone in our congregation and encouraging one another to use these gifts to serve God and others.

6. The Gospel Renews the City Holistically

God's work in the world is holistic. God did not form a people simply to take them to heaven when they die; rather, to use them as his healing presence in the world. Thus, the church should be holistic—we should be seeking to address spiritual and physical needs at the same time. Helping someone pay their rent is equally as significant as teaching them about Jesus.

God is the source of every good gift. He intends for his people to use these gifts to serve and not selfish gain. For example, God calls the rich and powerful to use their gifts for those who have neither.

We partner with the people of Seattle in seeking to serve the physical and spiritual needs of the city because God is interested in both. The Grace Deaconate is a group of individuals in the church tasked to help meet the financial and physical needs of those in the congregation.

MISSION

In each church we plant there will be three basic steps—"mission chapters."

Chapter 1: Connecting the City to Christ through...

Worship. Our worship services are designed to glorify God, build up those who believe, and challenge and help those who doubt or seek.

Community Groups. The backbone of Grace Seattle is our growing network of small groups and ministry teams, in which face-to-face friendships and caring develop.

Church Life Ministries. Hospitality, parties, events, women's ministry, etc. are designed to enable new people to develop relationships and enable believers to relate to one another as family.

Chapter 2: Building Christians into Servant-leaders through...

Caring Ministries. Through Community Groups and (eventually) our Deaconate, we hope to provide a nurturing context for spiritual growth.

Discipling and Leadership Development. Through Community Groups, Grace U classes, and mentoring relationships, our goal is to

- help new Christians mature into servant-leaders,
- identify and involve emerging leaders in apprentice relationships, and
- nurture and support existing leaders in their ministries.

Prayer Ministries. We must undergird all our ministries and strategies with prayer and reliance upon God's grace. We must gather in groups for prayer to seek God's presence and praise him for what he has done.

Coordination Ministries. Sunday Ministries, Administration, Communication, and Finance. Through these ministries, we will support the overall work of the church by matching resources (people, skills, and finances) with opportunities for service.

Chapter 3: Releasing Servant-leaders within the City through...

Social Renewal Ministries. Partnering with mercy and community development ministries to bring healing, justice, and reconciliation to the poor and oppressed of the city.

Church Renewal Ministries. Evangelism, church planting, and missions. We don't want to simply grow our church here in Seattle, but reproduce it here and around the world.

RESOURCES

1. WEBSITE

"<http://www.graceseattle.org>" www.graceseattle.org
www.tomgalpin.com

2. BRIEF TESTIMONIES

Raphael: "<http://64.207.151.139/documents/Story032705.mp3>" <http://64.207.151.139/documents/Story032705.mp3>

(available for download from website under "How can you connect? / Media / Stories of changed lives / 27 March 2005)

Sarah: "<http://www.graceseattle.org/documents/Story121204.mp3>" <http://www.graceseattle.org/documents/Story121204.mp3>

(available for download from website under "How can you connect? / Media / Stories of changed lives / 12 December 2004)

3. SERMON

Rev. John K. Haralson, Jr., Senior Pastor: "<http://www.graceseattle.org/Haralson021807.mp3>"
<http://www.graceseattle.org/Haralson021807.mp3>

(available for download from website under "How can you connect? / Media / Grace Seattle Core Values/ 18 February 2007)

HOW DOES THIS APPRENTICESHIP FIT INTO THE MISSION OF GRACE SEATTLE AS WELL AS MY PERSONAL CALLING?

As part of Grace's mission to Seattle, the church is committed to training people how to do the work of the Gospel in highly secular, urban settings. More specifically, Grace's pastors John Haralson and Michael Subracko have a vision for an apprenticeship program that is geared toward giving fresh seminary graduates guidance and experience in using their training in a secular, urban, postmodern setting. While the Gospel never changes, the way that is applied to the specific brokenness of any one life or culture varies, and learning how that is done requires experience outside of the seminary classroom.

John and Michael's hope is to give as much as they have learned from their own experiences as they can to a young minister through an apprenticeship. Their desire is that the apprenticeship will be characterized by both: 1) systematic training through varied experiences and frequent feedback; and 2) organic relationships in which the apprentice is mentored in their personal growth and professional training. This is the apprenticeship opportunity that God has provided for me.

Specifically, the apprenticeship will be a full-time, 2-year commitment during which I will be provided with opportunities to develop the following skills/gifts:

- teaching/preaching
- evangelism
- pastoral care/counseling
- one-on-one discipleship
- small group discussion facilitation
- administrative organization
- worship service preparation
- community outreach and cultural engagement

With regard to my personal sense of calling, God has been working my whole life through various experiences and personality traits to call me toward urban, secular settings outside of the Bible Belt. My experience in campus ministry, my time in seminary and many of the relationships that I have made over the years is certainly a big part of that. In order to communicate in detail how I sense that Grace Seattle will fit into the big picture of God's calling on my life, as well as the smaller snapshot of this particular stage of my growth, I want to simply share some reasons why the Lord is calling us to Seattle and to do this apprenticeship with Grace Seattle:

"...First, I desire to come to Grace in order to serve his people in Seattle and give the gospel to those in Seattle who do not already know Jesus. While I am still in the process of discerning some of the specifics of my calling, I have sensed for years that God is giving me an increasing desire to live among and serve people in cultures that are "secular." Seattle is a place of beauty and rich culture, but it's also a city where there simply aren't many Christians. I care about cities like that, and I feel called to use whatever

abilities God has given me to: 1) equip Christians in such a setting to live the totality of their lives in light of God's redemptive purposes and his spreading kingdom; and 2) befriend, love, and offer Jesus to those who do not yet know him...

Second, I want to come to Grace because there is a lot I have to learn... At Seminary, I have been given a lot of tools and understanding that are necessary for doing ministry, but I have not grown in all the ways that I need to. In short, training is one thing and experience is another, and I need experience. Specifically, I want to "get my feet wet" doing ministry in a secular setting like Seattle with a church that understands what it means to love a city like Seattle. I need to mature emotionally and grow in wisdom to gain the ability to pastor people well... I need help and guidance learning how to do ministry... I need to learn how to offer the gospel not only to those I serve but also to myself so that I will serve in the power of God and not under the pressure of simply performing.

Third, in addition to gaining experience, I also want to continue my education by doing a small amount of directed, informal study as it relates to ministry, the Church, the Gospel and how one is to communicate this to a watching, needy world.

Fourth, and this is related to the idea of learning and growing, I desire to work in a place where it's safe to make mistakes... That I'm basically a legalist toward myself, proving my value with my work, guarantees that my mistakes will crush me unless I'm in a community where others won't let me sin in that way. I desire to work in a context where I am encouraged and given the safe space to be honest about my sin and my shortcomings. I desire leadership that will give me feedback and correction in a way that points me to the gospel and to Jesus so that I can actually grow instead of just learning to "fake it." I desire to work in a community where we actually care about each other instead of performing for each other...

Fifth, I want to gain hope. It's fashionable and common today to be cynical—even about the church... The fact is, though, that God raises the dead, and it's a sin not to have hope for the church. I want to learn to love the church and see her beauty..."

I would add to this that Grace Seattle will be an excellent training ground for whatever God will call me to in the more distant future. That calling could be ministry in a similar church, or church planting in a North America urban center.

In summary: for Grace, this apprenticeship moves them toward their goal of bringing the redemption of the Gospel to secular, urban settings like Seattle; and for me, this apprenticeship is a chance to grow not in my skills and abilities, but also simply a follower of Jesus.

WHAT IS THE FINANCIAL NEED, AND HOW WILL IT BE MET?

One of the realities of churches in areas of the world or country where Christianity has never been a dominant force in society is that they are poor. They're smaller, and those who attend typically do not have a lot of money since older, more established families tend to live outside of urban areas. Additionally, the PCA does not have a denominational mission fund through which financial gifts from giving churches are channeled to churches in need. Therefore, it's necessary for churches like Grace Seattle to fundraise in order to pay their staff. In short, I will be fundraising for Grace Seattle so that they can afford to pay me.

After discussing and planning with John Haralson and Michael Subracko, we've decided on a monthly budget for Ruth and I of \$5,00 (or a yearly budget of \$60,000, including benefits). This includes one time expenses of moving costs, housing fees, benefits, and ministry expenses. Thus, the total amount for the 2-year internship is \$120,000. I would be more than happy to provide you with a line-item budget if you would like to review it.

In order to meet this financial need I have a 3-fold strategy: First, Ruth and I will pray, and pray some more. Second, I will be recruiting individual supporters to partner with Grace Seattle in prayer and monthly or quarterly financial giving designated for this internship. Finally, I will be asking like-minded churches to partner with Grace Seattle in prayer and financial giving in the same way.