

Providence Center

“Making the Wisdom of God Known”

A Decade of Difference

On Monday morning, August 8, 2022; I woke and felt like the Lord was telling me the dream he had laid on my heart, and I had carried, for the previous 10 years had begun to be fulfilled in 2018 and would be fulfilled by the time I turned 66 years old.

That is why I started reworking this document. Writing this all down, updating and modifying it with the new truth and values he had built into my heart since that initial writing back in 2008

The Purpose of Providence Center

The purpose of Providence Center is pursuit of the purpose of God. There are numerous locations in Scripture which could be cited to discern this because all of scripture is the unveiling of that purpose. However, here is one place where the grand plan is directly approached and succinctly summarized:

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:10-11)

God’s eternal plan

“His intent...manifold wisdom...eternal purpose.” (Ephesians 3:10-11)

- • God has a purpose and plan. God’s plan is eternal. God’s plan is full of wisdom and perfect.
- • This verse is a summation of the truths he began teaching in **Ephesians 1**
- • God chose in eternity, **“before the creation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4)**
- • God planned in eternity, **“he predestined us for adoption” (Ephesians 1:5)**
- • BTW-God’s choosing (election) is distinct from his predestining. They are related, but distinct. His choosing is for adoption into a family and any person can be included in that **“when they hear and believe” (Ephesians 1:13-14)** so, inclusion wasn’t decreed in eternity past, it is granted in present time based upon faith. The Predestination refers to God’s eternal plan to create a family in Christ. Election is individual and conditional. Predestination is corporate and unconditional.

Jesus Christ the accomplishment of God’s plan

God’s eternal plan was accomplished in Jesus Christ our Lord. (**Ephesians 3:11**)

- • He chose us **“in him” (Ephesians 1:4,11)**
- • He **“predestined us for adoption...through the one he loves” (Ephesians 1:5)**
- • Grace was given to us **“in the one he loves” (vs. 6)**
- • **“In him we have redemption...forgiveness of sins...seal of the Holy Spirit...promise of our inheritance” (Ephesians 1:7, 13-14)**

- He purposed it in Christ (**Ephesians 1:9**) and it was **“put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment”**-(vs. 10) this verse shows that God’s eternal plan, his foreordination wasn’t of individuals to salvation but of a corporate church, bought by the blood and unified by faith-including all people, Jew and Gentile-**“to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ”**. Individuals are included in this plan **“when you heard the truth”** and **“When you believed...”**-not when it was decreed in eternity past, but when they heard and believed they were included.
- This inclusion then of **“...we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ” (1:12)** and **“you also...”** means the Jews and the Gentiles-all people on the same basis-faith in the finished of Christ which put into effect the eternal plan of God.
- This incredible truth is what Paul teaches in **Ephesians 2:11-22**
- This eternally planned family of **“fellow citizens...members of his household”...is the “dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (2:19-22)**

The church the revelation/witness of God’s plan

God’s plan is made known NOW through the church (**Ephesians 3:10**)

- Immediately prior to this, Paul calls this plan of God a **“mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God” (Ephesians 3:9)**
- Again, this refers to his opening teaching **“he has made known to us the mystery of his will...which he purposed in Christ” (Ephesians 1:9)**
- This idea of God’s plan as a mystery now revealed first appears in **Ephesians 3:3-4** and Paul writes, **“This mystery was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit” (vs.5)**-in other words, this wasn’t totally new-God had given clues. He had told Abraham he would bless all the nations through him (**Genesis 15:1-3**). The prophets called the messiah a **“light to the Gentiles”**. But Israel had never quite grasped it. But now it was made known...
- **“This mystery is that through the gospel the gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body (the church) and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 3:6)**
- Now in the church, the manifold wisdom of God is being made known to rulers and authorities.
- Now, in this unified, holy family God is showing the world the only way it can happen. The only plan and power that makes it possible. The rulers and authorities of this world keep trying to bring all things together in the flesh. This manifests in demonic and destructive imperialism, communism, and globalism. God brings all things together in Christ. This is done through godly nation-building, attraction, gospel preaching, conversion by the Holy Spirit in the present and will be consummated when Christ returns, defeats death, and hands the kingdom over to the Father.
- The church reveals the wickedness, weakness, and futility of the rulers and authorities of this world and reveals the power and wisdom of God in Christ!

So, when we speak of God’s plan, we must speak of four epochs.

- What he purposed and predestined in eternity
- What he accomplished forever in Christ
- What he is doing/revealing now through the church as he sits at the right hand of the Father in heavenly session
- The eternal Kingdom he will hand over to the Father after his return and

final victory over death.

In Predestining, foreordaining-God rules “from above, from eternity, outside of time”.

In Providence, God rules “from below, now, in time”

When we speak of “Predestination, foreordination, etc.” we are addressing God’s ETERNAL PLAN for the course of history.

When we speak of “Providence” we are talking about how God has worked, and still is working, within history to bring his plan to perfect fulfillment.

This is why I call this vision-“Providence Center”.

- • I believe God has worked in our lives to bring us to this point of owning this land on Highway 17 and this building.
- • I believe his purpose/plan for this land is for us to build something here that witnesses of his wisdom to the rulers and authorities of his power through the church.
- • And I believe the “wisdom” we witness to is God’s “**manifold wisdom**”- in other words, not just wisdom for salvation and eternal life but “wisdom” for all of life. God’s wisdom, his truth, his way of doing things is better than the “rulers and authorities” in every aspect of life.
- • God’s “**manifold wisdom**” is wisdom for salvation, holiness, strong families, thorough education, prosperous businesses, effective and just government, enjoyable entertainment, truthful communication and media, and expressive, enjoyable art.
- • Witnessing to this “**manifold wisdom**” of God is, what the Puritans called, our “cultural mandate”
- • I believe God, in his providence, wants us to build a center here that lifts God’s wisdom up in each of those areas through faithful preaching/teaching God’s word, thoughtful and transformational worship, training of additional church leaders, establishing Christian Education, developing Christian leadership in business, the arts, media, trades, and government.

The Parts of Providence Center

- • **HighPoint Church**-The church is the heartbeat, and head of Providence Center. The church sets the pace, disciplines the leaders, determines the boundaries, and approves the activities of Providence Center. Providence will function with its own budget and board but under the authority and incorporation of the church.
- • **Providence Academy** (Christ-centered K-12 School educating from a Biblical Worldview)
- • **Providence Launch** (Business Incubation, coaching, and microfinancing)
- • **Providence Voice**-Publishing, Podcasts, Media etc.
- • **Providence Hall**-a church based, locally led, educational institution that prepares believers intellectually, spiritually, and practically for careers in civics, business,

education, and church leadership through credentialed curricula as well as offers training for certification in trades.

- • **Providence Homes**-Training in family self-sufficiency.

How far we have come

This next, italicized, section was something I wrote and shared with staff in 2017, before we had made the decision to sell our old building or had any clue where we would land:

A Template

Grace City Church in Washington State is doing almost exactly the type ministry I am describing in this document. I think their master plan would serve as a very suitable launch point for our planning.

The churches structures are in purple and you will see that they are planning two stages of development. Stage one consists of three components: The Event Center that seats 700, The Intersection, which is their foyer/co work space, and The Packing House which is their children area and Kidseum. Total square footage of phase one is 32,500. This is for a congregation averaging over 1000 in attendance now and holding 3 services in a local community theater.

I would propose we consider a very similar initial structure and lay out with these components:

- • *Event/Worship Center-12,000 ft.*
- • *Intersection lobby/co-work-5,000 ft.*
- • *The Grove-Children's area-6000 ft.*
- • *The Edge-Youth area-4000 ft.*

Total area of the initial structure would be 27,000 sq. ft. Our building costs would probably come in at \$3.4 to \$4.1 million. We already have \$3 million in hand. Split the difference and we are looking at \$3.8 million. If we didn't raise another penny we would be servicing one half the debt we had on our old facilities. But we will do a capital campaign and I think, conservatively, we can raise an additional \$150,000 in cash and \$600,000 in three-year pledges-we could very conceivably be debt-free in three years or less.

Again, I share all that just to show you how, I believe, God has been guiding this process. We ended up building 31,000 square feet and costs went up between 2018 and 2021 when we built-and my estimates were very optimistic in the first place. However, we are in a new building-very close to what was described above-on 20 acres of land with debt only slightly higher than we had on our previous facility. How will we move forward?

- • We are permitted to build up to 60,000 sq. ft. on the 20 acres we own. Our current building is 31,000 sq. ft. We built it this size with quality, stewardship, and sustainability in mind. Building less square footage allowed us to invest in higher quality technology which will resource other parts of Providence Center. Building smaller means, we reach more people by using the building more often-rather than having a

cavernous building which sits empty most of the week. Building smaller is a hedge against lean times that may come. We have not saddled the church with an intolerable burden and unmanageable maintenance.

- - HPC, Providence Voice, Launch and Hall-can function out of the current building. We started Providence Academy in the current building and are expanding it one grade level per year using modular buildings.
- - However, we will need to build at least one more building to house the growing church-this is our most immediate, pressing need and will cost \$8-10 million.
- - We can expand Providence Academy using Modulares.
- - We need to find a creative way to add a third building to house Providence Launch, Providence Citizens Center-we may be able to work a deal with the builders of our next church structure. This would be a land-lease to help them get established in Polk County and become an anchor tenant for Providence Launch.
- - Providence Trades and Homes-can be done without additional structures. These are apprenticeship programs. We can make this happen by purchasing and refurbishing homes, or by building a home for resale and using students to do it. We can also partner with local agriculture to develop sustainable gardening and do preparedness training with families on a semester type basis.

In addition to identifying fiscal revenue streams, churches should ponder how to maintain the overall health of the church. In the book *Red Skies*, Mark Deymaz writes an article “Disrupting Church Economics” where he calls for churches to create spiritual teams, social teams, and financial teams to help keep a balance within creating multiple revenue streams. Spiritual teams oversee the local church and ministries in traditional ways. Social teams work alongside the church to help facilitate the other 501c3 programs a church may be involved in like justice and compassion ministries. Financial teams would supervise other sustainable income that may fall outside of a 501c3 status, like if a church began to attract so much facility usage it might need to create a separate business as an event center which would require different supervision.

Not only does a church business create revenue for the church, but it also creates job opportunities that can add value to the local community and provides a great outreach opportunity to spread the gospel in the marketplace. Because of the value a local business adds, it's a unique way to spread the love of Jesus to people who may not go to a church.