

GRACE UPON GRACE - PARTNER'S MEETING - 2012

"I came to The Paradox four weeks ago with a broken soul; I have a lot of wounds and scars for differing reasons. I was feeling very stressed, lost and hopeless. I had a strict catholic upbringing, went through all the sacraments, but never knew Jesus. In fact, I feared him in a sense. I stopped going to the Catholic church about seven years ago. I believe that God answered my prayers in leading me to The Paradox church.

I want you to know that in only four Sundays The Paradox has given me more faith and an understanding of God's love and grace than I have ever known. Through the Gospel and through strength from Jesus, I have dealt with a conflict that was weighing heavily on me; and after today, I know that through Jesus, my wounds will heal. **I wanted you to know the impact that The Paradox has made in my life; I know Jesus as I have never known him before** and I look forward everyday to knowing him more."

God's Grace Evident In 2011:

CITY GROUPS

We doubled our City Groups from three to six in 2011. Throughout the year, countless stories were told of God's grace through one another in the care, counsel, and love extended to each other within all of the groups.

PORTERBROOK

We started Porterbrook Fort Worth in 2011 with our sister churches, The Rooted and City Church. It is our philosophy that the local church be the primary training ground for future leaders and pastors and we are overjoyed at the 25 people going through Porterbrook in our churches.
(more about Porterbrook on page four)

REDEMPTION GROUPS

We started Redemption Groups on a small scale in the fall and then watched as God did huge things with the participants. We had participants that were in the midst of all sorts of struggles and sin from addictions, eating disorders, abuse, marital struggle, pride, and self-righteousness.
(more about Redemption Groups on page four)

"It was miraculous. I felt a sense of wonder, and even joy, that the Lord had worked in our midst in such a way. There was also brokenness that was revealed. That weighed heavy on each of us. I have never felt such a mix of emotions on someone else's behalf." – Redemption Group Participant

CHURCH PLANTING

Because of your faithfulness and our commitment to church planting we gave \$19,380 to help start new churches in 2011. Restore Church is in Detroit, MI and C3 Church is in Denton. Please continue in prayer for Mike and Ross and their churches.

"Paradox Church Fam, I just wanted to let you know your very gracious giving to Restore Church means a lot and makes a big difference as we seek 'to show and tell the gospel to every boy, girl, man, and woman in the Boston-Edison Neighborhood of Detroit in order to make disciple-making disciples', **with deep gratitude for God's grace to us through you**, Mike Hanafee".

Remaining Steadfast and Faithful to the Lord – Hope and Prayer for 2012:

Here are some raw projections to help put into context our needs and where God is calling us to.

Currently:

2 services
220-250 people on Sunday morning
6 City Groups
100 people in City Groups per week
2 City Group coaches
6 in LDP (Leadership Development Process)
3 in Porterbrook School

End of 2012 (projections):

2 services
350-400 people
200-250 people in City Groups

Needs:

13-15 City Groups
5 City Group coaches
2-3 in elder process/development
25 in LDP/Porterbrook

These are not necessarily goals but very real possibilities that we must prepare for in order to properly care for, shepherd, and disciple those whom God sends us.

We need disciple-makers; we need City Group leaders; we need men and women on mission; **we need men and women with vision for what God has called them to.**

Thus, my questions for you are this:

1. Has God given you a vision for your ministry?

This may never mean you will be a church planter, elder, or ministry leader. But it will include The Paradox equipping you to use the unique spiritual gifts and influence he has graced you with. And it will not include doing nothing. So what's your ministry? What is God calling you to?

2. As you reverse engineer the process (where you are, where you are going, how do you get there), what are steps you need to take?

How can we equip and/or resource you? Do you need to grow in your knowledge of the gospel and have a broader theological base? Do you need practical training? Should you be in a Fight Club? Do you need to apprentice with a City Group leader? Do you need to become best friends with a guy or girl who is already doing what God is calling you to do? Do you need to go to a conference, read some books, listen to some mp3s? Do you need to start a business or non-profit? Do you need to disciple people in your City Group? Do you need to move to a specific neighborhood? Do you need to repent of sin? Do you need to pray and fast for vision? Do you need to quit your job? Do you need to move to another country? Do you need to move to a particular neighborhood?

3. Are you willing to play your part?

Good men and women are everywhere. Godly men and women are rare. We need you to play. And we need you to play your specific, God-ordained role. Most of you have been very faithful and are serving your butts off - you just need more of a push and need to know you are needed. Some of you have been a Christian for a long time and still haven't done much - maybe you just need to be called out or challenged.

The Paradox is called to make disciples and plant churches for the good of the city and the Glory of God. He has called us to plant churches around us in areas like Benbrook, Crowley, Arlington, Hurst, South Fort Worth, East Fort Worth, etc.; He has called us to serve our city well and to influence its growth with the power of the Gospel; He has called us to raise up more worship leaders for more bands and to send them out with our church planters; He has called us to build an army of biblical counselors to care for those who are struggling or hurting in a Gospel-centric way; He has called us to start a fire for Jesus on campus at TCU. **Its really easy to grow a big church in DFW. Its much more difficult to make disciples who passionately follow Jesus on mission and pour their lives out for the Kingdom.**

I am patient because I know these things don't happen overnight and we are only a year old; its a marathon not a sprint. But I also have a sense of urgency because its really easy to steer a smaller ship than a big one; now is the time to create the culture in our church that expects Partners to rise up and lead out - it needs to be an air that is breathed when new people come into our fold.

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CITY GROUPS

We doubled our City Groups last year from three to six and we will need to double them again to care for the people that God has and will be sending us. City Groups are the life of our church. They are where “the works of the ministry” (Eph 4) happen. They are *not* a weekly event but a *family* that gathers throughout the week as they love and minister to one another and to their neighborhood.

Two things need to happen. We need the various groups **to continue to have a missional, outward focus that cares more about people meeting Jesus** and being cared for then they do their own comfort. And secondly, we need more people called to lead and start new City Groups.

PARTNER-DRIVEN MINISTRY

We are a partner-driven church. We believe that when Paul says the leaders of the church should “equip the saints for the works of the ministry” it means that ministry is being done by the partners caring, discipling, counseling, and serving of one another and the city we have been sent to.

For instance I have heard partners desiring and discussing prayer teams, hospitality ministry, ministering to families with children, mentoring young girls or boys, loving those in the sex industry, financial planning, etc. I want to encourage you and challenge you to take risks, follow the Holy Spirit’s calling on you, and step out in faith. Let us know how we can equip you, resource you, and pray for you. **Our hope is that The Paradox is a church that innovates, creates, leads, and fosters an entrepreneurial, apostolic culture for the glory of God and the good of the city.**

CHURCH PLANTING

Statistically, starting new churches reaches more people for Jesus than just making existing churches bigger. Further, we believe in the DNA of our church and feel more communities and cities would benefit from Jesus-glorifying, Gospel-centered, missional churches.

Our hope and prayer is that God would call some of our men to church planting. I never thought I would be a pastor and church planter either. We also hope that God would send us men that already are called and want to be trained and sent out – much like I was at City View Church. We also want to continue to give 10% of everything we take in to support church planting. **Our big vision and hope would be that four or five City Groups would be planted in an area of Fort Worth and eventually become its own church.**

REDEMPTION GROUPS AND PORTERBROOK

From the beginning, dealing with our junk and developing leaders were two major components of our vision for The Paradox. With Redemption Groups and Porterbrook we are accomplishing that.

At The Paradox our City Groups are the highway for the mission of God we have been invited on; **Redemption Groups are the rest stop.** A Redemption Group is an intense small group that digs deep into difficult and seldom-discussed areas of life, such as abuse, addiction, and trials of all sorts. In our first session held last fall we have had participants that our in the midst of all sorts of struggles and sin from addictions, eating disorders, abuse, marital struggle, pride, and self-righteousness. We will make Redemption Groups available for the whole church starting in February.

Porterbrook is for everyone: whether a leader, future church planter, or simply a Christian wanting to deepen your theological understanding and becoming more mission-focused – **Porterbrook helps you better understand, enjoy, and serve Jesus and his people.** The program is flexible and has been designed to be integrated with all of life in whatever context you’re living and serving. At it’s core, the Porterbrook program is biblical, practical, and affordable theological education with the goal not just of growing in knowledge, but in character and mission in day-to-day life.

Each year consists of 12 courses completed over 3 semesters (also called “trimesters”). Trimesters open and close with a Saturday seminar and include self-study shared in a cohort (or community) environment so you don’t have to learn alone. All this for about the cost of one hour of seminary credit. The next trimester will start in the fall and is open to anyone.

He exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose

- Acts 11:23b

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Seeing God Flex in 2012:

GOD'S PROMISES FOR THE CHURCH

God promises that through the Gospel (Rom 1:16) lives would be transformed (2 Cor 3:18), for the good of the city (Jer 29:7, Heb 13:14, 2 Cor 5:18-20) and, ultimately, for the Glory of God (John 12:28-32, Phil 2:9-11).

Through the Gospel

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, **for it is the power of God** for salvation to everyone who believes... - Romans 1:16

As Partners, we must know the Gospel, savor it, let it be sweet to our ears and to our minds and to our hearts; we must be centered on it, saturated in it. We must display it and proclaim it with the ferocity and passion of an unconditionally, unmerited, ill-deservedly, loved people.

Our Prayer is that through the knowledge of the Gospel we would be so overwhelmed and in awe of your grace and mercy that we would saturate ourselves in it, worship You because of it, and proclaim and display it to those you have sovereignly placed in our midst...

That You Might save! That you might sanctify us and make us more holy – more like Jesus. And that you might save the religious and the irreligious in our midst.

Lives Transformed

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and **where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom**. And we all, with unveiled face, **beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed** into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. - 2 Cor 3:17-18

As Partners, the Gospel must continually transform us. We will not modify behavior but worship a Savior; we will not be enslaved to sin or idols but walk in freedom. We must regularly - by faith - confess, repent, and worship. We must boldly share God's redemptive story found in our story because there is no shame and, in it, God receives glory.

Our Prayer is that we would be a people that regularly repents in community. That we would fight for holiness and for joy for one another and lead one another back to the cross. Jesus, we pray that we would unashamedly and boldly share Your redemptive work in our lives for Your glory...

That You Might use our ongoing story for the edifying, encouraging, and saving of many lives. That through the evidence of Your work in our lives they might worship Jesus and be transformed themselves – from glory to glory – marriages restored, freedom from slavery to sin, freedom from religion and self-righteousness, relationships reconciled, and joy renewed.

For the Good of the City

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. **Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.** - 2 Cor 5:17-20

As Partners, we must be in the city – in our neighborhoods, in our workplaces, in our schools – intentionally present as we work, play, learn, hobby, eat, celebrate, and serve. We are missionaries. We must be broken over the people of Fort Worth; broken over stale religion; broken over sin and idolatry. Where you work is part of God’s strategy for Mission:Fort Worth; where you live is part of God’s strategy for Mission:Fort Worth.

Our Prayer is that as a church we would deny comfort; we would abhor cowardice. Give us a mission mindset - a wartime mentality - in everything we do, every dollar we spend, every meal we eat. Give us a love for our neighbor; a love for our enemy; a love for the single mom; a love for the broken, the lost, the hurting. Give us your heart for the people of Fort Worth...

That You Might make your appeal through us. That the people of Fort Worth would be reconciled to their Creator, Father, and Redeemer.

For the Glory of God

“Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: **“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”** The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. And I, **when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.**” - John 12:28-32

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then **you also will appear with him in glory.** - Col 3:3-4

As Partners, we are to glorify God in all that we do. As a church and as Christians we must be humble; not perpetuating the self-righteous “us vs them” Christian mentality. Our “way” of church is not necessarily better than other churches; our way of life is only better because of the grace of Jesus. So we are to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and do everything for the name of Jesus.

Our Prayer is that in our words and deeds you would be glorified. Let not our political party, our school, our position, our economic status, our church, our denomination, our network, our family – let nothing - be seen or heard as our passion or drive but only the name of Jesus. Humble us before the cross that we might praise you in all we do. Be lifted up for all to see in all we do...

That You Might draw people to Yourself and be passionately and radically glorified. That you would be more worshipped and that more would appear with you in glory.

“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” - Jesus

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