

A Vision Document for Providence Baptist Church

Vision Statement

To declare the sovereign majesty of God through proclamation, exaltation and education, according to the revealed Word of God, to the ends of the earth, by His grace and for His glory.

Summary of the Vision Statement

The vision of Providence Baptist Church is that the church will be an instrument through which God may carry out the work of His Kingdom through the proclamation of His gospel throughout the earth, the exaltation of His name in worship, the edification of His people through education and through ministry to the lost and hurting people of the world. We acknowledge and accept the sovereignty and majesty of God, the Holy Scriptures as His inspired and infallible Word and the Holy Spirit as our guide in His mission for this church.

As a community of faith for all people, our prayer is that Christ be exalted and glorified for the joy of all people. A church where men and women may come to be instructed, encouraged and challenged by the expository preaching of God's Word is our aim. A church where worship is God-centered is our mandate. A church where life is celebrated because of the goodness of God and His gifts and where families are encouraged to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and cease in busy-ness as a way of life is our ambition. A church where marriages are held in high esteem and encouraged to portray the relationship of Christ to His church is our intent. A church where singles are affirmed and strengthened in their pursuit of God, where children are instructed in God's Word that they might grow and learn early how to trust Christ and be satisfied in Him, and a church where every person is accepted, loved and encouraged is our aspiration. A church that embraces the uniqueness and beauty of all peoples is our desire. A church where ministry to the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, and the poor is encouraged (Isaiah 61:1-3). A church where the supremacy of Christ over all things is known, spoken of, loved and lived. A place where Christ is treasured above all things and our lifestyles are characterized by pressing on to know the Lord (rather than by pressure to perform) is our objective. May our great God and Savior grant the unfolding of this vision for His glory!

Explanation of the Vision

The Word of God is Foundational

Let's think together about what this vision looks like for Providence Baptist Church. The foundational statement in this declaration is *according to the revealed Word of God*. The sole authority on which we stand, by which we know God, on which we frame our worldview and order our lives, is the Word of God (Isaiah 40:7-8; II Timothy 3:16-17). Because His Word reveals to us the glorious attributes, nature, and character of God, we are responsible to worship and adore Him.

In an essay on Jonathan Edwards, John Piper expresses what we at Providence are about: "Our duty and privilege, therefore, is to conform to the divine purpose in creation and history and redemption – namely, to reflect the value of God's glory – to think and feel and do whatever we must to make much of God. Our reason for being, our calling, our joy is to render visible the glory of God."¹

God's Word is Foundational for Proclamation of God's Sovereign Majesty

Because God's Word is foundational and worship is the supreme task of the church, the proclamation of God's Word becomes the central component of worship (II Timothy 4:1-5). *To declare the sovereign majesty of God through proclamation* is to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27).

Proclamation of the wonder of His glory (Psalm 148:13), the infinite worth of His greatness and the extraordinary work of the Godhead in salvation call the church to worship (Exodus 15:1-18; Deuteronomy 32:1-4). These truths keep before us the supremacy of Christ in all things and call us to live for His glory (Colossians 1:15f). Our church life is structured to this end. From the council of elders to the youngest child, our delight and responsibility is to glorify God. Through ministry teams, K-Groups, Sunday School classes, worship and music ministry, as well as all other areas of daily life, our goal is to magnify Christ.

To proclaim the sovereign majesty of God by proclamation, the preaching of God's Word, will in itself frame our vision (Psalm 148:13). Expository preaching will grow the church both spiritually and numerically by the direction and power of the Holy Spirit. Declaration of God's absolute sovereignty, His awesome power to save and the wonder of His love will draw and will also drive away (Isaiah 55:10-12). The Lord will grow his church so that her worship will be biblical and her living authentic and saturated with God's Word. The church is designed to nurture

and mature saints as they pursue God and struggle against sin (Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 8:12-17). Thus, expository preaching will facilitate to a great extent the growth of the church. Expository preaching, week in and week out, will set the tone for Christian life and frame the ministry, worship and mission of the church.

God's Majesty Proclaimed through Exaltation

We believe that the supreme responsibility and delight of the church is worship (John 4:23c). The Westminster Shorter Catechism reminds us of this with its first question and answer, "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." This is worship.

To proclaim the sovereign majesty of God through exaltation is to declare worship the supreme task of the church (Isaiah 6:1-7; Psalm 24:1-10, 148:13, 98:1-7, 96:1-9). Worship is for the saints. Worship cannot be designed to market the gospel to draw the maximum number of people without regard to fidelity to Scripture. God seeks men and women who will worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23f). To exalt the name of Jesus above all else, both in music and preaching, is at the heart of worship (Philippians 2:9-11). To adore Christ Jesus as the glorious Redeemer and Lord is the mandate of worship (Revelation 5:9-14). To treasure the Lord Jesus above all things is the practical outworking of worship (Philippians 3:7-11). To magnify His name above all names is the celebration of worship and to worship Him in the beauty of holiness is the joy of worship (Isaiah 61:10). This exaltation is accomplished both in corporate and private worship. Because worship is the fuel and goal of missionsⁱⁱ, it is our expectation that as we worship God Almighty, He will call out from among us men and women who will go ***to the ends of the earth proclaiming the sovereign majesty of God***. Our desire is that all peoples be brought into the glorious delight of the Lord God (Psalm 67:1-5). ***Proclaiming the sovereign majesty of God through exaltation*** sets God at the center of our lives, not man. Thus, our lives are to be lived out in the atmosphere of worship – living daily to revel in and magnify the infinite worth of God's glory. As the Lord is pleased to grip our hearts through God-exalting worship, our joy will be to see churches planted, built and sustained. We must be a church with a mega heart for worship. This lifestyle of exaltation should result in church life that is not program-centered or numbers-driven. We walk, war and worship with the intent to magnify Christ corporately and individually under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit. The issue here is to understand that all of life is under God's sovereignty, not compartmentalized for convenience so as to separate the spiritual from the secular (Psalm 103:19; Daniel 4:34-37). We were created for worship and the enjoyment of God's greatness and glory (Isaiah 43:7). Christianity is to be lived out daily at school, at business, at ballgames, at home,

and anywhere God leads us (I Corinthians 10:31). Worship is not about Sunday alone, but about living from Sunday to Sunday. Martin Luther conveys the freedom of worship in our ongoing daily lives in this statement, “The worship of God...should be free at table, in private rooms, downstairs, upstairs, at home, abroad, in all places, by all people, at all times.”ⁱⁱⁱ

God’s Majesty Proclaimed through Education

To proclaim the sovereign majesty of God through education is to teach and disciple the church to recognize the supremacy of Christ in all things and to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in order to live daily under Christ’s Lordship (Colossians 1:15-23). The teaching ministry is designed to equip and to train each member in the use of his or her gift and in the knowledge of the Scripture so that, as a body, we may serve our Lord and our community effectively (Ephesians 4). To be a follower of Christ Jesus is to be disciplined to think, feel, speak and serve in a manner that evidences Christ’s rule in and over us. In the teaching ministry, the children of Providence must be brought to see and know the greatness of God. Education must begin at home, with heads of households leading their families to embrace the Word of God and modeling how to live upon Christ (Ephesians 6:4). The goal of education is to learn to treasure Christ above all things and to have the ability to communicate that truth in every arena of life. Our teaching opportunities must be integrated and flexible enough to meet the needs of the body while teaching the Word of God in an expository, systematic manner. The church must confirm and affirm instruction received in the home. Education must embrace the disciplines of the Christian life and also be grounded in worship.

The discipline of church members also falls under the *proclamation of God’s sovereign majesty in education*. Unrepentant, contradictory lifestyles and behavior cannot be tolerated in the body if it is to remain healthy (Matthew 18). Loving each other in Christ demands that we live responsibly and accountably toward one another. To exercise church discipline is to maintain a strong and healthy church. This strength and health are not necessarily in quantity, but should be in quality. The very fact that a church practices church discipline will limit or at least will provide a more defined parameter for church growth. Education will also embrace the reception of new members. Membership entails a process of interview and teaching that encourages the prospective member as well as the church. The very nature of our membership process, through education, will likewise impact church growth.

Prayer is the Catalyst for Implementation

Our hope and prayer is that each of the ministry teams will function in the following arenas of ministry to ***declare the Word of God in proclamation, exaltation and education***. The Worship Team is involved in the overall direction of our worship – ministry of the Word, prayer, and celebration through music. The Mission Team has responsibility to help the church understand and embrace her mission responsibilities born out of worship and the exposition of God’s Word. The Teaching Team is designed to help the church articulate and develop its teaching philosophy and educational goals. The Building Team is engaged in formation, development, implementation and maintenance of buildings to the glory of God. The Finance Team is engaged in the oversight of the financial goals and management of the church’s resources to enable her ministries. Every team is under mandate to help facilitate ***the proclamation, exaltation and education*** ministries at Providence Baptist Church in such a way that God’s sovereign majesty is upheld and that Christ Jesus is ever becoming the treasure of our lives. As we pray we are confident that God will expand our ministry teams to embrace other areas of ministry as led by the Holy Spirit. Corporate and private prayer must compliment the preaching of the Word, our worship, our teaching and our ministries (Ephesians 11:15-23).

The Church’s Mission – to the Ends of the Earth

All of this is to be done with the goal of ***declaring this gospel to the ends of the earth*** (Monrovia, Huntsville, Alabama, our great nation and the world) so that all peoples may rejoice in and enjoy our great God. As John Piper says, the reason there is mission is because there is no worship (Romans 1). This is the great commission: to make disciples of those who will treasure Christ above all things and who will love the worship of God (Matthew 28: 19-20; Luke 4:16-19; Isaiah 61:1-4; Romans 1:5, 10:14-17)!

It is All of Grace

This is to be accomplished ***by His grace*** (Ephesians 1:3-14). All we have and are is by the grace of God. The theological foundation upon which we stand and build comes from the Word of God and out of the Reformation. The five solas are the bedrock of our doctrinal position – sola fide, sola gratia, sola Scriptura, solus Christus, and soli Deo Gloria. We understand that from start to finish all of life is lived under the grace of God. Our salvation and sanctification is all of grace and it

is only by God's grace that we can be His church in Monrovia, Huntsville, Alabama, in this great nation, and in the world. (I Corinthians 4:7).

It is for God's Glory

All is to be done *for His glory*. This whole venture is not about us, but about our great God (Ezekiel 36:22-37; Psalm 115:1). He is worthy of all praise, glory, honor, wisdom, blessing and riches (Revelation 5:11-14, 7:9-14). We were created for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). We live to glorify Him, to esteem Him worthy of all adoration and worship (Revelation 4:11). We revel in His glory and look forward to the day when that glory will fill the earth as the waters fill the seas (Habakkuk 2:14). Christ in us is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). As we began, so we end. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

In order to implement and accomplish this vision, we must press on to know the Lord (Hosea 6:3). We must forsake all fads, gimmicks, trickery, religious busy-ness, man-centered programs and anything else that would allure us from treasuring Christ above all things (Colossians 2:8). In pressing on to know the Lord, our great Savior will teach and lead us to know how to live satisfied with and in Him (II Peter 3:18).

ⁱ John Piper, A God Entranced Vision of All Things, (Wheaton; Crossway, 2004), p. 23.

ⁱⁱ John Piper, Let the Nations Be Glad, (Grand Rapids; Baker Academic, 2003), p. 17.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 222.