



grace

on the streets

a ministry update from The Grace Project • December 2005



Grace in the City

God's heart for the city is communicated clearly throughout Scripture. God began history in a garden and he is ending it in a city. The City described in the book of Revelation is the fulfillment of the purposes of the Eden of God. We also see how the apostle Paul took the gospel to the cities of his land to reach the nations of his day.

Cities are where people gather to find refuge, expression, opportunity, and meaning. Cities are the centre of influence for a nation. Cities are where the flashpoints of the spiritual battle between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness are most intense.

With 80% of Canada's population living in urban centres, **reaching the cities of Canada will be key in reaching this nation.**

We are entering a post-secular, urbanized, global world. This means that we are going to be more like the Roman empire than any other time since that world died. For the first time in 1500 years, there will be multiple, vital, religious faith communities and options in every society. It means we will have traditional, secular, and pagan world-views living side by side. It means that cities again will be as influential and central to culture as in the Graeco-Roman world. ~Tim Keller

the Need for Grace in Canada

Christianity is on the decline in Canada. Many churches have closed their doors. Others have surrendered to secularism. **In some major cities, over 40% are atheist.** Further, the fastest growing religious categories by rate of increase between 1991 and 2001 are:

- Paganism (+281%)
- Native Spirituality (+175%)
- Islam (+129%)

In 1950, almost 60% of Canadians went to church on a weekly basis. Today, less than 20% attend. **In some major cities, less than 10% attend church.** And the numbers are decreasing.

Canada's large cities have less than half the churches per capita than the smaller communities of under 30,000. In fact, there is only one Bible-believing church for every 3,200 Canadians. **Thus, a country with over 30,000,000 people has only 10,000 of the 60,000 churches it needs.**

This nation desperately needs Bible-believing churches, and planting them in her cities must be a top priority!

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OUR 3-FOLD STRATEGY:

The "3 Cs" of The Grace Project make it a holistic approach to church planting and revitalization.

Churches

Taking Christ into the heart of the city will require God's people to be a **Christ community** in an urban community with the purpose **loving the city** as Christ loves it. This will require churches who are **Word-led** who have a fierce dependence God through **grace** and **prayer** for all gospel advance in the city. This also means each church will reflect its community and own the needs of its specific neighbourhood.

The Grace Project will work in partnership with other churches and denominations to plant and revitalize churches with the same heart.

Centres of Equipping

Going forward into the city with the gospel will require each of God's people to fully express and live out their calling in all walks of life – from the home, to the streets, to the workplace.

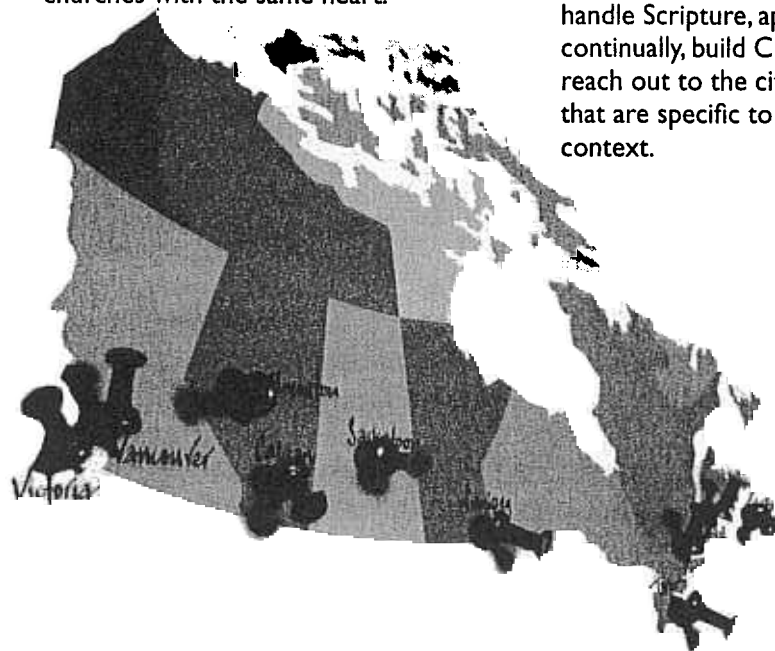
At the heart of The Grace Project is an **innovative and practical church-based training model** to equip the whole people of God for Christ's ministry. These training centres offer training that is tailored to each city and to each church's and individual's calling and context.

The emphasize is to grow each person as a disciple who is able to handle Scripture, apply theology, pray continually, build Christ's Body and reach out to the city – all in ways that are specific to their calling and context.

Community Transformation

As God transforms his people into Jesus' likeness, he sends them into the city. As the church penetrates the whole city with the gospel, God's people minister in word and deed. **As the gospel goes forward into the city through his people, God's power brings cultural renewal and social transformation.**

Initiated by God's call and Holy Spirit moving his people to action, individuals start new outreaches and ministries to bring Christ's transformation to people in the city. For instance, an artist spearheaded Arts in the City, Arts in the Sanctuary. Two single moms have a burden to start a ministry to single parent families. Imagine a whole city transformed as God uses his people to bring hope and change through Christ to every avenue of society.

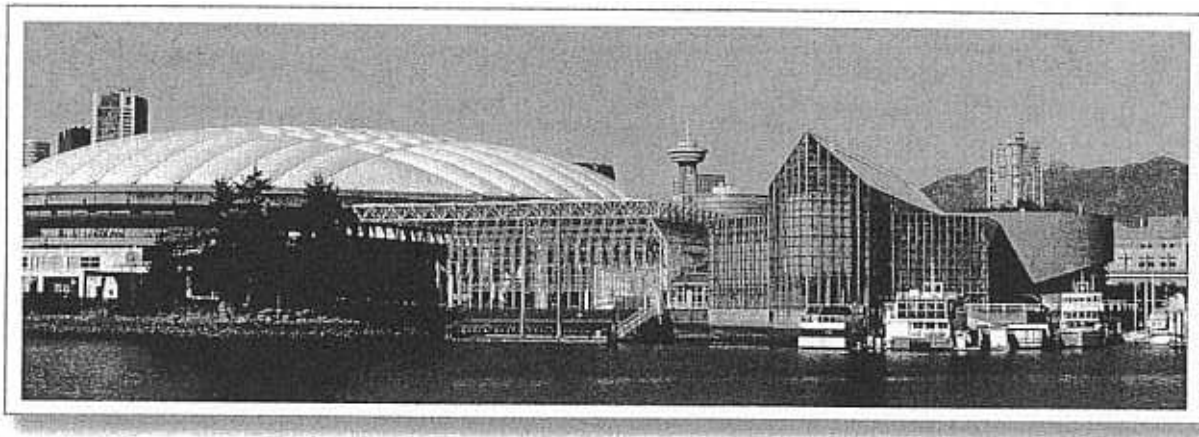


THE PURPOSE of The Grace Project is to reach Canada with the Gospel of Jesus Christ by reaching her cities through a comprehensive church-based urban ministry movement

THE VISION of The Grace Project is a Canada where the message and ministry of Jesus Christ penetrates and transforms the spiritual life, social dignity, and cultural heart of her cities.

Grace Vancouver Church

Vancouver is a diverse city characterized by incredible beauty and affluence on one hand, yet great spiritual need and desperate social problems on the other. It's a city of cultural, ethnic and political diversity. Tourism and film making are its prime industries; entertainment and leisure occupy a high place. Pot is smoked openly and hard drug addictions abound. Prostitution flourishes in this city including the selling of children on Kiddie Row. It is a city open to eastern and new age religion, but is surprisingly secular. The fastest growing religious category is "none."



Grace Vancouver Westside

The Westside of Vancouver is where the "beautiful" people like to live and enjoy the beaches, sea wall, restaurants, shopping and art galleries. This area has a fairly even Caucasian/Asian population of successful young families, yuppies and busters.

Centering on Granville and Broadway, steps away from Granville Island, Gallery Row and Kits Beach, Grace Vancouver Westside is a **youthful community** of artists, students, professionals and young families reaching out to its community with **culturally engaging ministry and message**.

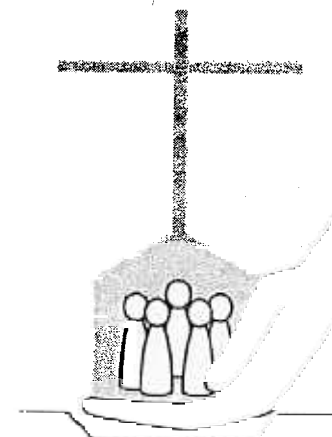
Grace Van West is like my second home and family. I love that we are located in an artsy community and reflect it. I love how our location affects all that we do.
~Renae

Grace Vancouver Eastside

The Eastside of Vancouver is a progressive blended community of a diverse social and ethnic make-up. Issues in politics, human rights, and the arts are discussed in coffee shops. Vibrant shop-lined streets give way to dilapidated rooming houses, soup kitchens and homeless shelters.

Grace Vancouver Eastside is a **down-to-earth, diverse community** that reaches out to its neighbourhood of ethnically and economically diverse singles and families with **informal and interactive worship**. They are rooted into the needs of its community, addressing issues like sexual exploitation and low income housing.

I wanted to be involved in a church that knows and welcomes its neighbours. I think this is the kind of church Grace Van is, and is becoming. Things I like about Grace Van East: Pastor Steve's beard, the liturgy, communal luncheons, the after-sermon discussion, and all the friendly folk.
~Dilys



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Grace Toronto Church

With over 4.6 million people, the Greater Toronto area comprises more than 12% of Canada's population.

Toronto is a city of **diverse ideologies, religions and worldviews** – people are seeking ways to define reality and find significance and meaning to life.

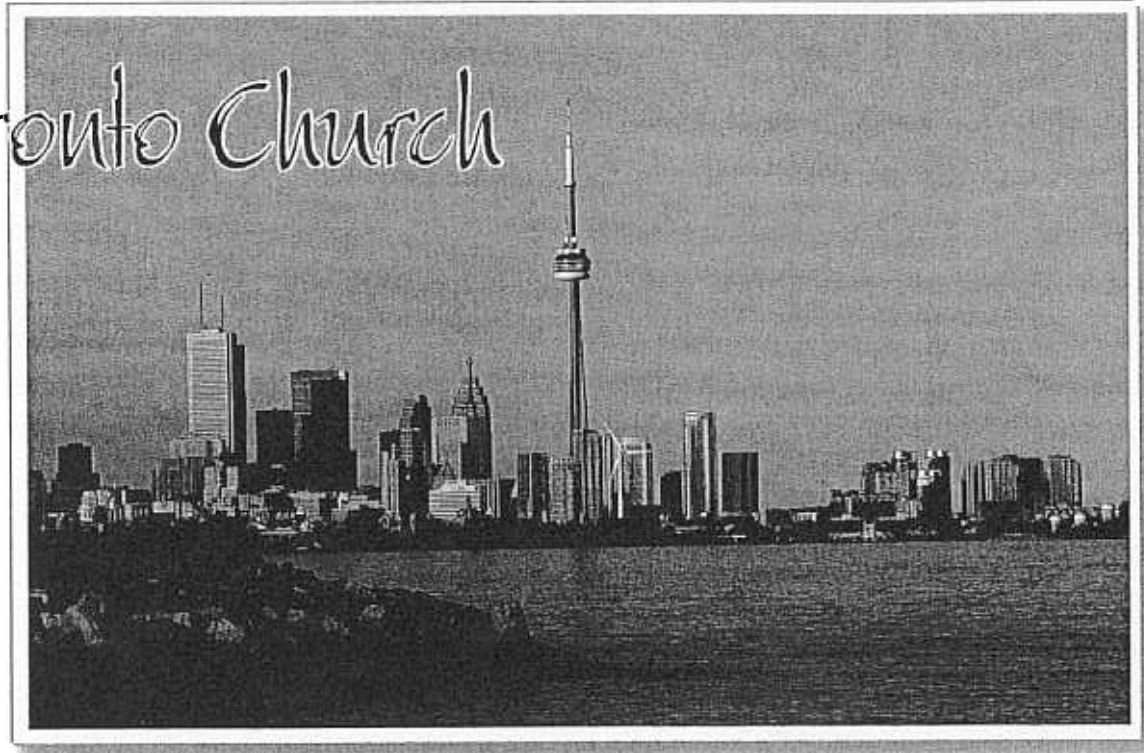
Many of the country's cultural and economic **elites are clustered** in this city. A growing **international city**, 49% of Torontonians were born in another country. Over 100 different nationalities are represented here. A strong **community of artists** call Toronto home. The **financial hub** of Canada centres on Bay Street in downtown Toronto.

Reaching this city with the transforming power of the gospel will require a paradigm of church, faith and spirituality that permeates every area of life. **Integrating faith and work will be key** in reaching this city for Christ.

Grace Toronto Church is a new church plant seeking to engage this leading city in Canada with the message and ministry of Christ. **A solid beginning** of a couple dozen seekers and believers meet to study God's word together and pray. A few have come to discover and receive new life in Christ. A Christmas service is the first formal outreach to friends and family in the city.

The Lord is doing His work among His people. We have been humbled and awe by His provision, even while we have been sobered by the reality of the spiritual weakness in the church here. The culture is hostile, because the church has failed to be

salt and light. We have no one to blame but ourselves. The Lord needs to work repentance and renewal in His people before we can hope to impact the culture. We have felt a growing call to move forward solely on our knees.



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Grace Centre for Urban Mission and Biblical Studies

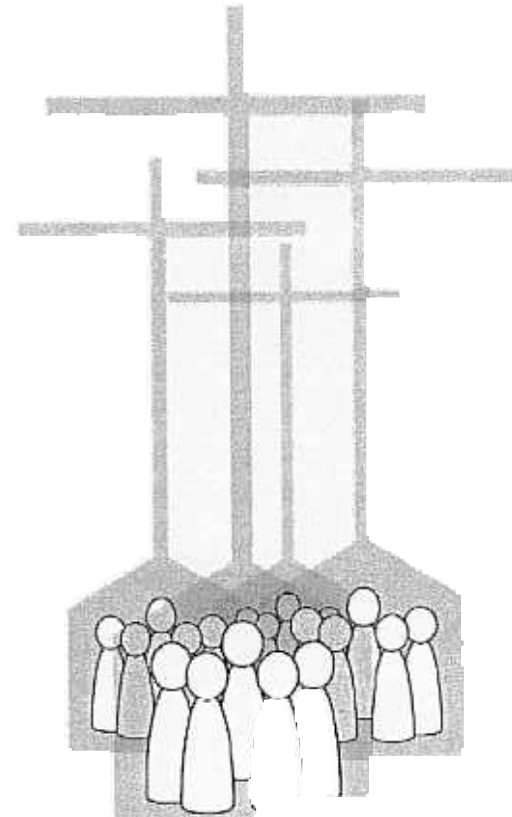
Equipping each follower of Christ to reach their sphere of influence for Christ

To reach the cities of Canada, and ultimately the nation, it will take Christians and churches of all kinds to live out their calling fully at all levels and places in a city's life. This requires a fresh approach to training and discipleship.

The Grace Centre is a **practical church-based training model of equipping** the whole people of God for Christ's ministry. **Hands-on learning is taught by practitioners** who are living out mission and ministry to the city. For example, the director of ministry to sexually exploited women teaches workshops on recovery and transformation. Learning is solidified and demonstrated in the context of existing and new ministry opportunities, community and life.

Each disciple's **training is tailored** to grow them spiritually in their life context to reach their sphere of influence for Christ, whether their mission is in the workplace, the lab, the classroom, the hospital, the home, the church or anywhere else. The desired outcome is for each disciple to **grow in character and ability** to handle Scripture, apply theology, pray continually, build Christ's Body and reach out to the city – all in ways that are specific to their calling and context. The result is maturing disciples who commit to involvement and start up of ministries reaching all types of people in the city.

I see Grace Centre as a building block of a bridge that connects the community and the church where the church can get involved in the city and the city can get involved in the church. I'm really enjoying my classes and getting into the Word. It's helping me see I'm part of a much bigger picture than I realized. It's giving me a vision of my calling and clarity of the Great Commandment to love God and the Great Commission to love my neighbour. The rich fellowship and group learning fill my cup so I can love others.
~Dallas



Prayer Training for Urban Mission

Equipping God's people to be missional people of kingdom-centred prayer

Taking ground for Christ's kingdom in the city requires the foundation and ammunition of prayer. Prayer is the only explanation and method for lasting fruit.

Grace Vancouver quite unintentionally stumbled upon a hunger and need for **training disciples and churches in missional prayer**. Prayer Training for Urban Mission began simply as a core course at Grace Vancouver where a few gathered for **transformational prayer of ourselves and our communities** – a time of asking God to tear down our own heart idols and the city's strongholds.

Doors have opened to train over 100 local, national and international church and lay leaders in prayer for urban mission.

Many of these leaders have continued to **implement the training in their own churches and cities**. Some have even had opportunity to



train missionaries in Germany, Spain and Uganda. All have felt opposition as they have sought to lead their people in battle through expanded prayer efforts. Yet they have also tasted the Spirit's breath in their prayer life as disciples and as a church.

Seven Days of Prayer with Jesus is a book with expanded teaching on the priorities of the Lord's Prayer. It offers practical tools for kingdom-centred prayer and serves well as an introduction or followup to prayer training.

Your prayer training course continues to be a blessing one year later. So far, I've mentored eight people as well as brought many insights from the material into our weekly congregational prayer meeting and a Sunday school class of 90+ people. I've experienced remarkable breakthrough with my wife and children, and breakthroughs in connection and conversation in our neighborhood. In the church, we are beginning to see that we as leadership have lost spiritual vitality and relevancy as kingdom pace-setters in the church. We need to see Jesus.
~Steve, pastor in North Carolina

This has refocused my prayer life and I see that prayer is the work, not just preparation for the work. ~participant

This got me thinking in terms of how a church's brave life exposes its body to be a mission-centred church or maintenance-centred church.
~participant

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Churches

Centres of
Equipping

Community
Transformation

Worship Academy

Equipping people to be true worshippers of God

We live in a culture where people worship anything but God – worship of work and success, entertainment and celebrities, the body and sex, comfort and security... the list is endless.

Born out of the heart and call of several worship leaders at Grace Vancouver, the Worship Academy **trains and grows God's people in strong vibrant Biblical Christ-centred worship.** Specifically they aim to train worship leaders for churches, chapels and church plants. They also focus on training the whole congregation in worship – specifically in getting worship into the homes and lives of the body of Christ so that worship is not seen primarily as a Sunday morning event, but as a life posture throughout each day.

Production of Grace Vancouver's first CD of gospel-centered music, some written by our own worshippers, will be a key step in facilitating worship in the homes of the congregation. The CD will also be a deep encouragement to many international students who return to a home that is often lacking opportunities for rich worship.



Through prayerful contemplation opportunity, the agreement of two church leaders and my own heart's desire to be developed as a leader, I became convinced of my call to be a part of Grace Vancouver's Worship Academy. One of the great blessings of this half-time internship is that it enables me to pursue my other calling to the secular music

world with the rest of my work week. In prayerful planning, I came upon a three year plan to develop myself as a professional musician through training and performing here in Vancouver. I plan to use this time to prepare for future ministry in secular music as well as in the church body. ~Adam

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Grace Gathering Chapels

Bringing light to urban housing developments and to the marketplace

Taking church into the city means establishing small chapels called "Grace Gatherings" in neglected communities – from the marginalized poor to the distant and various streams in the marketplace. These gatherings begin in neighbourhoods, housing projects and work places. The first and most established Grace Gathering is alive at Candela Place. Opportunities to begin new Gatherings are present in another housing project and in a marketplace setting.



Candela Grace Gathering

In the heart of a city is a place of hope in a neighbourhood surrounded by drugs and prostitution. Candela Place is a subsidized **housing project for low income adults** in downtown Vancouver offering a place of new beginnings through safe and accessible housing.

In partnership with More than A Roof Ministries, Grace Vancouver is **shepherding this community** through a Grace Gathering Chapel in the living room at Candela. The community includes immigrants, recovering addicts, physically and mentally challenged and formerly homeless people. Each is struggling to get on their feet and off

the street. Many are looking for work, struggling with life issues, disease or disabilities. Candela is a safe place to call home.

Studying the truth of God's Word and prayer together, they are discovering what it means to belong to the warm, protected circle of the family of God. The Grace Gathering is providing a **gateway for community development** – english classes, special events, counseling, volunteer groups, small business development and opportunities for local businesses to volunteer their services.

"I found a new family here.. I'm so grateful for this community. Becoming a widow shortly after arriving in Canada from the Philippines was a terrible and traumatic experience. ~Tess

"In coming to live here I've met a lot of good people who are interested in me and interested in me helping myself. It was hard at first. I wanted to leave cause I wasn't used to the environment. Things were too clean, too organized. Where I came from was just drugs and alcohol. ~Ray

"I've been going down to Candela with some of the stylists from my salon. The \$3 haircuts we offer the residents helps with their self-esteem and practically with things like job hunting. I like getting to know them and love that they remember things about my life as well. ~Jenn

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international friends

Bringing hospitality to the nations in our midst

The nations are at our doorstep. The city of Vancouver is more than 50% visible minority; Toronto is over 40% visible minority. Seventy-three per cent of all immigrants who arrived in Canada during the 1990s settled in Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal. Many have no local contacts or language skills when they arrive. Immigration counselling and language classes are greatly needed. There are also thousands of international students who flock in to learn English and the culture.

Throughout the Bible we are reminded to **care for the immigrant and foreigner in our midst**. Grace Vancouver has found a fruitful harvest in extending hospitality to the nations in our midst. International students often come willingly to church and are eager for Bible studies, sermon discussions, friendship and mission.



The choir has made a full on collision and intersection with the International Ministry; half of the choir are ESL students who are moved by the music and are eager to learn the meaning of the lyrics they sing. **Many come to new faith in Jesus and return home with a gospel song on their heart.**

An emerging partnership with International Student Ministry of Canada and soon-to-be-offered ESL lessons offer greater reach to the world right around us.

The Alpha course helped me to know more about Christianity. Also my life has been getting better after I started to believe in God. Especially I feel more comfortable with myself. I am much happier since I started to go to Grace Vancouver. My life would be totally different without it. I would like to share my happiness with my friends who are looking for something real. ~Kanao, student from Japan

Many of my friends back home are not Christians. I hope that will change and I hope I can make a difference. But first, I should change, learn and study more about God. I am in the process of finding God myself but I hope to teach them about God. ~Chris, student from Korea

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Arts in the City, Arts in the Sanctuary

Bringing beauty to the city and celebrating creativity with local artists

Visual arts, music, film and drama are the common language of urban culture. These things also reflect the creative grace of God which is common to all.

There is a spiritual dimension in the art scene. In Vancouver's art world, New Age spirituality plays a significant role. Many artists seek spiritual contact through sacred circles and yoga mantras for artistic inspiration. Experience with one art group reveals that there are spiritists planted intentionally in art groups to find recruits.

Living alongside "Gallery Row," Grace Vancouver Westside is ideally suited for our Arts in the City, Arts in the Sanctuary ministry.

Once a year for a month through art shows, music concerts and film screenings, **the church becomes a mezzanine or crossroads** – a place where over 500 friends and neighbours in our community discover the warmth and enjoyment of creativity. Both Christian and non-Christian artists,

painters, photographers, sculptors, filmmakers, poets and musicians bridge the City and the Sanctuary around the common value of art. People come to enjoy the fine art, wine and hors d'oeuvres, but they find much more. They find people whose understanding of art is rooted in the Creator who made us in his image. They discover people who love life and are filled with joy and light. From this fragile crossroads

of art and life, **relationships are formed and the church engages the culture** face to face just as Jesus did. Throughout the year, Christian artists in our midst continue developing these relationships and pray for each other as they move into mission in the city. Our partners in mission, Grace Toronto are seeking a work studio space to serve artists in their city.



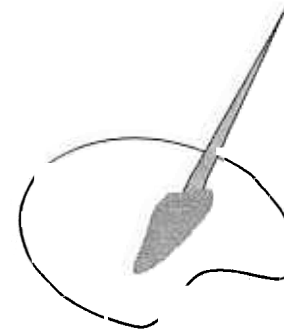
photo by Dave Edwards

Finally an arts event where I can show my work and feel like I belong, even though I am not a Christian.

~Participating artist

I have loved art and making things ever since I can remember. I also love to see others enjoying art. My prayer is that we will welcome artists to enrich our community and to learn about the Father who gives us each the ability to create beautiful works for His glory.

~Caron



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Showers for the Shelterless

Bringing dignity to the city's homeless

Grace Vancouver Westside's affluent neighbourhood is home to 70 homeless people, many who are seeking distance from the drugs and alcohol rampant in the Downtown Eastside. Each week, our **homeless and low income friends come for simple things we take for granted** – a coffee and healthy breakfast, a hot shower and clean clothes, and friendship in a warm, welcoming environment.

Volunteers are being transformed as they love and develop friendships with their neighbours and as they learn about homelessness, mental illness, addiction, and the importance of human dignity, simplicity and frugality.

Participants view Saturday mornings as the one time in the week they feel truly cared for. Some participants have moved from living on the streets to housing, and others have reconnected with their families for the first time in years. This is a place for those in need to access resources, referrals for housing, jobs and other services.



You people do things differently here, you actually want to get to know me. I'm not just another homeless guy and that's a really nice feeling. ~Participant

This is my oasis, my safe-haven. ~Participant

My days start out differently now, if they can wake up with a smile on their face, so can I. ~Volunteer

Our real success story is in the change of heart that has happened in every person whether volunteer, participant or staff. Each of us are able to view one another as a work in progress and as a friend.

~Teresa, Director

An innovative partnership between Grace Vancouver Westside, Saint Augustine's Catholic Church and Kitsilano Community Centre, **Showers for the Shelterless is a reproducible model** that has been transplanted into other neighbourhoods in Vancouver. There is a continued growing interest from other communities to use this model that hinges on the **synergy created through partnership between the church and the community.**

The Showers for the Shelterless partnership has also grown to offer an **Extreme Weather Emergency Shelter.** When temperature drops below freezing it opens its doors to our friends so they can come in from the cold for dinner, a warm bed and breakfast the following morning.

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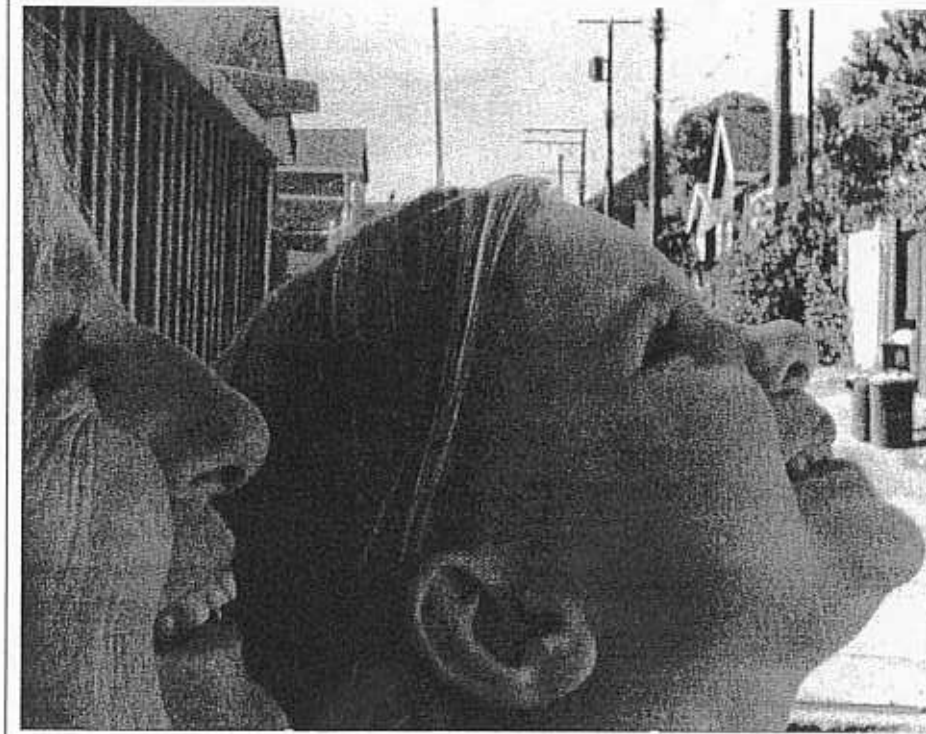


Families Together

Bringing support and relief to single parent families and families in need

On average 18% of Vancouver is made up of single parent families. Twenty-eight per cent are low income families. Many families feel isolated and exhausted. Many of the support groups available for single moms have a limited time frame – after a certain amount of months they are expected to find support elsewhere. They all could use a safe place to **receive care, support and resources to reduce stress, restore relationships and rebuild community.**

Families Together is an emerging ministry that has the heart to bring together the resources of both community and neighbouring churches to serve single parent families. Based on a model from a church in Calgary, Families Together will seek to **minimize the emotional and economic burden of single parent families and families in need.** Through support groups, counseling, mentoring, career transition services, parenting workshops, and an emergency and late-night child care service, single parent families will be introduced into a **spiritually vibrant, safe and stable atmosphere where they can be cared for and empowered to care for others.**



I separated from my husband when my second child was 3 months old. I moved into my parents' basement suite and started healing from my emotional and relational hurts and from my own sinful heart. I joined a single mom's group through the YWCA. Since day

one I knew the church could and should offer a similar program with prayer and the gospel. As a woman who has been broken and suffering, I am aware of the power of Christ to touch the deepest hurts of my heart so that I can love

and care for others. I want my life to be a reflection of Christ's love. I want others to know that I know God personally and that Jesus is the greatest friend I have ever met. ~Teresa

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Genesis Vancouver

Bringing freedom to those in bondage to the sex trade

The sacredness of life is on the decline everywhere. Slavery has a new face in our century. **Millions of women and children are sexually exploited** and trafficked worldwide. It is the fastest growing business of organized crime, operating at around 50 to 60 billion dollars annually. Life on the streets or in a brothel means a life of daily violence, drugs to numb the pain, or simply dying inside a little bit each day.

The fact that Canada is considering legalizing prostitution is a sign of a culture giving up hope. But we know there is another alternative.

We are partnering with Servants Anonymous (SA) to begin Genesis Vancouver – a **recovery choice from sexual exploitation for women and their children**. SA has a proven model that freed over 300 women

and teens in Calgary. In the 1990s, the known number of women on the streets in Calgary was reduced from 400 to 293 by 1997. SA was very active in providing safety and rehabilitation during this period.

Genesis Vancouver is a **long-term program offering women dignity, hope and new beginnings** through safe and supportive

housing facilities, recovery programs, education, job shadowing and training, ongoing encouragement and care. It is our prayer for these women to enjoy simple gifts in life – a daytime job where she gets a paycheque, not cash, to be there when her son wakes up at 3am and the emotional stability to comfort him.

*I'm doing so well! I have a suite in the basement
Guess what! I have a fire place in the living room!
~Participant from Calgary recovery program*

*I'm married and it is awesome. We have a second child – I'm going to church and I am happy! If you could see it, you'd be so happy too!
~Participant from Calgary recovery program*



artwork by Leon Yin

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Churches

Centres of
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Churches	Centres of Equipping	Community Transformation
Grace Vancouver Church >Westside >Eastside >(Downtown)	Grace Centre for Urban Mission and Biblical Studies >Vancouver >(Toronto)	Grace Gathering Chapels >Candela >Charleswood
Grace Toronto Church	(Worship Academy)	Showers for the Shelterless
		Genesis Vancouver
		International Ministry
		Arts in the City, Arts in the Sanctuary
		(Families Together)

(Indicates new ministries in development.)

Thank you for your partnership in the gospel through your prayers and financial support! We could not do it without you and count on your prayers and involvement.

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