

Dear Friend of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

First off, I would like to extend an apology for the long time between newsletters. So much has been happening that at times it was hard to find time to take a breath. The Lord has definitely opened up a door of opportunity for us and we are trying to faithfully move forward seeking to advance the joy and faith of others in the Lord Jesus Christ through the teaching of the Word of God. Diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and His amazing salvation is our mission. Thank you all for your continued prayer and support of our small ministry. Below I will try to highlight some of what is happening.



Now, you may be saying as you read this, “Come on, Murray, you can’t fool me. There are only 28 chapters in Acts.” The Acts 29 Network exists to start churches that plant churches – thus continuing Christ’s mission as revealed in the first 28 chapters of Acts. Hence the name, Acts 29. I am currently in the assessment phase with the Acts 29 church planting network. God is significantly using this network to influence and shape the church planting culture through both rock-solid theology and contextualizing the gospel. Acts 29 churches won’t water down their theology to reach more people and they won’t attack the culture in the name of Christianity. Their goal is to plant churches that are missionaries in their respective communities sent by Christ with the gospel (John 20:21). You can find out more about Acts 29 on their website: [www.acts29network.org](http://www.acts29network.org)

In the year ahead, we will continue with In-Depth Studies Canada – a theological ministry to the Body of Christ. However, we are going to make church-planting a real focus. To this end, Cheryl and I are selling our home in Leask and moving to an apartment in Saskatoon.



### **Church-planting in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada**

There is a tremendous need for gospel-centered churches that exalt the Sovereign God of heaven and earth in western Canada. Our desire is not simply to plant one church, but to begin a movement of churches which plant churches in Saskatchewan and the western provinces, beginning in the urban centers.

In grace, God has already established a core of believers in fellowship together. Grace Fellowship ([www.idscanada.org/grace](http://www.idscanada.org/grace)) is a Christian community which exists for the glory of God and the good of people by extending hope through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We desire to be a gospel-centered church that embraces the calling of God to act as a missionary to our culture in complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Our purpose is to glorify God by taking Christ to a world that for the most part does not know Him. We see the preaching of Jesus and relationships built on sacrificial love as the means of witness. Our proximity to a university community is also a potential means for reaching a multi-national community. We hope to empower leaders both theologically and biblically and give resources towards further church planting.

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (and all of Saskatchewan for that matter) is desperately in need of churches that proclaim a God-centered gospel. It is our province's largest city (one-fourth of the province's population) and it is growing fast (at least by Saskatchewan standards). One couple that phoned me looking for a church stated that we were the first church they had contacted in Saskatoon that ever talked about the righteousness and the cross of Jesus. They said that every other church they called talked about praying a prayer to ask Jesus in your heart – but there was no real answer to the sin problem. There was no teaching of repentance. There was no turning people away from themselves and pointing them to the glorious Lord Jesus Christ who is able to save sinners to the uttermost.

Where I grew up in rural Saskatchewan, there is town after town without any Bible believing church at all. It seems to me that Saskatoon would be the strategic center from which to begin to impact our community and from there continue to diffuse the fragrance of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ for the glory of the triune God.

## **The move to Saskatoon.**

Phase One: [COMPLETED] Bible studies begun in Saskatoon in homes and on the university campus.

Phase Two: [COMPLETED] A core group of believers gathered for the beginning of a church in Saskatoon. Secure a meeting place for the church to gather on Sundays. (God provided a community hall at a current rental of approximately \$80 a month. Amazing!).

Phase Three: [COMPLETED] Securing an apartment in Saskatoon which can be used as a “home base” for Cheryl and I, as we seek to disciple and build relationships with people. It is difficult to plant a church when you live 70 miles away.

Phase Four: [Current phase] Selling our home in Leask, Saskatchewan, and moving to our apartment in Saskatoon. I will continue to commute to teach in the public school in Leask (70 miles north of the city of Saskatoon) in order to support myself. We are hoping to receive \$50,000 for the sale of our home (hey, it's small town Saskatchewan). This will pay for our move and enable us to put some funds in savings to go towards a down payment on a home in Saskatoon. Since homes in Saskatoon are now running around \$250,000-\$300,000 plus, we will need to save around \$150,000 more in order to have a down payment that will keep our mortgage payments within reach. If the Lord sells the house, Cheryl and I will pack up and move our

belongings (a small portion of them) into the apartment in Saskatoon – which we will call home for the next while. We will have to put the rest of our stuff either up for sale or in storage (including most of my books). Steve Lehrer told me I should get rid of our kitchen table to make room for more books! As the Lord provides, we will look at trying to purchase a house in the city, where I can have a study again (until then, the kitchen table will work – if we decide to keep it!), and room to host Bible studies and guests.

Phase Five: Lord willing, with support, I will be able to reduce my time working in the school in Leask to focus on the church plant. Due to increased expenses living in the city, the total need will likely be around \$3000 a month. This would enable us to eventually move from the apartment to a house. Expenses would include a mortgage payment, taxes, living expenses, and church start-up expenses. This amount could decrease if we were able to come up with a substantial down payment for a home. I want to have the raising up and training of godly young men for the work of the ongoing church-planting ministry as one of my main focuses.

Phase Six: Our ultimate goal would be to have the need for support decrease as the church grows viable and self-supporting. We want to continue to be a church-planting church that supports other church-planting efforts to the glory of God. There is a tremendous need for gospel-centered churches that exalt the Sovereign God of heaven and earth in western Canada.

## **Gathering Prayer Support**

One of my highest priorities at this time is to gather prayer support. in order to draw on the faithfulness of our loving heavenly Father who delights to give good gifts to His children who ask. I am seeking people and groups to commit Grace Fellowship to regular prayer. Please consider becoming a prayer supporter of Grace Fellowship by regularly seeking the Lord to provide our needs, and to glorify Himself through the advance of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Our Missional Strategy for our Church plant in Saskatoon:**

### **Do all to the glory of God-**

Our desire is to have God at the center of all that we do, seeking His glory first and foremost (1 Cor. 10:31).

### **It's all about Jesus-**

My number one goal would be to teach the Bible that we might learn about Jesus! I desire that Jesus be the center and the circumference of all we do. He is the centerpiece of God's gift and revelation to us.

### **Take heed to yourself-**

To accomplish the goal of diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God in our community, I would first take heed to my own soul. If I am not thrilled by Jesus and His so great salvation, what kind of messenger would I be? I would be a living contradiction. The essence of worship is valuing Christ more than all the world has to offer. Thus, I need to continually feed on the Word and walk in the Spirit in an ever growing relationship with Jesus who loved me and gave Himself for me. The pursuit of joy in God through Jesus Christ is not only vital, it is commanded. I must be equipped to train up other faithful men who will be able to teach others

also. I must be able to teach and equip others (all the believer-priests!) for the work of the ministry. Please pray for this dependent church-planter.

### **Without Me you can do nothing-**

As one who is totally dependent upon the Lord – the builder of the house – prayer is of utmost importance. We have a core group gathered and we have begun to meet regularly to pray together in addition to our own personal prayer times.

### **Feed My sheep-**

The faithful exposition of the Christ-centered Scriptures needs to be at the center of our assembly time. My opinions are not worth much – God’s Word is truth. Through the Word, sinners are saved and saints built up. It is my delight in bringing forth from the Scripture the teaching that God has revealed for our good and His glory. I love the full revelation of God’s dealings in the Bible with its unfolding gospel of Christ culminating in His glorious life, death, resurrection, and ascension as King of kings and Lord of lords. We need to have our assumptions bow to the revealed reality in God’s Word.

### **Train up faithful men-**

From within the gathered assembly, I am, and will continue, to look for and train up potential leaders. I desire to have a plurality of male elders to oversee and shepherd the flock of God. To that end, I have currently set up an interactive discipleship website for doctrinal training and exhortation. I also am trying to meet with several guys for individual and/or small group discipleship.

### **Go therefore and make disciples-**

We seek to freely offer Jesus Christ to all as the joyful news to be received “without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1). We earnestly exhort all to look away from themselves and embrace Christ, who died the sinner’s death on the cross, for the forgiveness of sin and the satisfaction of the soul.

This glorious gospel in which the Lord of glory condescended to the point of dying on the cross for unworthy sinners never ceases to amaze and humble me. As recipients of such amazing grace, it is our prayer and heart’s desire that the Lord might glorify Himself in and through us as we seek to advance the joy and faith of others through the teaching of the Word of God. Diffusing the fragrance of the knowledge of God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and His amazing salvation is our mission.

We have no goal to reach a specific sub-group, but rather are open to all the Lord brings across our path. We want Jesus to build His church, and as such we desire to preach the gospel to every creature. Those the Lord calls through the heralding of His word into assembly together around our great Head – Jesus – will be a witness into their own culture and social circles. We will also try to break into new social circles as the Lord opens doors of opportunity. For example, we have had opportunity to host Bible studies on the university campus. Our church must value the privilege God has given all of us as being His ambassadors, accomplishing His goal of spreading the knowledge of His glory to our community and beyond.

### **A fellow-worker for your joy-**

The pursuit of joy in God through Jesus Christ is not only vital, it is commanded. “In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Psalm 16:11 (See also

John 15:11, 16:24; Psalm 37:4; 2 Cor. 1:24). God is glorified, not only in being known, but in being delighted in.

### **A new commandment I give unto you**

We desire that our enjoyment of Christ's gracious riches overflow in love that meets the needs of others. Thus we aim to strengthen each others' faith in hard times, restore hurt relationships, comfort the broken-hearted, and implore prodigals to return to the Father.

We value building up strong marriages and families, where God's Word is taught and lived out; where husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church; where wives respect their husbands; where the hearts of the parents are turned toward their children and the hearts of the children toward their parents.

We value the diversity that God created among mankind and the unity in diversity that God creates among His people - a unity that manifests itself beyond Christian politeness and friendliness, in an authentic community showing love, care, and concern throughout the week as we share our lives with each other. Through every believer using their gifts for the benefit and growth of one another, we desire to help one another fix our eyes on our Lord Jesus Christ to increase our love and enjoyment of Him to the glory of God.

### **According to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will**

I am delighted to see what the Lord will unfold. Life is an adventure, and our Lord has written the script. That knowledge gives me great hope and faith. Things may not go according to my plans, but they will go according to His – and His plan is the best of all possible plans. To God be the glory. That is my joy!

## **Thanksgiving**

### **Website –**

We are very thankful to have Shane Becker from Treasuring Christ (<http://treasuringchrist.com>) in Australia help us with our website. Shane has helped us add some new features, including a whole discipleship section with interactive Bible studies. Visit our church website at: [www.idscanada.org/grace](http://www.idscanada.org/grace).

### **Gospel Outreach-**

Since we have determined to take the plunge and move to Saskatoon, God has been working in a number of people. I baptized a woman a couple of weeks ago who had been trusting in the fact that she prayed a prayer nine years ago. Now, having been granted repentance, she and her husband have been gathering with us, seeking to learn about the true sovereign holy God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has also put us in touch with a number of other people, who seem very open to the gospel, and amazed at what the Bible reveals. One man after the teaching time last Sunday, took me aside to ask me follow up questions. One of the things He wanted to know is who would kill Jesus and nail Him to the cross? I told him that ultimately it was God Himself. When I showed him in the Scripture that no one took His life from Him, and that He gave it willingly and purposefully, he was impressed. We looked at how Jesus stepped towards the soldiers at His arrest and they were "blown" back, showing His disciples and us, that He was no victim. It was for our redemption and His glory that He bore His cross. What a Savior!

## Endorsements

God has graciously provided me with good friends in the gospel over the years. Several in kindness have written endorsements for me to use in a brochure regarding our church-planting endeavors. Here are a few:

“One of the ‘high lights’ of my itinerant ministry was visiting Leask, Saskatchewan with my wife. Both my wife and I will never forget our time of blessing there. We met a wonderful group of believers under the leadership of Pastor Murray McLellan. We also visited a Bible study that was soon to become a church plant in Saskatoon. If anyone in that area believes and loves the Doctrines of Grace and New Covenant Theology, I urge you to visit and fellowship with these believers. If your church is looking for a place to support as a home mission project, I know of none better than this ministry.”



—John G. Reisinger, Editor of Sound of Grace, Founder of the John Bunyan Conference, evangelist, and Bible conference speaker. He has pastored churches in the U.S.A. and Canada. He has spent ten years in church planting and established four Sovereign Grace churches.

“If you are looking for a church that seeks to express in word and deed what it is for believers in Jesus Christ to walk in the beauty of holiness by the power of God's indwelling Spirit then I encourage you to consider the labors of Grace Fellowship as they seek to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the World. I am especially thankful our Lord has appointed my good friend and fellow laborer, pastor Murray McLellan, to the task of leading this new work in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.”



—Pastor Maurice "Moe" Bergeron, Sovereign Grace Fellowship, Boscawen, New Hampshire. [www.sovgracenh.com](http://www.sovgracenh.com)

“I have known Murray for a number of years and I am absolutely convinced that he is a faithful shepherd of the people of God. He is well grounded biblically and has a heart for the lost. He is not frightened by difficulties, but is committed to resolving them in a manner that honors his Lord. I recommend Murray as a faithful man of God.”



—Geoff Volker, Director of In-Depth Studies and an Elder at New Covenant Bible Fellowship in Mesa, Arizona, [www.ids.org](http://www.ids.org)

“Having observed the gospel ministry of Murray McLellan and been the beneficiary of His God-centered, Christ-exalting, heart-reaching sermons I highly recommend him to all of the students that come to us. Here is a ministry that seeks to be faithful in magnifying Jesus, in proclaiming the glory of His cross, exulting in the power of His resurrection, and living in the enabling of His Holy Spirit. I commend this ministry whole-heartedly.”



—Mike Cleveland, Founder and President of Setting Captives Free and speaker on Setting Captives Free Radio

“It is not difficult for me to make a recommendation to consider entering into a supportive relationship with Murray and the work that he and others are seeking to establish by the all enabling grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Saskatoon. It has been my privilege not only to know him but to spend hours studying with this dear brother. He is one of the most Christ focused men that I know, a conscientious shepherd of God's flock and a gifted writer. His understanding of our precious Christ as our New Covenant has impacted my life and this understanding in eminent through his life.”



—Joseph Krygier, Pastor of New Covenant Bible Fellowship in Evans New York and has ministered in the USA, Poland, Ukraine and Romania. He was on staff at Buffalo City Mission for 20 years.

"In our post-modern era, where truth, meaning, and certainty is sacrificed on the altar of subjectivity; it can be difficult to find a local church that is committed to the supremacy of God in all things. Grace Fellowship is a church committed to bringing God the maximum glory by making and molding disciples that know what it means to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow after Jesus. If you desire a rich spiritual-feasting upon the word of God, a focus on heartfelt fellowship, mutual ministry and accountability, then I encourage you to come and see what the Lord Jesus is doing in the midst of this new work in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada."



—Dustin Segers, a pastor with Shepherd's Fellowship Baptist Church in Greensboro, NC.

Our God has done wonderful things and we look to Him for all our sufficiency as ministers of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3:4-6). We are content with our current situation and how our Lord has provided. We will continue to strive to magnify His name with everything we have. Should our support increase, we will be thankful and seek to be good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Regardless, we will continue to strive to advance the joy and faith of others through the teaching of the Word of God. We will see what the Lord has in store for us in this coming year. Whatever it is, it will certainly be too good for us. I continually stand amazed at His grace. It is a pleasure to follow Him - outside the camp - for here we have no continuing city!

We are striving to be faithful. May the Lord be magnified!

Please visit our web site for more information on our ministry in Canada, and pray for us as we seek to have God glorified in everything we do.

If you have a desire to support the church-planting and teaching ministry of Murray McLellan you may do so by sending a cheque to:

Grace Fellowship  
Box 74  
Leask, Saskatchewan, CANADA  
S0J 1M0

Make cheques payable to “Grace Fellowship” and designate them “for Murray.”

Note: If you live in the United States and would like to receive a tax-deductible receipt, please direct your gift to In-Depth Studies in Arizona and designate it for Murray in Canada.

You may make donations online at: [www.idscanada.org](http://www.idscanada.org)

If you would like to talk with me about all that is happening, please give me a call (or e-mail me and I'll call you. We have a long distance package now, so I can call anywhere in Canada or the U.S. for "free".)

Saskatoon phone: (306) 244-4373

Leask phone: (306) 466-4423