

More and Better **Matthew 28:19-20**

November 5, 2017
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Welcome to an exciting and important Sunday as a church family! If you are visiting our website today, this is where you would normally find a Bible exposition. 99 out of a 100 Sundays, that's what happens. Today I'm going to do a little of that, but this is more of a church family chat. We are glad you have found our page. Maybe what you read today might make you think, this is the kind of church I want to be a part of. That would be great. Everybody in our church was once new and decided to join in on what God is doing through our fellowship.

As we always do, let's start with Scripture. This past year we had teaching about the kingdom of God. Jesus' repeated message while on earth was that the kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God through Christ. Jesus is the king of God's kingdom. The gospel is the kingdom message. Personal salvation comes by faith in Jesus as Savior and King, transferring our spiritual citizenship from the kingdom of darkness and death to a new kingdom—a kingdom of light and life eternal. It is to pledge allegiance to Jesus. Someday Jesus will return and exert his royal authority over every being in heaven and earth. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. We don't physically see his authority and reign now, but he is reigning at the right hand of God.

His kingdom and its priorities are to be our highest purpose. *"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."* (Matthew 6:33 ESV)

King Jesus gave us a final commission. This is our prime directive from our Lord.

"Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:16–20)

The Empowerment for the Mission – Jesus' Absolute Authority

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Verse 18)

I thought Jesus always had authority. Didn't his miracles prove that? Jesus did have authority; he exercised it during his earthly ministry. However, the sphere of that authority was not over all heaven and earth. God the Father ruled heaven. Satan ruled earth. Now, by virtue of his obedience to the Father's will and victory over sin and death, the Father grants to Jesus all authority over everything everywhere. The only thing not under Jesus' authority is God the Father himself.

The Essence of the Mission – *Make Disciples*

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Verses 19-20)

This is a verse where getting the grammar right is essential. Like English, the Greek uses tenses of words to communicate emphasis. In this verse there is one imperative and then participles that surround it to explain the character and nature of the imperative.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)



Take a look at the picture above. "Make disciples" is the imperative. The participles are "Go," "baptizing," and "teaching."

So let's begin with the imperative of the mission. **Make disciples.** It is a command. *Make disciples.* If anyone asks you, what's the point of a church? It's to glorify God and make disciples.

Here is how we say it, "**Our mission is to make fully devoted followers of Jesus whose lives are all about Him.**" –Bethel Church

If that is our mission, do we know what a disciple is? Essentially it is *to follow the leadership and teachings of another.* The meaning is captured in the words Jesus said to Matthew himself when he called him as a disciple. Jesus said, *Follow me.*

Making disciples includes the beginning of discipleship, conversion that's normally through evangelism. It also includes the process of growing and maturing in our spiritual lives. A healthy church will care deeply about both sides of the mission. Multiplying and maturing. Jesus describes what making disciples will entail. *Going. Baptizing. Teaching.*

The "Go" mission

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." (Verse 19)

The Co-mission is a "Go" mission. Making disciples requires active and intentional pursuit of people with love and the gospel. When are we done with this? Two possibilities. When every single person on earth is a follower of Jesus or when Jesus returns. Are either of those realities right now? No? So we are still on mission making disciples.

"Go" summarizes all the time, effort, sacrifices, and sufferings of God's people as they have died to themselves, taken up their cross, and said, "I am following Jesus." That's what it means to go.

Baptize them

We talk often about this and we will be baptizing at our Crown Point campus next weekend. Baptism is the outward sign of inward faith in obedience to Jesus. That's why we do it.

Teach for transformation

"...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Verse 20)

Christianity is not merely the beginning of the Christian life. It is an all-encompassing worldview that changes every aspect of who we were to become who Jesus would have us to be. Discipleship begins by evangelism and conversion but is a life-long process of changing, maturing, and growing. None of us have arrived. We are all in process.

A local church that focuses only on evangelism will likely have converts but perpetual immaturity. A local church that focuses only on maturing will eventually close because of attrition. There's no new believers and they haven't warmed the baptistery up in years. It is both making disciples and maturing disciples. Are you with me? You see it here right in the Great Commission. This is what we are to do.

This brings us now to exciting news that evidences Bethel Church is a church pursuing with passion the Great Commission King Jesus gave us.



Would a good summary of the Great Commission be to go and make more and better disciples? *More + Better*. M and B.

Today we are announcing the next chapter of our church's story and grounding it in the words of King Jesus. *More and better disciples*. We have initiatives at all our campuses. Some are on the *More* side, some are on the *Better* side. I'm going to walk through these. If time allowed, more could be said about each of them. After I'm done, we're going to break from our livestream to let each campus pastor talk about their campus initiatives, and then we will come back together for some final thoughts. So what is *More + Better*?

Additional Campuses/Congregations

Five years ago, we added our second campus. Three years ago, we added our third and fourth campuses. Since then we have been building and strengthening the ministries at each location. As Pastor Brad shared, this has been a tremendous year for our church.

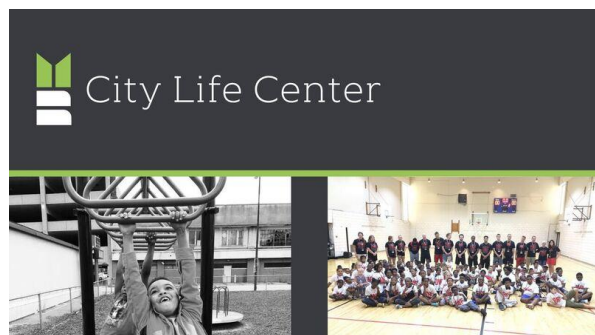
More – We see gospel opportunity with another campus and we need help to do so. This may be a new geographical location campus like our others. There is a lot of population to the northwest, and maybe God will open a door as he has before.

Listen to this: we also are considering language-specific campuses. A congregation of our church that primarily ministers in a non-English language. In Northwest Indiana, 74,000 people return to their homes and they speak a language other than English. We see opportunity for *More + Better* there. Two languages we are focused on are Spanish and Mandarin. There is obviously a huge Spanish-speaking population here and it could be exciting to see what Bethel Church Español could do. We also have real possibilities in the Chinese community and we are currently working on that one.

As has happened in the past, could our dreams become reality by the providence of God? God knew that he would provide Bethel Church-Cedar Lake. Bethel Church-Gary. Bethel Church-Hobart/Portage. Might we look back to this day with Bethel Church Español or Bethel Church Highland/Munster/wherever? Who knows. And would that mean we are on mission making more and better disciples?

Fund the City Life Center

God allowed us a few years ago to begin an independent nonprofit community center out of our Gary campus. The City Life Center presently operates year-round, serving the Gary community. We run camps all summer and afterschool programs during the school year. We have around 100 children in our afterschool program. 75 of them stay and are part of our church ministries in the evening including AWANA and Verge youth ministry.



We also are feeding children and young people there. Over the past 12 months we have served 17,000 hot meals. The City Life Center has received various grants from the public and private sector. That's great. The problem is that they are designated funds for programming only and the Center needs money for their operating expenses. We want to raise dollars in *More and Better* to help fund their community ministry in Gary.

Expand Seating in the Crown Point Auditorium

This requires some explanation. We moved into our Crown Point facility in 2000. It's hard to believe we have been there coming on 18 years. God has blessed us richly over those years, certainly with more and more people. This past year landed us on the fastest-growing church list largely due to increases in our Crown Point attendance. Our attendance requires three services. Our issue is the middle service. The first and third service times aren't great start times for families. The middle is perfect. The middle is packed.

So what do we do? We could build a new auditorium with increased seating. Cost estimates are around \$12-15 million dollars and many fine churches have chosen to do just that. But that's a big number.

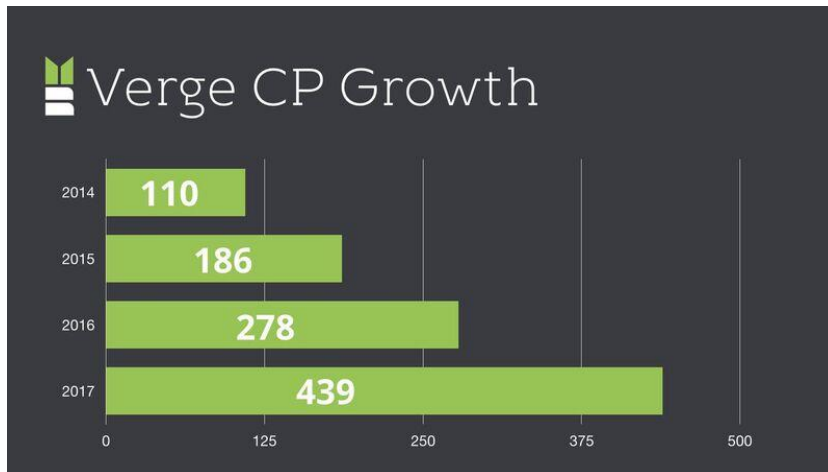
This past summer we began looking at the geometry of our facility. One thing we did 18 years ago is we built a very tall building. This summer we realized there are cavities of space hidden from view. Large cavities. So large that we began to speculate, rather than building a new auditorium, could we simply utilize space we already have, but aren't using. The elders commissioned a feasibility study with an architectural firm. They did initial measures and said, *we think you are on to something*. We hired them for additional work and they have confirmed that we can expand our present 1,000 seat auditorium to 1,500 seats without adding a square foot to the footprint of our building. 50% increase with no addition. Oh, and remember the \$15 million-dollar price? Our initial pricing puts this at \$1.8 million. And all the Dutch people said, *Amen!* Here are some preliminary drawings:



You will notice that the expansion utilizes the height by adding to the balcony on the sides. New efficient seating on the floor gets us right to 1,500 total capacity. With our current growth trajectory, we think this would mean more and better disciples.

Expand the Crown Point Student Center

Let me show you some numbers (see next page).



This was last Tuesday at Verge:



That is our fastest growing ministry and the Student Center capacity was maxed some time ago. We want to remodel, remove some walls, and get our ministry to young people the facility needed to yield more and better young people for Christ.

Remodel Cedar Lake Lower Level Kids Center

We are incredibly blessed with our new auditorium at Cedar Lake. It's a great facility. However, the children's ministry space is under the old auditorium and is showing its age.



The rooms are small. We want to gut and redo the space for larger, brighter, and happier rooms to make more and better disciples among the children of our church.

Provide a New Roof and New Parking Lot at the Gary Campus

Roofs are great until you need a new one. We have been patching the roof there and slowly burning dollars when a new roof is the permanent fix. We need it.

If you have been to our Gary campus you know that the parking is kind of a seek and find experience. We don't really have a parking lot. We do own a half acre that is currently a stone and weed space.



We want to put a true parking lot there which would serve our Gary campus and the City Life Center during the week.

Hobart/Portage Campus

You may recall that a few days after we merged with Central Baptist Church, they had a major rain and it flooded the south end of the building. That was not a great time for a flood, but Noah thought so too.

We repaired the necessary spaces and just cut the drywall and locked the doors on a couple large classrooms.



What has happened is that the Hobart/Portage campus has grown 65% in three years. It's so much growth that there is hallway crowding. We need to reclaim that flooded space for our family and children's ministries there. Why? You got it. More and better disciples. So that is Bethel Church *More and Better*.



Now we're going to take a few moments to talk about *More and Better* at each campus.

Crown Point More and Better

A few more details as we are just talking about Crown Point. This plan is a stewardship plan. We are stewarding the gospel opportunity we have. We are stewarding the space we have. We are stewarding the dollars we have. The beauty of this is that we can do all three things with one concept.

We further are excited to think that we could do two services on Sunday morning. Probably 9:00 and 10:45 like our other campuses. Both times are prime and doable times for everyone including families with children. This would also help our volunteers, the quality feel of our services, our parking in and out, and will allow time for fellowship between services. It's an overall win on all levels.

Oh, and I think I failed to mention one more thing here at the Crown Point campus.

Expanded women's restroom (men's too) – I don't know if this makes more and better disciples, but it will certainly make happier women!

If this is successful, our hope is to begin this after Easter services and have it done by *All About Him* Sunday in late August.

The Appeal

I know the question you are asking is, how much will all this cost? Here is a breakdown of the costs for each initiative and a total cost.



The total cost is around **\$3 million**. Our primary aim is not raising money; it's raising disciples whose lives are all about him.

Friends, will you be a part of fulfilling the Great Commission in our Jerusalem by supporting with your prayers and money for these needs?

We are looking to have all our pledges in by December 10. We have summarized all this in a **More and Better guidebook**. We are providing one for each family today. I'm asking you to honestly go before the Lord and ask, *God what would you have me to do?*

For the next weeks we are going to share more of the whys of *More + Better*. If you have any questions, please contact us.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Verses 19-20)

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