

December 2017



THE ALLIANCE CHURCH OF CHEEKTOWAGA

Experiencing Christ's Kingdom Together



PJ Bogoniewski

actsoflight@gmail.com

740-331-9711

www.ActsofLight.com

The Excitement Continues to Build!

Forget about any pre-stage jitters! We have too much work left to do before January 7th to stand around and feel anxious! Still, our CORE team is super excited that we're just 2 weeks away from launching on Sunday mornings. There have been so many people who have invested into this church launch, so many people who have prayed, so many conversations, so many decisions made, so many who have stepped outside of their comfort zones, and so many who have allowed the Holy Spirit to work in them and through them! I know that this is just the beginning of what God is going to do in us and through us.

Thank you for the part that you've played. Please, don't give up on us now! Continue to pray, give if you can, read and recommend my books, and tell everyone you know that there's a new church opening in Cheektowaga on January 7th!

WE HAVE OUR LOCATION!

The journey to find the location for us to plant is a lot like the journey that Moses took towards the Promised Land: there was a lot of wandering, frustration, and whining along the way! Well, maybe I was the only one doing the whining. Ha ha. We were faced with dozens of possibilities and options. Most of our journey felt like we were trying to knock down walls of opposition and resistance. In my last update I detailed some of that journey, as well as our frustrations, and let you know that we were talking with a hotel that might work out for us. I'm happy to tell you that we are going to be launching at the Holiday Inn in Cheektowaga right next to the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport. They went out of their way to "make this work for us!" They were so welcoming and accommodating and their space is going to work out really, really well for us. No, it's not a perfect space—and we did have to change some of our plans because of the space that they're willing to rent to us, but we're certain this is where the Lord wants us to be and IT'S SO GOOD TO HAVE A PLACE!

One of the things that I really like about this location is that anyone in Cheektowaga will know just where it is. It's just next to the airport, so when you're giving directions to navigate by landmarks you've got them 90% of the way there by saying, "it's right next to the airport." That also means that it's not hard to get to, because the traffic flow to the airport is very well designed. In fact, one of our CORE team members who drives about 30 minutes each week to be part of our team said it was easier to get to the Holiday Inn than it was to get to Centerpointe—even though Centerpointe was fewer miles than the Holiday Inn. That's because the traffic is designed to get you to the airport easily.

We began to meet at the Holiday Inn on December 10th to prepare for our launch. This was the first time most of our team was able to see our space. We worked as a team to determine how we were going to set up our space, how we were going to get people into and out of our space without issue, and how we needed to adapt our ministry plans because of the space that was available to us. At the end of a 4 hour working session we all agreed, "This space is going to work quite nicely!"



Gary was a big part of finding a place to meet.
He was SO EXCITED when we found one!



The entry area of the hotel looks really nice!



Our space will give us enough room for 150-200 people.

The space we'll be using is divided into 2 areas. On Sunday morning one is for worship and one is for our nursery/toddler area. On Sunday nights we had to figure out how to make our 2 spaces work for the nursery/toddler area, children's ministry, youth ministry, and adult small groups. We came up with a few innovative ideas—at least ideas that were new to us. Our Children's ministry and Nursery/Toddlers are going to share their space on Sunday nights. That means our youth and adult ministries are going to share the other space on Sunday nights. With the thoughts of possible distractions of having Children's, Youth, and Adult ministries all trying to do some musical worship and games at different times in the same spaces, we decided to have FAMILY WORSHIP and GAME TIME on Sunday nights. That's a new thing for all of us. Turns out EVERYONE likes to play youth group games (no, not *all the* crazy sweaty games we played in Rome!) as well as singing the kids songs. No, I won't share the video of our adults all trying to do the motions to the kids songs, but I will tell you that we all had a laugh and enjoyed the time we spent worshipping the Lord in this unusual manner. After the family worship and game time we'll all break apart into our age groups for an age-appropriate time of study. It's not something I would have thought of without the necessity of thinking outside of the box caused by our space restrictions, but it's something that I think we're all going to benefit from.

I'm Overwhelmed With His Love and Grace!

Recently I told a friend that this is one of the most exciting times of my life and ministry. This past year has been a thrilling and fruitful time of training our CORE team for the LAUNCH on the 7th. It's the culmination of years of learning that only comes by being a volunteer leader in a small church, which was added to by years of working under pastors who really knew what they were doing, which was added to by dozens of trainings, seminars, books read, and discussions with healthy ministry experts, which was added to by my time as a youth pastor in Rome, summer program director at Delta, lead pastor in Athens, which was added to by deep discussions about faith and ministry with a few groups of outstanding leaders, and the coaching I've received from other church planters and coaches. In fact, for the most part, the only part I've played in the successes of this past year, as well as the hopeful anticipation for days to come, is to be a good student and prayerfully follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is really all about Christ and what He is doing in us and through us by His Holy Spirit.

It really is a privilege just to be part of it—to have a front row seat at what He is doing.

I am so thankful for each person who has prayed for us!!! For each person who has given financially to this project. For each person who has invested in my life and in the lives of my family members. For the partner churches who have blessed this project in so many ways. And for the amazing CORE team who have stepped so far out of their comfort zone again and again in order to follow the Lord's leading. They have been great students! They have heard so many new topics over the past year, wrestled with so many deeper things, adapted to a new WHAT and HOW of ministry, made new friends, changed life-patterns, and submitted themselves to be trained for this amazing adventure.

The Lord is Gathering People to this Plant

One of my favorite parts of the account of Noah and the ark is that Noah didn't go out and gather the animals from the four-corners of the world. That would have been a huge job. Instead, the Lord **BROUGHT** the animals to the ark and Noah had to care for them when they arrived. While I think this has application to church planting, in that we're trusting that God is going to draw people to our new church plant, we also realize that we have to GO and invite them to join us as well. I'm so proud of our team for spreading the word so far.

But we've been waiting for our launch before we invest too heavily in our invitations because we found that people were thinking that we were **ALREADY LAUNCHED!** NO! We don't want new people to start showing up for our practice services. We're still working out all of the details. We're trying to figure out where we need to put stuff, what our people flow is going to be like, where are the weaknesses in our plans, and we're developing a list of stuff that we need to care for before we launch

on the 7th. If new people start coming in the door they will have to be our priority and we won't have the time to use our space to prepare it for the launch on the 7th.

But still, people have been asking "When can I come?" This reminds me of a story that Pastor Jeff told in Athens. Pastor Jeff had been working to plant the church that I pastored in Athens and had been wondering if anyone would come—as I too have been wondering about the church in Cheektowaga. Out of the blue he got a message from someone in a foreign country asking questions about the church because their son was attending Ohio University and they were looking for a good church to worship in. Suddenly, Pastor Jeff realized that God could fill the church with people HE choose in ways that go beyond anything that we understand. We have to do our part and prepare for the people that He is going to send to us, while inviting everyone to come and be part of this new church.

The pastor of one of our partner churches was recently getting his hair cut. In casual conversation with the hair stylist he asked where she lived. She mentioned that she lived in Cheektowaga. He responded that he had a friend who was planting a new church in Cheektowaga. She asked about it, since she and her family had recently been looking for a church in Cheektowaga they could attend. We're hoping to have them join us for a Sunday in January—and hoping they continue to come back again and again.

In response to one of my invitations to speak at a partner church a couple came forward to express interest in joining our church. They had recently been looking for a church and had "happened" to attend this partner church for a bit before I came to speak. They live 5 minutes from our new church plant and are very interested in being involved with us as we launch.

In response to another speaking opportunity a family took me up on the invitation to get some ice cream with me to hear our plans for our new church plant. We still haven't found a good time for us to connect for ice cream, but they recommended our new church plant to a co worker from Nigeria was looking for a church in Cheektowaga. We're hoping to see him in January as well.

On the first Sunday we were meeting at the Holiday Inn to "figure out our space" a hotel worker "happened by" and began to ask questions about our new church plant. Some members of our team took the chance to talk with her, encourage her, and pray with her. I'm sure we'll see her again when we launch in January.

There are many more stories of people that God is drawing into this plant! He is at work. We get to join Him in the work He's doing. It's so exciting!

Website—COMING SOON!?

Our website is up and running, but is still "under construction." It should be done by our launch. If you know of anyone who is looking for a church in Cheektowaga, the best first step would be to point them towards our website. It will contain all of the latest information on when and where we're meeting, as well a thorough description of the mission and vision that define our church plant. I'm hoping that we'll be able to livestream our services at our website, as well as post sermons as soon as possible. That will allow you to "check in" on what we're doing from time to time.

Our website name is: CheektowagaAlliance.org

Want to Partner With Us?

The best way you can partner with us is through **PRAYER**.

- Pray for the remaining details that have to be worked out before we launch on January 7th.
- We're still looking for a worship leader who is called to lead worship for us. We have a couple of people who are going to "stand in the gap" until the Lord leads us to the right leader. I've spoken with a number of potential leaders. They are hard to come by, and there are many aspects of their leadership that have to be in step with my leadership, so please pray that the Lord would call the right one to partner with us.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will draw people to our new church.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will send us out to invite people into our new church.
- Pray that our CORE team will depend on their training to get them started in our new ministries, that our training would be adequate for this phase of our church plant, and that He would provide any additional training that we require.
- Pray that He will continue to provide for our financial needs.

There are plenty of other ways to partner with us as well. Maybe God's calling you to move to Cheektowaga to be part of this plant. Maybe He's leading you to new relationships with people who already live in Cheektowaga who are looking to be part of a church plant like ours—or who need to be part of it and don't know it yet! Maybe He's asking you to do something else that will take you out of your comfort zone and experience His Kingdom in ways you've never experienced before. The important thing is that you listen to His leading and step out in obedience! Ask Him to give you the courage to follow His leading. He'll meet you where you are and allow you to take the next steps in your spiritual journey with Him.

You can go to our webpage to read all of our updates—and to view some of our leadership training sessions. These sessions will give you a more detailed idea of our focus for this new church plant.

I know that I've been asking you to pray about **purchasing, reading, and recommending my books** for quite some time. This is a great way for you to be part of this church plant. My books are designed to help you in your walk with Christ, answer some of the questions that you might have about Him, help others answer their questions, and challenge you to live your life in missional ways. I know that you'll be blessed as you read them! Then, as you recommend them to others your recommendation could lead to another recommendation, and another, and another, and another... This is a great way for you to support our family, and this new church plant, as well as give me the opportunity to bless you. If each of the families who receive this newsletter signed up to listen to my books on Audible we would receive over \$5,000. That would be a HUGE HELP in planting this new church! I know that these books will be a blessing to you as you read them as well!

I'm thankful for those who have purchased my writings, are reading them, and are sharing how the Lord is using them to expand their faith, their understanding of Kingdom living, and are actively joining Him in His work to expand His Kingdom!

Here's how you can give financially to this new church plant. We're working on filling out all of the paperwork required for us to be an official new church (there is LOTS of red tape to wade through!) so that we can set up our own bank account. We're hoping to have that figured out some time soon. Until then, our district office staff have set up an account for us to use through the district office. Any gifts sent will be tax deductible. You can send any checks to:

Edward Lyau
Northeastern District of the CMA
6275 Pillmore Dr.
Rome, NY 13440

Make your check out to "the Northeastern District of the CMA" and write "For Cheektowaga Church Plant" in the memo line.



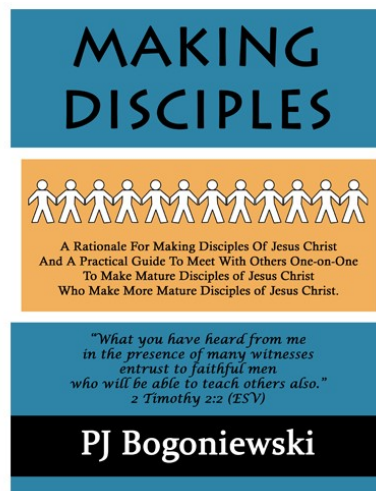
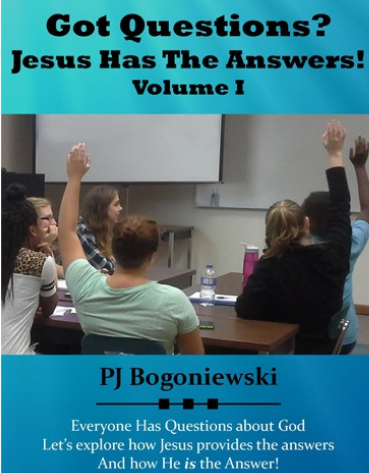
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I recently realized that I didn't publish any new books in 2017! Boo! While I have another 15 book projects in the works, and I've been working on them here and there as I've been able to, I wasn't able to **finish** any of them this year. You can look for more titles coming early in 2018, as I'm close to finishing a few audio projects, an interactive prayer project, and the next two "Got Questions?" volumes. My prayer is that the Lord will use these new projects to advance His Kingdom as well! Thanks for being a part of this journey with us!



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