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It's Already Been 6 Months!

The age-old adage is that "time flies when you're having fun!" And that adage has certainly been applicable to our new church plant. The Alliance Church of Cheektowaga has been meeting as a CORE leadership team since the First of January and it's hard to believe that we've been meeting for 6 months already. So far, our meetings have been going VERY, VERY WELL! For me, it's great to have a group of people I'm pastoring "hands on" again, and I'm super excited about seeing what the Lord is going to do in us and through us as we prepare for the ministry ahead and set out in faith to see how He's going to use us as we move forward.

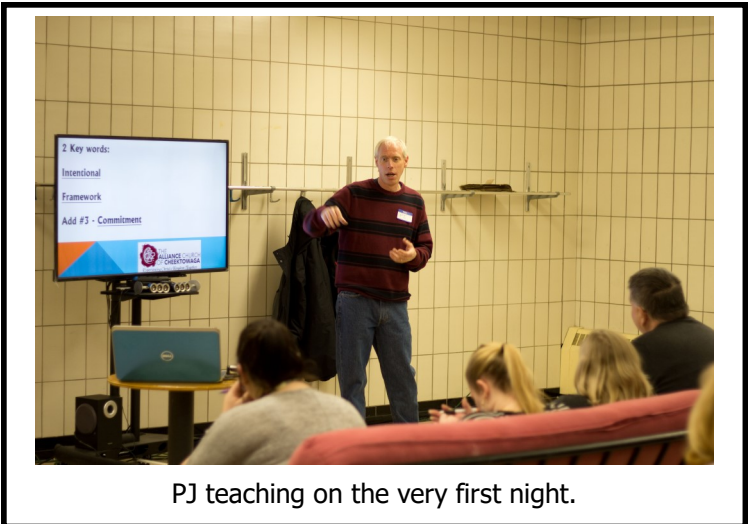
Working The Plan

The launch plan we developed, resulting from much that I read, the direction of the Alliance church planting initiatives, along with the invaluable advice I've received from my coaches was to be implemented in three key stages: Developing Partnerships, Recruiting a CORE team, and recruiting a LAUNCH team.

It really has been exciting to see the Lord lead us into partnerships with a variety of churches in WNY. These churches have offered prayer, guidance, encouragement, financial support, people for our CORE teams and LAUNCH teams, as well as allowing us to use space, share resources, and introduce us to others who want to be in on the Kingdom Advancement that Jesus is doing through our new church plant.

While speaking at a number of churches this past fall, we invited more than two thousand people to prayerfully consider becoming part of our CORE leadership team. These people will be sent from their existing church to be part of the leadership team of our new church plant. Our target was to see 30 people on our CORE team. We are just shy of that.

This summer/early fall I'm circling the wagons and going back to our partnership churches to recruit our LAUNCH team. Optimally, this is a team of about 100 people who are going to be sent from their existing congregations to be part of our new church plant for one year. They'll be the people who will attend our Sunday morning worship, small groups, and other ministries as we invite all of Cheektowaga to be part of what God's doing in our new church plant. The Alliance has found that most of these LAUNCH team members will trickle back to their sending churches as the Lord brings new people into our new church. Of course, they're invited to continue to be part of our new church, but most of them will probably make their way back to their sending church after the first year of our ministry.



PJ teaching on the very first night.

Once we get some traction into Phase Three—recruiting our LAUNCH team—we'll be putting a LAUNCH DATE on the calendar. At this point, I think that some time in October would be the earliest date for us to go public, but the first week in January might be a more realistic date for us to shoot for. We still have more work to do with our CORE team, we have some training with our LAUNCH team, as well as holding some practice Sunday morning services—and we have yet to secure a location for us to meet on Sunday mornings. So much to do!

"The What" and "The How"

During our initial meetings we outlined "The What" and "The How" of the Alliance Church of Cheektowaga. While we could pick from many visions and strategies for this new church—and there are MANY that we ***could have*** chosen— I leveraged the

many books on the topic I've read, seminars I've attended, the Alliance Ministerial Program studies, my ordination preparation, the training I received from district leadership, as well as the input of church planter friends and my coaches.

It all starts with the tag-line under our name: Experiencing Christ's Kingdom Together. This new church is all about a group of disciples who are here to experience Christ's Kingdom—wherever He leads, whatever He asks us to do, and whoever He puts into our path. I like the line in a Tim Timmons song, "Wherever the King is—there is the Kingdom!" We want to be with the King and we want to, together, partner with Him in that Kingdom work.



Part of our CORE leadership team on day #1.

We are developing a framework that is designed to allow the Holy Spirit to do His work as unencumbered as possible. We are sinful people, but as we seek His grace, His leading, His gifting, and hear His voice calling us to do His work, we want our framework to allow Him to do work that goes beyond anything we could ever do on our own. This framework is designed to **Reach** others for Christ, to **Build** their faith through intentional spiritual formation, to **Equip** believers to become disciples, to **Multiply** leadership, and **Send** those new leaders into leadership positions—both within our new church, in other planting initiatives, and other projects as He leads. This reach, build, equip, multiply, and sending framework will create a spiritual formation flow that will see people come to know Christ, grow in biblical knowledge, be equipped to be effective disciples, trained as a leader, and sent into leadership positions.

That's the WHAT of The Alliance Church of Cheektowaga. The HOW is a four-tiered system that can best be explained through the college metaphor. Colleges are designed to help someone who knows little about a topic be equipped to use the nuances of an area of learning in a career. They do this through a four-tier system: 100-level, 200-level, 300-level, and 400 level classes. Each of these levels have their own dynamics of education, such as teacher/student ratio, lecture-based learning, level of collaboration, and expectations for the students.

In our new church system, the 100-level is represented by our Sunday morning experience: musical worship, biblical message, and discussion groups to wrestle with the application of the biblical message. The 200-level is represented by our Sunday night experience: kids ministry, youth group, and small groups. Our 300-level is designed to be found through the development of a one-on-one disciple-making culture (see the next section). Our 400-level will be a three-tier leadership development program, where each of the tiers takes about a year to progress through. At first, the leadership developing program will start out on Sunday nights, then it will be transferred to more of a one-on-one training program.

We believe that this is a good system to meet people where they are, introduce them to Christ, and help them grow into mature disciples who make more mature disciples. While there will be "room" for someone to be part of our church without "getting caught up in the flow of spiritual formation," most people will benefit from a design to intentionally help them make determined strides to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ who are actively involved in making more mature disciples of Jesus Christ.



More of our CORE leadership team on day #1.

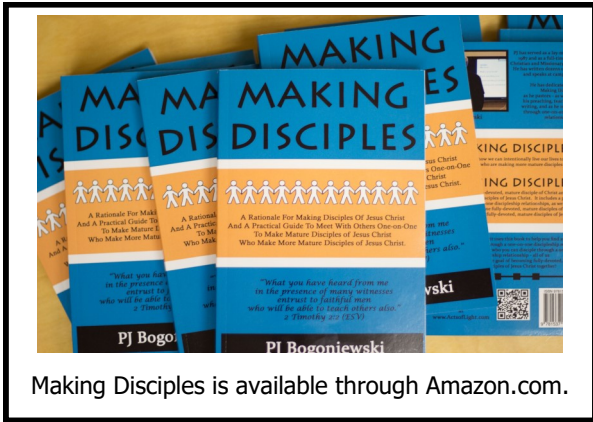
Making Disciples

Making mature disciples of Jesus Christ is a passion of my life and ministry. I take Paul's admonition to equip believers, working with the Holy Spirit, to help believers mature into solid disciples of Jesus Christ:

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." - Ephesians 4:11-13.

In my book, ***Making Disciples***, I present a rationale for the importance of intentionally making disciples of Jesus Christ and a simple to follow plan to leverage relationships to meet one-on-one to develop spiritual formation that is not dependent on a pastor's sermon series, a Sunday school class, or the next small group that is offered. Yes, all three of those are IMPORTANT in

a person's spiritual formation, but by meeting one-on-one we're able to develop a customized spiritual formation plan that meets someone right where they're at and helps them take the next steps in their spiritual formation without delay.



Our CORE leadership team is currently going through *Making Disciples*, logging their notes during the week, and engaging in a discussion based on their notes each Sunday night. Our discussions have been enlightening and powerful! It's exciting to see the way the Lord is using our personal study and group discussions. This paradigm of developing a culture of meeting one-on-one to intentionally grow our faith is a new one for most of us. The best part of a culture where EVERYONE is working to make mature disciples who make more mature disciples is that this culture self-perpetuates a cycle of evangelism and discipleship that is always adding more people to the Kingdom and spurring them a path of significant spiritual growth. This culture does not depend on "evangelism events," but leverages disciples of Christ who are willing to engage in missional living to leverage existing relationships to engage in spiritual conversations so they can bring the Gospel into the lives of those who are around them in their every-day lives.

We've seen that there is a need to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those in the town of Cheektowaga who haven't heard it, as well as helping those who have been disconnected from the local church to be once again connected with a healthy church. We hope to be that church, but are more than willing to see them connected to one of the other healthy churches in WNY as well.

The Harvest is Plentiful

By using some population tool resources, as well as US Census Bureau demographics regarding the people of WNY, along with some of the research that has been done by Barna, we've identified that there are over 109,000 people within an 8-mile radius of the center of the town of Cheektowaga who do not currently go to church. Many of these are people who used to go to church, but may not be going to church because they have been hurt by previous church experiences, or they feel that churches are irrelevant to their lives.

By integrating leadership development in the WHAT and HOW of the very core of the Alliance Church of Cheektowaga, we'll be training leaders for the harvest—not just for church ministry work. We want to see every single person involved in this new church actively involved in the harvest: sharing their faith, engaging in spiritual conversations, leveraging the ministries of the church, as well as being involved in one-on-one discipleship relationships to both learn from others who are ahead of them and teach others who are behind them on this spiritual journey.

Our Current Needs

While we are so excited about the positive steps we've made in the past year—developing partnerships, seeing people be called to be part of this church plant, and the positive fruit of our Sunday night sessions—there are a few more things that we require before we can put a launch date on the calendar. Will you pray that the Lord would provide the following for us, as well as prayerfully consider how you and your church can respond to help meet these needs? Thanks for praying for us!

CORE Team

- We still need two more KEY people on our CORE team. We need someone to lead our future kid's ministry and we need a worship leader. These are people who are going to leave their existing churches to be part of our new leadership team. Please pray that ***the Lord would call these key people into these crucial positions.***

LAUNCH Team

- This summer/early fall I'll be meeting with our partner churches to begin to recruit our LAUNCH team.
- I would like to see an elder family sent from each of our partner churches for the period of one year.
- I'm hoping for families with children and teens who are willing to be part of our LAUNCH team. We have a youth pastor on board, now we need youth!
- I'm hoping that leadership in our partnership churches would pray about approaching people from their congregations and asking them to pray about being part of our LAUNCH team. Keep in mind that studies have shown that churches who send their people to be part of a church plant see the Lord bring new people into their churches to replace those they sent!

Location

- We're pursuing a few different options for a location for us to meet when we launch on Sunday mornings.

Finances

- Because of the blessing of Centerpointe Community Church, to date we've had NO building rental costs. They have provided me with office space and have invited us to use their building free of charge on Sunday nights. They are a true blessing to us!
- My salary is on a decreasing percentage plan from the District Office. The Alliance Church of Cheektowaga has already begun to pick up 25% of my salary. Please pray that the Lord would provide this monthly shortfall.
- When we launch we will probably have facility costs, as well as equipment costs. The money that is being donated today will help us as we discover these upcoming costs.
- We are going to use social media to contact the people of Cheektowaga to inform them of our new church plant. I don't have a definite number of this cost as of yet, but I know that this project is going to be costly. I also know it will be very helpful in building name recognition with the people of Cheektowaga as we launch.

Want to Partner With Us?

The best way you can partner with us is through **PRAYER**. There are plenty of other ways to partner with us.

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 later in 2017. 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.



Scan this code to get all of our updates through PJs Blog.

Or go to:
ActsofLight.com/acts/pjblog.htm

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.

Will you pray about **purchasing, reading, and recommending my books**? 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!

All three of these books are available on Kindle, in printed format, and on Audible. If you haven't heard of Audible, it's a way for you to listen to books on your smart phone, computer, or tablet. I narrate each of the books (they take about 6 hours to listen to) and you can listen as you drive, walk, or just hang out around the house. Audible gives me a significant bonus if you sign up for their service, purchase my book first, and then listen to my three books in three subsequent months. The service is \$15 a month and there are thousands of other books you can enjoy. Scan this code to find out more about each of my writings or you can search by my last name at Amazon.com.

Got Questions? Jesus Has The Answers! Volume I



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Everyone Has Questions about God
Let's explore how Jesus provides the answers
And how He is the Answer!

Mission: Possible Living the Great Commission



Doing our part
to complete
The Great Commission



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MAKING DISCIPLES



A Rationale For Making Disciples Of Jesus Christ
And A Practical Guide To Meet With Others One-on-One
To Make Mature Disciples of Jesus Christ
Who Make More Mature Disciples of Jesus Christ.

"What you have heard from me
in the presence of many witnesses
entrust to faithful men
who will be able to teach others also."
2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)

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