

Mission Expansion

1 Chronicles 29:10-18

Mark Vroegop

10 Therefore David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. 13 And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.

14 "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. 15 For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. 16 O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own. 17 I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. 18 O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you (1 Chron 29:10-18).

The mission of College Park church is "igniting a passion to follow Jesus." For us, that is more than just a motto, moniker or mural; it is personal because we know that Jesus can really change people's lives.

Kyle and Stephanie Bingle came to College Park because they were invited by their friends. They were drawn here when they sensed the Spirit of God moving in people's lives through the exposition of God's Word. Within a short time they became members, attended The BRIDGE where they were able to connect with other new people. They formed a small group for the relationships at the BRIDGE, and Kyle became their leader. Last month, Kyle invited a friend whom he had been witnessing to come to our Fresh Encounter Service. As a part of that prayer service, his friend asked for prayer, fell under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and received Christ after the service. I met this new brother last Sunday.

Rick Baum was a hurting man when he walked in the doors of College Park a few months ago. He was alone and broken. His marriage had fallen apart and his grown son had recently died due to a heart attack. While in the coffee talk room he reconnected with a life-long friend who challenged him to follow Christ. Rick knew he was home and he surrendered the next season of

his life to Jesus. He's an ex-Marine, and now he's looking to share Jesus with other soldiers through our military ministry.

Jeremy and Kristina started visiting College Park after their babysitter, Erin Cecil, invited them to come to a LEAF night. Jeremy grew up in church, but he was longing for something more. He and wife came during the series and Job which was providential since he was trusting God for a very tenuous work situation. God used that series and his life circumstance to reinvigorate his love for Jesus, and his wife Kristina renewed her commitment to Christ as well. Jeremy is now growing even further through College Park Institute, and Kristina has joined a MOPS group.

Ruth (not her real name) found Jesus through a ministry to women in the Brookside neighborhood called HeartChange. It was in a discipleship class that she understood her need for a personal savior. But that was only the beginning. Her discipler worked with her to complete her GED, worked on her resume, and rejoiced when she got a job. She needed transportation so they worked on getting her a license, even helping her learn how to drive. A local business donated a used car, and now Ruth is driving herself to a great new job. Ruth found what only Jesus can bring: hope!

These are a just a few of the stories of lives that have been changed at College Park. These are just a few of the people who have come to see that igniting a passion to follow Jesus is both compelling and contagious.

A Bit of History

For over a year now, we have been prayerfully considering our growth strategy. Our challenge is pretty simple: we've grown by 1200 people in the last two years. Word has spread in our community as to what God is doing, people are coming, and you are inviting people who need Jesus. We don't have to work on our marketing. People are literally coming to us and asking to tell them about Jesus.

The challenge is that we've added these people to a facility that was already at capacity. For those of you would have been around here a while you are used to what I've called "competitive seating," "the stairway of doom", and what someone recently called the "parking lot of peril." You know, we chuckle about these things, but for people who come for the first time it can be quite a barrier. I saw it in the eyes of some visitors last week who were frantically looking for seats prior to the second service as I helped them find three seats together.

We've asked you to "come early, sit close, park far, and help out" and you have been so responsive. Thank you! We've also improved Worship2, and we are getting ready to expand it even further. However, our challenge is not just sanctuary seats; our facility challenges are comprehensive and connected. Parking lots, hallways, children's ministry space, and sanctuary

seating linked in terms of space constraints. Our Elders came to see that we cannot fix one challenge without addressing the other issues.

We are also very aware that the economic climate makes considering any kind of project quite challenging. These are not easy or certain times for many of our people. And that is why we have taken over a year to carefully evaluate our needs as a church, the scope of this project, and the economic environment. While some people would see a challenge, we see an unique opportunity for us as church, an opportunity that is balanced with faith and stewardship. Imagine with me the glory of God that could be shown through a wonderful outpouring of generosity in the midst of these uncertain times. We know that there are risks, but we believe that there are equally large risks in doing nothing.

Mission Expansion Project

This morning you received a simple brochure that summarizes the basics of what we are considering. Tonight we'll have a congregational meeting to consider entering into a stewardship season or capital campaign. We walk you through our rationale and financial boundaries. Our vote tonight is not a vote to build or commit anything beyond seek the Lord for 40 days of prayerful consideration as to what we are all willing to give over the next three years. We are only asking for permission to ask you for sacrificial commitments. You see, we want to be sure that you, as a congregation, are on board with this concept because we will need to do this together. If the congregation approves this stewardship season, then we will identify at least a dozen dessert nights for you to interact on a more personal and detailed level. Again, tonight is only about moving into a discovery season.

I'm sure that you've had time to look through the material. We've called this our Mission Expansion Project rather than a name like "Equal Sacrifice, Unequal Giving" or "Brick by Brick" because this project is not complicated. It is designed to give us the space that we need to facilitate the vision that God has given us.

This building is designed to help us do what God has called us to while at the same time protecting our core DNA. Part of my role here is to help protect the things that make College Park special and unique – to guard the things that God seems to have blessed over the years. Therefore, our design and our funding needs to be carefully evaluated so that we do not have a facility that doesn't fit who we are or a budget that compromises who we want to be.

Let me walk you through the numbers on the last few pages. Here are the numbers that we know:

- Our total project cost is 19 million which includes the cost of the facility at 17 million and 2 million in interest and contingency protection
- Our funding will come from two sources: 3-year commitments and budget contributions

- Our minimum funding goal from these two sources is 14 million which includes a minimum congregational commitment of 12 million and a maximum budget contribution of 2 million
- I'm also pleased to tell you that we already have 6 million in leadership commitments toward the funding goal from 14 families with gifts ranging between 1 million and \$25,000 and the financial support from our Elders totaling \$350,000.

We see the Lord's hand at work in our church, and we see his hand already with a strong level of leadership support.

Tonight we'll consider whether to take the next step into a stewardship season so that we can determine God's will through the level of sacrificial giving of our church family. We'll update the website tonight after the congregational meeting with the results. If the vote is favorable, then we'll move into 40 days of prayer and commitment to consider what we can do as a family. A very important part of that season will be at least a dozen dessert nights, a time for you to learn in detail about our vision and ask questions. On March 21, after we've collected the commitment cards, we'll have another congregational meeting where we'll consider whether or not to build based upon the financial data.

The reality is that we have to do something to address the needs of our growing church. God is has given us a wonderful opportunity. This facility simply allows us to accomplish our mission effectively; it allows us to minister to the people that God is sending us with room for future ministry. This is not a Field of Dreams Project – "if you build it, they will come." They are already here.

How to Think Biblically About Facilities

One thing that I think will be helpful would be to look at how the Bible presents moments in the life of God's people when they are thinking of building a place of worship. You see, there is an understandable tension with building new space. It is a lot of money; it is a lot of work. Some folks wonder why don't we just give the money to missions or plant churches or just pack more people in. Those are great questions, and we'll answer them during more fully in the dessert nights. But I want you to see that while worship space never eclipses the worship in the space; worship space is still very important. Facilities facilitate meeting with God, and that's important.

Example #1 – The Tabernacle

The first example that we have in the Bible is the Tabernacle, the portable center of worship for the wandering nation of Israel. After God confirms his covenant with the people in Exodus 24, he gives instructions for Moses to build a sanctuary in their midst, and he is to do so through the contributions of the people of Israel (Exodus 25:1-9).

Exodus 35 records the moment when Israel brought their offerings. It was a beautiful moment:

20 Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21 And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the Lord's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. 22 So they came, both men and women. All who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the Lord (Ex 35:20-22)

In fact, they were so generous (because of their understanding of God's deliverance) that Moses had to tell them to stop giving:

2 And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whose mind the Lord had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work. 3 And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, 4 so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task that he was doing, 5 and said to Moses, "The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do." 6 So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, "Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing, 7 for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more (Ex 36:2-7).

Can you imagine? Call it far-fetched, but there you need to know that I'm praying about the possibility of how we could do this project completely debt-free. I'd love to be able to say, "Okay folks, we've got more than enough..." What a statement that would be!

The book of Exodus ends with tabernacle full of the presence of the Lord – "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

Example #2 – Rebuilding the Temple

Skip forward almost 1,000 years, after the rise and fall of Israel and after the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, as the people of God return to Jerusalem some 500 years before Christ. Ezra 3 records the moment when the people laid the foundation stones for rebuilding the temple:

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the directions of David king of Israel. 11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel."

And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, 13 so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away.

There was great rejoicing because the rebuilding of the temple was a memorial of God's goodness, his steadfast love, and his gracious provision. The people of God were always more than the building that they worshipped in, but the facility itself was special because it was the place that they met with God.

Example #3 – The Temple

The final and most memorable example is the construction of the temple. David, of course, wanted to build the temple, but God prevented him, giving that honor to Solomon, his son. 1 Chronicles is loaded with important and helpful information. Notice the following:

1. **There was an early commitment by leadership before asking the congregation to give (1 Chron. 29:3-5).** David committed, then the leaders committed (v 6), and then the people committed (v 8).
2. **The offering increased their joy (1 Chron. 29:9).** The people gave from a willing heart. You, no doubt, will hear the 2 Corinthians 9:7 – "Go loves a cheerful giver."
3. **The offering created worship (1 Chron. 29:10-18).** David's prayer gives us a three-fold summary of what was going on in their hearts, and it captures my prayer for what will happen in ours.

- **Exult** – In response to the people's generosity, it drove David upward. He exulted in God as he said:

"Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. 13 And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. 1 Chron 29:10-13).

- **Embrace** – There was another response – one of humility. This moment reminded David and the people that every that they have is from God:

14 "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. 15 For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. 16 O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own (1 Chron 29:14-16)

- **Expect** – There was a hopeful expectation of what could be in the future. David said,

17 I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. 18 O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you (1 Chron 29:17-18)

I don't know about you but I want that to happen at College Park Church! And we have even more reasons to exult-embrace-expect because we have so much more spiritual light than what the Israelites had.

Same Purpose, More Hearts – To Him!

Our mission of igniting a passion to follow Jesus is compelling and contagious, and we want to be the best stewards of the people and the ministry that God is giving us.

The fruit of what God is doing here is evident to others. Listen to what Mike Bowling, pastor Englewood Christian Church and a Brookside partner said, "When I've been with the staff and the people of College Park Church, I get the sense that this is a group of people mobilized by mission. I'm not blowing smoke here. I see a group of folks who are captured by mission of God reconciling all creation to himself. There doesn't seem to be any boundaries to College Park's sense of the mission of God through Christ Jesus." I want more of that!

When I was in India, I stood teary-eyed in a school court-yard with 200 children. This Christian School was literally the first gospel witness in this area for centuries. A Buddhist prince had paid tribute to the British government as a guarantee that no missionaries would be allowed in this region. And here I was in a school that was funded by College Park Church through our Christmas offering. I was witnessing the dawn of the gospel. I want more of that!

Last August we did a series on Relationships, and I preached a really tough message on the subject of pride. After the service I invited people to come and pray, humbly asking for God to forgive them of their pride. There were easily 80 people kneeling in each of our services. You

could hear the audible sounds of conviction. People were broken, and they were meeting with God. I want more of that!

Just for a moment, imagine with me:

- The opportunity to minister to 5,000 people each weekend
- A church filled with a diverse collection of people from all walks of life who've discovered that grace has no limits and no color
- A Christmas offering that hits 1 million dollars
- The ability to host regional conference in theology, counseling, social justice, or missions
- Fresh Encounter services with 1,000 or more people and being known as an Acts 6:4 church – committed to the Word and Prayer
- Partnering with other churches in our city to make a difference in the Brookside neighborhood
- A leadership institute to help believers in the marketplace learn how to maximize God's glory in their strategic roles
- Children's ministries, Jr. High, Sr. High, College, and Singles Ministries bursting with young people on fire for God's word and filled with Spirit-empowered love for Jesus.

Imagine with me what igniting a passion to follow Jesus looks like at a whole new level. Imagine a place where we can exult in God, embrace our need, and expect great things from meeting with Jesus.

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