

February 12, 2007

Dear Church Family,

We are about to embark upon one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced!

So, I want this opening piece of information to be helpful and informative. Please take the time to read it through. I think you'll be encouraged and inspired!

For more than 104 years, FBC has risen to the challenges that come with an expanding ministry. We have focused on the mission Jesus gave His church: to influence our friends, our community and our world to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ ... one life at a time. (Matthew 28:18-20)

With more people coming to Christ and growing in their faith, developing additional facilities has been necessary. From humble beginnings in two other downtown locations, the people of FBC moved to our current site on 12<sup>th</sup> Street in 1947 and have continued to expand the church campus for the past 60 years!

If you were a part of FBC two years ago, you will remember we held all-church dinner meetings to explain that as a result of growth in the church, and especially in Children's Ministries, ground level classroom space and mid-sized group space was becoming very limited.

As a result of prayer and careful consideration on the part of the pastors and deacons, we presented an idea for what our next major expansion project might be: a three-story multi-purpose building. It was *very big*. Frankly, it felt pretty intimidating. We had a general estimate of \$20 to \$25 million. (And it looks like we've ended up very close in our estimates.)

A few of the governing ideas regarding the size and design of this building were to maximize our limited down-town property for ground-level children's space, to create needed room for mid-sized group gatherings, to allow for future expansion and to create an athletic facility for use by the entire church family and to allow outreach ministries we cannot currently pursue.

We asked for feed-back from the congregation, and then conducted an all-church survey with the Goehner Group so the deacons and pastors could be sure to hear clearly the voice of the congregation. We considered this step vital in hearing the voice of God.

The overwhelming response was, "*We need to build! We need to continue to reach our area for Christ!*" The cost was intimidating to some, a positive challenge to others, and the second major theme of the survey was "*Let's be very smart in how we approach this financially ... we don't want on-going ministry to be harmed.*"

The deacons and pastors took that information to heart and came back last spring with the results of the survey and a plan:

1. Build a multi-purpose building (size and scope to be determined).

2. Develop parking on 11th Street (to replace parking that would be lost with new construction).
3. Relocate the administrative offices (as the building they are in will be removed to make room for the multi-purpose building).
4. Begin pursuing plans for child-care ministry and sports outreach ministries.
5. Come back in the spring of 2007 with firm plans on how to move ahead.

As a church we demonstrated our support of this plan by committing \$1.2 million over a 12 month period that began June 1, 2006.

Over the last eight months, the deacons and pastors have worked diligently on this plan, and we are now ready to share our next steps:

1. We will launch a four-year giving effort to build a multi-purpose building, an athletic facility, and relocate the administration offices.
2. The multi-purpose building will be three-stories. The first floor will be completely finished and furnished for children's ministries and a new day-care ministry. The second floor will have one large meeting room for youth ministry, and the rest of the floor will be developed as needed. The third floor will be developed as needed. The outside will look like a perfectly completed building. The Children's Ark and Lighthouse buildings will be removed, and the park area completed. The cost for this is \$18.6 million.
3. The athletic facility that was going to be inside of the multi-purpose building will now be constructed as a stand-alone building. Two different contractors told us it would cost far, far less if we removed it from the facility. Also, two separate buildings make better sense for ministry usage. It will include a sports court (basketball, volleyball, etc.), locker rooms and showers and will be 12,000 to 14,000 square feet (right at the same size we proposed when it was inside the multi-purpose building). The cost for this piece is \$ 3 million.
4. The replacement offices for the Administration Building will be located in the Christian Education Building. We already have Children's and Women's Ministries offices downstairs in this building.

The **total cost** of these three projects, considering inflation, and some contingencies, is **\$22 million**.

**What kind of ministries will this allow us to accomplish?**

1. Facility for a day-care ministry, focusing on the downtown area (this is in addition to usage for our Children's Ministries both weekdays and Sundays).
2. One-stop facility for parents with children (instead of up to three-four stops).
3. Athletic ministries for children, youth and adults who are members of the church and for outreach into our community: midnight basketball, aerobics, volleyball, etc.
4. Allow us to expand offerings on Sunday mornings by giving us mid-sized group space. Currently, we are out of mid-sized group space on Sunday mornings.

I am very, very excited about these and many other opportunities that will materialize as we seek the Lord.

There are many more details I could share, but this letter is already getting quite long. Here is what I'm asking and urging each of us to do:

1. Pray! The Prayer Team has already begun to pray in earnest, and they will lead all of us to pray at various times and places. One of the first will be 24 Hours of Prayer from noon Friday, February 23 to noon Saturday, February 24. This will lay the ground-work for all we do. We'd like everyone to sign-up for a 30 minute block somewhere during this time frame.
2. Attend a Home Meeting: The focus of home meetings will be information. We want everyone in the church to receive detailed information and have their questions answered. They will begin in mid-March and go through mid-April.
3. Attend a Celebration Dinner: This is a time to celebrate the ministry the Lord has given us and enjoy a meal together. This is a very important "part 2" of the information and inspiration we all need ... presenting the breadth of the ministry and how God is at work among us! At these dinners, we'll announce the advance financial commitments made by the pastors, deacons, and some other families in the church. The dinners will be Sunday, May 6 through Friday, May 11. Please mark your calendar to attend one of these inspirational meetings.
4. Commitment Weekend: Two weeks after the Celebration Dinners, in the worship services on May 19 and 20, we will present our financial commitments towards the building program.
5. Announcement Weekend: Two weeks after Commitment Weekend, June 2 and 3, we will announce the total amount we have committed over the next four years.

Curtis Grant and Randy Reeves are spear-heading this entire effort. They have already recruited many others to help them, and many more will be needed. So, if you're asked to help, please do what you can!

As a result of the intense and careful efforts of the past two years, I firmly believe we are on the right path. We are seeking the Lord at every step. The deacons have prayed and analyzed and discussed and evaluated and carried this project in their hearts. With one voice, they are unanimous in their belief that we are doing what God is calling us to do in spite of the apprehensions that come with a project of this magnitude.

I look forward to sharing many more details with you and answering your questions. Until that time, please continue to ask the Lord to lead us and to expand our outreach to the tens of thousands of people in our region who still need to meet the Savior.

Sincerely in Christ,

B. Wade Estes