

A few weeks ago, I sketched for you the story of BVBC from its beginning in 1969 to the present. It was the story of the church as seen from the outside: main events, and main characters. This month, we'd like to tell you the story of BVBC as seen from the inside: its purpose and meaning.

You already know some of this inside story, but I hope you will see the familiar in the light of some new features. I hope what is new will excite you about the church's future.

The Great Commission

Jesus said something remarkable to His disciples after He rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. He said: **“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”** (John 20:21) From that moment on the mandate to continue Jesus' mission in the world has never left the Church.

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus elaborated on what He sent His Church into the world to do. It is the most familiar statement of our mandate. Jesus said: **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Spirit (and here comes we don't want to miss), and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”** (Matthew 28:19-20)

All large churches are very busy. It is an open question how intentional they are about making baptized disciples, who obey everything Christ commanded. It is easy to ignore that, because it is hard to do. It requires wisdom, an intense determination to take people seriously, and the gift we find hardest to give: our time.

In the opening chapter of Acts Jesus elaborated on the scope of what He sent His Church into the world to do. It is a justly famous statement. We need to hear it with new ears, if we are to appreciate its relevance in the new world order that is emerging in our lifetime. Jesus said: **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** (Acts 1:8)

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