



*Lisa Welter is the Community Care Director for Eagle Brook Church. As her story notes, she entered into our conversation in 2014. Eagle Brook was at a pivotal moment in their ministry and organization and Lisa became involved in strategic discussions regarding the church's next steps. Work with Purpose's leadership team and sponsored events gave Lisa support in learning about and thinking through her recommendations for advancing EBC's impact in discipleship and missions. Lisa have been a key partner, telling her story and casting vision for the multiple pastors leading EBC satellite congregations and other Twin Cities Region pastors and leaders.*

## **Redirecting Mission Efforts in Light of Faith/Work/Economics Thinking**

Just under three years ago, I was introduced to the Faith, Work and Economic conversation with Bethel Seminary and Work with Purpose. At that time, I was the local mission pastor supporting our six campuses at Eagle Brook Church as we engaged in our backyards and with our partnerships. The idea was intriguing but my initial reaction was, "This would better fit with the staff team that guided our values as a church. What could I possibly do from my vantage point?" However, the new concepts and ideas stuck with me. I began contemplating on the possibilities of "what if"? What if I could integrate some of these new thoughts with our mission philosophy? What if I could change our mission model to reflect a better way of caring for the most vulnerable and live out Matthew 22, Matthew 25 and Matthew 28 and actually see change?

For two years, I researched, listened, read and asked questions and slowly began to integrate the FWE conversation into my own thinking and the way in which I could translate it in the current reality I found myself in. I did not have oversight over the actual discipleship process but I did have oversight and authority over the missions framework and philosophy and decided to commit to this new way of thinking and begin the hard work of tearing down old mission frameworks and integration. My goal was to provide pathways for our 23,000 attenders to live out the Gospel in everyday living—they would have a refreshed perspective of how to "see" mission and to integrate it into serving the poor in spirit, the addicted, the workaholic, most vulnerable and broken wherever they found themselves: at work, on the soccer field, in their homes, at the homeless shelter, etc.

In the process of tearing down old models, I first laid out this new way of thinking to our leadership team and they agreed it fit well in our missions department. They also agreed that I change our funding model to reflect the FWE conversation better and we empowered our partners and those being served by our partners better—we eliminated the constant stream of "handouts" meaning we stopped food drives, backpack drives and other types of drives as we determined we were literally holding people back from their God given identity and potential and we would frame up our strategies to be "relationally driven" not "product driven." Now, do not misunderstand, products



play a role, but that was not the role we felt we should be advocating for. No. With 23,000 people attending there was much more we could do and we wanted to find a way to unleash the potential in our attenders and the ones they served each day. This tearing down process took approximately 12 months in our mega-church setting and we prayed that God would reveal a new relationally-driven strategy with time. During this time, I educated constantly and spent much of my time reading, praying, and seeking God's plan for his church.

This past spring, as I engaged staff and partners, it became very clear that if we continued to operate our mission department as a stand-alone ministry our attenders and staff would not fully grasp that the FWE was changing our thinking for the better. I requested to dissolve the mission department and asked all ministry areas (family, discipleship, and care) to integrate the guiding principles of the mission department and uphold missional thinking together to mobilize attenders. This was approved and I found myself leading all Care Ministries and pastoral licensing/development processes to integrate FWE into all of our ministries supporting the poor in spirit, the addicted, benevolence, pastoral training, etc. To date, that is currently being worked on. We've also moved our church closer to focus on local child welfare in 3 main categories: finding homes, resourcing those homes doing the hard work, and independent living (mentoring, job skills and employment so that they can become all that God created them to be and to flourish). This progress is literally beginning to change our church from the inside out. Our adult discipleship process is slowly changing to also reflect FWE including workplace small groups and groups taking special interest in caring for vulnerable children. Our benevolence process is becoming more robust to draw out potential to help others see in themselves what has been covered up for years due to a well-intentioned welfare system.

With our new approach to child welfare in MN, we are receiving huge support at the State level. There is no effective answer to the problem at the government level or at a non-profit level. However, I've taken the FWE conversation to them and with our 3 focuses of homes, resourcing, and independent living while mobilizing the local church to accomplish those—we are seeing hope reignited in our friends working at the state, county and non-profit level....and it's actually taking root! I could not be more pleased. The church on mission, seeing its own potential of the Gospel lived out in every area of life, is a beautiful picture of Christ's power, redemption, and reconciliation for all to flourish.

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