

the Boulder project

purpose

We desire to plant a church in the city of Boulder which is committed to the Gospel, longing for radical transformation which only it can bring, in our lives, our city, and our world. We want to have a movement mindset, committed to planting churches which have the same love of the Gospel and therefore people.

calling

Our hearts have been drawn to church planting for the past four years, particularly in the Rocky Mountain West. The Lord has opened the door for us to plant a church in Boulder, CO. We have prayed about Boulder for quite some time and are thrilled that this is the city where the Lord is leading us. We look forward to making Boulder our home and developing a community of believers who love God and neighbor, while embracing all that is good in Boulder and engaging with the people and their culture in order to bring change through the Gospel.

snapshot

Boulder sits at the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, just 25 minutes NW of Denver. Boulder is full of young and vibrant people. They love to be in the outdoors and active. The climate and location provide ample opportunity for endless recreation. Because of this love for recreation and a desire to protect the environment Boulder has set aside and protected large portions of the city which can never be developed.

The people of Boulder are highly educated. It is home to the University of Colorado with students coming from all parts of the US, especially the East and West coast. Once there, students want to stay. Our plans are to have RUF on this campus, as close to our start-up as possible.

With a strong economy, many move to Boulder for a job in one of the many companies either in Boulder or in Boulder County. However, because of Boulder's self-imposed limits on growth and high cost of living it is difficult for people to get a start. But this hasn't stopped them from trying.

why

We believe Boulder is a strategic place for a church which loves God and His Gospel of grace and is willing to share the Gospel from a heart of love to bring change to the lives of people and the city. First, it is strategic because Boulder is an influential city. As home to writers, artists, musicians, universities, and major corporations, Boulder has become an incubator of culture and philosophy. Both of these are informed and molded by secularism and pluralism. Its culture and philosophy are not stagnant, they constantly are changing and being exported to all parts of Colorado, the US, and even around the world.

There is a second reason to plant a church in Boulder; when compared to the rest of the nation the people of Boulder are far less likely to have an interest in "religion". In Boulder, 48.5% claim to not be involved with their faith, compared to a US avg. of

34.7%. A full 20% of the people of Boulder say they have no interest in religion. However, when there is interest in spiritual matters, people are twice as likely to be involved in an Eastern or New Age religion. Buddhism has an unusually large presence due to the presence of the Shambhala center and Naropa University. Because of this, the philosophies of Eastern and New Age religions are quite prevalent in the minds and lives of the people of Boulder, even if they do not “practice” these religions.

During one of our visits to Boulder we met, Kim and Tiffany. Kim manages the CD area at Barnes and Noble on Pearl Street. She opened up to us and within five minutes shared her fears and suspicions of Christianity and “organized” religion. She asked if the church we planned to start would be “traditional” or “progressive”. I told her that we are traditional in that we believe God has spoken to us in His word and that we can know Him. But I told her that we are progressive in the way we love people. We met Tiffany at Starbucks. Tiffany was especially eager to talk. She shared with us the kind of church she thought Boulder needed. Tiffany said that Boulder needed a church where everyone could believe what they wanted and where everyone else would be okay with that. I asked her if she would mind if I shared with her the kind of church we want to start. She wanted to hear, so I told her that as followers of Christ we believe the Christian message is true, and that we would teach people what we believe, but if they did not agree with us we would still want to be their friend. She said that this is the kind of church that would work in Boulder.

how

We will reach out to Boulder in one-on-one relationships. Our homes will be opened for dinner, parties, hanging out, Bible study, discussion groups, movies, etc. We hope to hold talks and discussions in local bookstores and/or pubs to talk about and discuss issues which are relevant to people in Boulder. We believe that historic Christianity has something to say about all of life and we want to engage with people, from a Christian world view, in a place we all feel comfortable.

Our vision is to start a church which is built around community groups, meeting in the homes of individuals who agree with and are committed to our vision for Boulder. This vision will be built on 6 core values: *truth, authenticity, worship, community, beauty, and mercy*. We are only able to embrace these core values to the extent we embrace the Gospel. The Gospel is not simply propositional truth or a good idea, but is the actual power by which we are changed and the only hope for change that matters in Boulder or any other city.

It will be a while before we begin having worship services. However, when we do begin we are committed to excellence. Having *beauty* as a core value we plan to engage all our senses as we worship the Lord. Also, people in Boulder want to be challenged to think. That is great, because as creator of our brains, God expects us to use them. Our worship will engage both mind and heart.

We believe this city is in need of a church which engages with people on every level of their existence, embracing what is good in the culture and challenging what needs to change. We will walk with people as they consider the claims of Christ, pointing them to the Gospel as the only answer for their brokenness.

core values

truth: We believe truth is accessible and is something for which our hearts yearn. We especially long to know if there is a God and if so, how we can know him in a personal way. In a world where many believe truth is relative, we believe God is true and has revealed himself in his word, the historic scriptures of the Christian faith, and in his son Jesus. Our desire is to be a community which invites all to come and explore the claims of Jesus and to discover the truth of his message. His message is what is called the Gospel, or good news. In the Gospel we learn that we are far more broken and sinful than we have ever realized and that in a relationship with Jesus we are far more loved than we ever dared dream. This is grace!

authenticity: Our hearts also yearn for authenticity. We want other people to be authentic with us and we have a longing to be authentic with them. It is in the Gospel that we find the freedom to do this. In the message of the Gospel we realize how much we have been forgiven by God, totally by his grace, and we are free to be authentic with him. There is nothing to hide from Him. After all, He is God, He knows everything about us already and he still loves us. In an authentic relationship with God, through Jesus, we find the freedom to be authentic with each other too.

worship: We are all created to worship. Look around and you can see that people will worship anything. However, our hearts are made to worship God. This is our highest calling. We desire to be a church community who worship the living God and invite all people of Boulder to come worship him with us. When we gather as a community we will worship with our minds and hearts. However, worship is not only to be done when we gather together as a church community. We believe and will teach that all of life is to be lived as an act of worship to God.

community: When we enter into a relationship with God, by faith in Jesus, we enter into community with him. As a people who are in community with God, we desire to build community with each other through meaningful relationships. It is in a community fueled by grace that we can best face life, sharing in each other's joys and sorrows. We will not be a club or closed community. Rather, we will be a community who welcomes everyone to join us on this journey of faith, or to explore the claims of Christ. We also want to be a community who are friends with those who do not share in our beliefs.

beauty: Boulder is a beautiful city and the people who live there appreciate beauty. As creator, God has given us a beautiful world in which to live and enjoy. We want to be a community which values beauty and looks for it everywhere. However, in a world which is well acquainted with sadness, fear, loneliness, hatred and countless other results of sin, it is at times hard to find or recognize beauty. But in the Gospel we have eyes which have been opened to redemption. Our eyes are opened to see beauty and the potential for it in places of significant brokenness, pain, and suffering. We want to be a community which celebrates beauty and long for it where it seems not to exist.

mercy: When we experience the mercy of God it should move us to show mercy to others. Boulder is blessed with wealth, but there are those who live in Boulder who are weak, and poor. We desire to be a community which is sensitive to the needs, both spiritual and physical, of those who are weak and/or poor. We want to be a community who is rich in mercy, expressed in word and deed.

you

Here are three ways in which you can join us in “the Boulder project”:

prayer: You can join our prayer team. We need people praying regularly, for us, our church plant, relationships we have made, and the city of Boulder. We are not naïve’ and arrogant to think that we have all the answers, or that “we” are the answer for Boulder and all her needs. We need people to pray that God will use us, in our brokenness and weakness, to walk humbly with him and minister to the people with whom God puts us in contact. The prayer team needs to pray that God will continually show us our need of the Gospel. How can we share with others something with which we are unfamiliar?

financial: You can support us financially. Boulder is an expensive place to live and do business. However, in addition to the high cost of living and cost of doing business, building a church to self-supporting status is expected to be slower in Boulder than most cities. Here are the two most prominent reasons we believe it will be slower: 1) we want to look for conversions (this is a good thing), rather than shuffling existing believers from another church to ours in order to grow, and 2) giving to a church will be a new concept and will require teaching. For these reasons we will raise support which stretches over a five year period.

contacts: 1) Who do you know in and around Boulder? We would love to call on them to see if they would be interested in joining us in this adventure. 2) Who do you know that would like to support a church plant? Maybe you know someone who loves missions, church planting, the West, or Colorado specifically and would like the opportunity to support us. Or, maybe you or someone else would like to support a particular project or event for our church. 3) Do you have contacts which would help us save money as we; purchase equipment, build a web site, etc...

support

We need to raise \$540,000 of support. This support can be any amount. It can be in one time gifts or spread out up to five years. You may choose from a variety of ways to participate. Following are some ways to consider. If we are successful with this plan we will reach our goal.

individuals:

1 @ \$50,000
4 @ \$25,000
5 @ \$10,000
10 @ \$6,000
10 @ \$3,000
10 @ \$1,000

churches:

1 @ \$50,000
2 @ \$25,000
5 @ \$10,000

presbytery:

\$90,000

total:

\$540,000

us

Kirk and Debbie have lived in St. Louis, MO for the past four years while Kirk has attended Covenant Theological Seminary, from where he graduates in May, '04 with a Masters of Divinity. During our time in St. Louis, Debbie has worked at UBS Financial Services Inc. Debbie has worked in the brokerage industry for twenty four years. Kirk has served as Seminary Intern at Greentree Community Church (EPC) for the past two and a half years. During the first year and half of Kirk's internship he served in GTCC's first church plant. Currently Kirk is under care of Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Nashville, TN and the Nashville Presbytery.

The Boulder Project is part of the Rocky Mountain Presbytery (PCA) and Mission to North America. It is our hope to raise our support during the Spring and Summer of '04 and move to Boulder in the Fall of '04.

demographics

population: 97,000

age range	0-4	4%
	5-14	9%
	15-24	21%
	25-34	18%
	35-44	14%
	45-54	16%
	55-64	9%
	65-74	4%
	75-84	3%
	85 & up	2%

population by segment:

- 19.4% university life (US avg. 0.8%)
- 17.5% educated new starters (US avg. 2.9%)
- 15.9% traditional affluent families (US avg. 3.5%)
- 15.5% educated mid-life families (US avg. 3.4%)
- 14.8% rising potential professionals (US avg. 2.3%)

diversity is high with 31 of 50 US "lifestyle segments" present

91% are below age 65

38% in survivor generation (23-43) 27% higher than US avg.

average household income:

\$79,000 (US avg. \$63,000)

education:

college graduates- 135% higher than US avg.

post graduates- 227% higher than US avg.

marital status:

singles- 62% higher than US avg.

married- 24% less than US avg.

divorced/widowed- 20% less than US avg.

non-traditional family structures

concerns: (these are unusually high)

achieving educational objectives, social injustice, satisfying job/career, finding companionship, finding life direction, achieving a fulfilling marriage

"religion"/faith:

personal involvement is extremely low

preference for historic Christian faith is extremely low

unusually high Eastern and New Age religious preference