

How is the Church Planting Process Going?

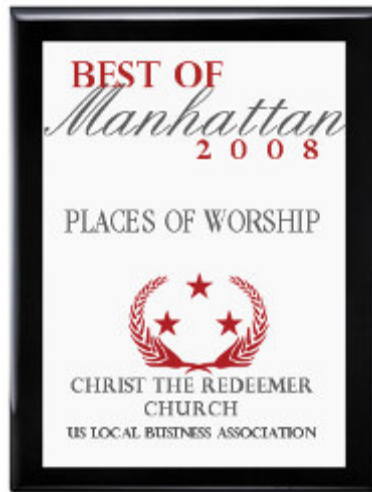
Around the turn of the last century, Henry Venn, a noted missiologist, proposed that a successful church plant could be measured by three “self’s” – 1) Self-governing, 2) Self-supporting, and 3) Self-perpetuating. Here is my (Nate’s) assessment of our church planting process in terms of thee three “selfs.”

Government: We have our first qualified candidate for ruling elder; his name is Chip Zachary, and his ordination is scheduled for March! However, our presbytery (regional governing body) has a rule that we need TWO ruling elder candidates before we can be a full-fledged church. *Please pray for God to raise up another elder this year!* (Want to move out and join us? The economy’s good here!)

Finances: 2008 was a tipping point for us toward financial self-sufficiency. However, there are three factors that could change the picture significantly: 1) Outside support is steadily dwindling, 2) We are anticipating a move from our current modest meeting facilities into some sort of commercial property arrangement which could be 10x our current rent, and 3) we also anticipate hiring our first administrative assistant to help with the workload.

Membership/reproducibility: We have 31 members (including children), plus a number of regular visitors, but only 6 of our adult members expect to be here for more than a couple of years. I suggest this puts us around 50% of critical mass for self-sufficiency. Once we surpasss critical mass, we are

interested in starting another church in our region. The transience of the college and military world around which Manhattan is formed creates a tremendous discipleship opportunity for us but makes long-term growth slow. It has been encouraging to see people who have been under our discipleship for a short time, going out to other areas and reporting back that they are using what they learned here in their new location! The brightest part of our membership is the large number of children who can bring exponential growth over time. Our congregation is expecting two more births this year!



I hope that gives you some picture of where we are as a church. It appears that our church is going to take longer than average to reach self-sufficiency, so we have a genuine need for continued support, yet I believe that your investment in this church is well-used for the glory of God in Kansas.

Nate catechizes one of our youngest members



Peter's 12th birthday with siblings & church friends





← LEFT
Amos, Josh, &
Peter at their
desks



RIGHT →
Lilly, Paula, &
Hope during
family devotions.

Family News/Prayer Corner

- About 40 singers and musicians came to our Messiah Sing-and-Play-along. *Thanks for praying!* Also, you can hear a sample of our [newest music album](#) on our website
- God has brought several new and re-newed contacts across our paths this season, many of them unchurched. *Pray that God will draw them to Himself and into the Church.*
- In addition to preaching a [sermon series](#) on marriage from I Corinthians 7, Nate edited and re-published his commentaries on [Jonah](#) and [Ezekiel](#). *You can now buy them on Amazon.com!*
- We've had a lot of sickness this winter. *Please pray for good health!*
- The kids did well in the Topeka NCFCA tournament (Beni won 2nd place in Lincoln-Douglas debates!) *Please pray for safety and good speaking ability as we travel to a St. Louis tournament this week.* Nate is also teaching in OK City this week.
- Our next newsletter should be a birth announcement! *Pray for strength and health for Paula and baby during these last few weeks of pregnancy – and for a birth that is free of complications.*

Kid's Corner: Peter Justin

I'm 12 now and in 6th grade. Since my last kid's corner two summers ago, I have finished my first read through the Bible and am almost done with the Pentateuch for the second time! My favorite books during 2008 were *The Wilderking Trilogy* by Jonathan Rodgers, *Mars Diaries* by Sigmund Brower, *The Dragon King Trilogy*, by Stephen Lawhead, and *Redwall* by Brian Jacques. Recently, we put in a wood stove; my favorite part about installing it was working up on the roof with my dad. I also like sitting on the couch next to the wood stove reading on cold days. Also, I've been doing much better with telling the truth and not losing my temper. Thanks for praying for me, but please keep praying. Also *pray for me to have peaceful Bible reading time in the morning*, for it sometimes feels like Satan is trying to distract me by other things that are not as important.



Peter, our 4th son, dressed as a messenger at the walk-through nativity.

