

Greenville Boiler Room

History, Vision & Plans

May 2009

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How did it all start? (The Short Version)

After a Friday morning prayer meeting at Covenant United Methodist Church, right before March's Dwell gathering, there was a prayer warrior who asked me about 6:22 having a building. It hadn't even been on my mind, and we were not praying about it that day. But I was always looking around town for a potential prayer room space. I told her about a building for rent in Uptown Greenville. It was the upstairs of Backdoor skate shop right on the edge of ECU campus. I had had my eye on it for a while and had even gone to look inside. She said she would be praying. It seemed so random.

About a month later at noon on Friday, April 3, a week of non-stop 24/7 prayer began on the campus of East Carolina University. In a small room in the Baptist Campus Ministry building, students started praying again. This happened last semester. Students, faculty and other Jesus-followers from the Greenville area signed up to pray for an hour or two so that there was continuous prayer. It was a crazy idea that came from a book called *Red Moon Rising* by Peter Greig. They started doing it in England about ten years ago. It was so life-changing for people that it has now spread worldwide (see <http://www.24-7prayer.com>). This is not a new thing. The folks in the UK stole it from King David in the Bible, as well as others throughout history who created spaces for non-stop ministry to God. The prayer at ECU started at noon on Friday, and God started moving very quickly.

About three and a half hours after 24/7 prayer began on April 3, a 6:22 supporter stepped out of his car behind Backdoor skate park and God spoke to him (he claims in an audible voice!) and told him to rent the upstairs for 6:22 for a year. He was outside of his car crying. Apparently God wanted this thing to happen.



What's in the name "Boiler Room"?

A mechanical room or a boiler room is a room or space in a building dedicated to the mechanical equipment and its associated electrical equipment. Unless a building is served by a centralized heating plant, the size of the mechanical room is usually proportional to the size of the building. A small building or home may have at most a utility room but in large buildings mechanical rooms can be of considerable size, often requiring multiple rooms throughout the building, or even occupying one or more complete floors (see: mechanical floor).

(From Wikipedia)

While driving down Memorial Dr, one day, I noticed the abandoned Hamilton Inn & Conference Center, and I thought about how cool it would be to have that building for God's kingdom. You could have a prayer room, host conferences, house the homeless, etc. I asked God for the building. A few days later Shepard and I drove by, but this time we circled around the parking lot. Other than the road sign, the only signs we saw on the whole building were two signs that said "Boiler Room". It was very exciting because we knew this is what many people called their 24/7 prayer communities (see <http://www.boiler-rooms.com>). A few months later, the hotel was torn to the ground.

"... C.H. Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers of the late 19th Century, attributed the fruitfulness of his entire ministry to his 'Boiler Rooms'. These were prayer meetings – often established in basements - that facilitated intercession while he preached. Spurgeon, who often preached to crowds of 10,000 in days before amplification, considered these 'Boiler Rooms' to be the very power-source of his ministry."
(From boiler-rooms.com)

Dreams like a large Christian conference center will happen, but I believe that first our city needs a Boiler Room to fuel these dreams with persistent prayer. In many ways a Boiler Room would be "underground". The growth and community would be on a grassroots level. The hours of hidden prayer and intercession would be providing unseen spiritual power for the Church on our city. Yet a small boiler room could provide the fuel that powers the dreams of God and fans the evangelistic flames in Greenville.

Immediate Uses for 6:22

- **theBurn.** Our Burn weekends are city-wide gatherings of continuous (8-24 hours) music and prayer. Worship leaders and intercessors unite from multiple congregations to take shifts ministering to God.
- **24/7 Prayer Weeks.** In the fall semester of 2008, ECU campus ministries united to pray non-stop for a week. They were struggling to find a suitable location, and the boiler room will be perfect to host these events. More of these weeks are in planning.
- **Office Space.** Matthew and Shepard's home is filled with printers, envelopes, and computers where the administration of the ministry takes place. With a baby on the way, they need all of the space that they can get. This also provides a central location for other volunteers to come and help with the administrative tasks such as web site maintenance, promotions, mailings and partner's correspondence.
- **Bible study.** Monday night Bible studies that provide biblical foundations for worship, prayer and the tent of David.
- **Storage room.** Over the years we have acquired a lot of assets. Most of our "stuff" is sitting unused in Matthew and Shepard's garage. Having a space of our own will allow us to use the resources God has given us such as a projector, screens, artwork, tables, a drum shield, computers and sound equipment.
- **Band practices.** Currently, when the band wants to practice, they have to find a church that is available on that night. This becomes increasingly frustrating, and the Boiler Room would provide a flexible space for band practice to happen almost any time.
- **Recording Studio.** Since moving out of his parent's house, Matthew's "home recording" has been limited due to where he has lived. Between Matthew and 6:22, there is a desktop computer, a Presonus Firepod recording interface, software and microphones so that the Boiler Room could be used to record music.
- **Community Space.** The space can be rented to other churches, ministries and organizations for various uses.
- **Friday nights.** In the fall of 2009, 6:22 will resume weekly Friday night gatherings. At least three out of four Friday nights will be in the boiler room.

Future Uses

- **Day and Night Prayer.** Ideally the Boiler Room would become a place where churches and ministries could have their prayer gatherings. We would like to see the prayer room have hours where it is also open the public for anyone to pray. Perhaps one day there would be ministry happening to God every moment of every day! (We would like to have the live video feed from International House of Prayer in Kansas City projected on a screen and join with their prayers.)
- **Local Concerts.** There are already those who would be anxious to host small concerts. The local/underground music scene is a thriving subculture, but tends to be neglected in the Greenville area. This could be a great way to build relationships and reach our city.
- **Art Studio.** The Boiler Room could provide space for creative types to develop their talents, express themselves and worship God through their gifts.
- **Guitar lessons.** The Boiler Room could become a training ground to teach musicians the practical and spiritual aspects of worshiping with their instrument. What would start with beginner guitar lessons could become much more.
- Also "love feasts" with free meals for anyone who comes, community outreaches, and many more possibilities!

Advantages of the space above Backdoor Skate Shop

Location: 222 E 5th St, Greenville

- Three rooms for our use include
 1. Prayer Room – this is the large meeting area that could host worship events for up to 100 people.
 2. Coffeehouse – this is a smaller room that could be used for “hang out” space and to sell coffee products
 3. Office/Studio – smallest room to be used for office work and small recording projects
- The growth of new age, witchcraft, humanistic and occult interest is growing, particularly in Uptown. A magic shop has recently opened. There is a newly opening store features products from eastern religions. The other day I saw a “Jesus fish” on the back of a car with the word “pagan” instead of Jesus. What used to be subtle is now becoming more and more blatant and mainstream. Uptown Greenville needs more voices of God’s kingdom to love and serve these people with the Gospel. We want to join ministries like Collide and Harmony Church who are already shining light in that area.
- This is quite literally the “gate” between East Carolina University and Uptown Greenville.



To get to the bars from campus, you will walk by Backdoor. The upstairs window allows you to look out onto the campus and look down the main strip of clubs on 5th Street.

- Proximity to the skate shop provides an immediate missions opportunity. We would want to develop relationships with the skate shop employees and the kids that hang out in the shop and skate on the street.
- The freedom and flexibility is endless. We can have live, loud music at any time. We can do virtually anything we want in the space.
- Backdoor recently received a façade grant from Uptown Greenville so the exterior of the building is currently being renovated.
- The space is in Uptown Greenville is rare, and we have purposefully been a member of the Uptown Greenville organization for a few years knowing that God has great plans for that part of town.

Boiler Room Needs

These are listed in approximate order of importance. We will gladly receive physical donations or financial gifts towards specific needs.

- Monthly partners – please pray about giving on a monthly basis.
- (2) Window Heat/Air Units ≈ \$650 each at Lowe’s
- Sound system
PLEASE NOTE: These sound system requests are our top picks, and we would gladly receive donated equipment that is different or of lesser value until we are able to afford the equipment below.
 - Snake (16 or more channels) ≈ \$360
 - Powered Speakers (Mackie brand)
 - (2) subs ≈ \$1000 each
 - (2) cabinets ≈ \$1400 each
 - (5) wedge monitors ≈ \$700 each
 - Mixing board - Allen & Heath MixWizard ≈ \$1350
 - Keyboard - Yamaha Motif or Korg Triton ≈ \$3000
 - **We already have microphones, stands, direct boxes, and cables.**
- Chairs & couches for prayer room and coffeehouse
- Small stuff for inside the prayer room –
 - Energy saving light bulbs
 - Lockable mailbox to mount on wall to collect donations,
 - “Restroom” and “Office” signs
 - book shelves
 - lamps
- Coffeehouse equipment
 - Furniture, either built or purchased, to create a “counter space”
 - Cash register
 - Blender
 - Mini-fridge
 - Small coffee bean grinder
 - Small espresso machine
 - Basic coffee maker
 - Coffee urn / dispenser
- Stage lighting – PAR cans, dimmer system, etc.
- Djembes and hand drums
- Flat screen TVs for projecting lyrics (we already have a screen and projector, but TVs would be more space efficient)

Is the Boiler Room a church?

No. We see the boiler room to be a city-wide space where people from any church can be in unity, unbelievers feel welcomed and everyone encounters God's presence. We value the local churches and their leaders. We want to pray for, have relationship with and be a blessing to the local church, particularly in Uptown Greenville.

The following excerpt from the book *Punk Monk* answers this question with some clarity. Although the Greenville boiler room is not officially connected to the 24-7 prayer organization or the boiler rooms described in *Punk Monk*, we do take inspiration from their movement (documented in the books *Red Moon Rising* and *Punk Monk*) and appreciate their language in helping to describe what God is doing. **Comments in red are from us.**

As we regrouped and recognized that our identity was relational and not dependent on a building, more and more people began asking whether Boiler Rooms were in fact churches. In Reading we had a non-Christian wanting us to be their church. In Ibiza we had people coming to Christ through our mission teams without an ongoing church community. In America we had a large church wanting to plant a Boiler Room as a congregation, and the Salvation Army was already using Boiler Rooms as part of their church-planting strategy.

But was this right? Maybe it was divisive? What about situations where Boiler Rooms were supported by existing churches? Strong voices expressed strong opinions on both sides of the argument, and so, in 2004, we gathered 50 24-7 leaders in the Pyrenean mountains of Spain to discuss this thorny issue. We had commissioned papers from three well-known Christian leaders.

*Central to our discussion was the question of what Boiler Rooms looked like in pioneering circumstances. In these scenarios – where there is no other relevant Christian witness that can disciple the converts **(this is obviously not the situation in Greenville)** – we agree that Boiler Rooms could (and indeed should) be church plants. But what about situations like Reading?*

The answer very much depends on your ecclesiology. In the last 50 years, theologians like Lesslie Newbigin have helped refocus the Church on our primary call to incarnate the gospel in missional community, and we have no hesitation in describing all Boiler Rooms as missional communities. As such, they may be considered “churches” in the sense of ekklesia (ek: “out of and klesis: “calling), which is the predominant New Testament word for “church,” and simply describes a purposeful assembly of Christians.

Church history, however, has complicated and occasionally confused this simple definition. 24-7 celebrates the rich ecclesiological insights of sacramental, liturgical and non-conformist traditions and works closely with various denominations. In light of this reality, we have to recognize that the word “church” is not one that can be used casually and should not be applied carelessly. To describe a Boiler Room as a church could be misleading or confusing in some situations.

*This is part of the reason that today we continue to use the term “Boiler Room” for all of our communities. Part of the attraction is that the name can describe an ecumenical Christian community working with various churches to bring renewal and catalyze mission (for example, the Salvation Army Boiler Room in Wandsworth, South London) or to describe a church plant in an unevangelized community (for example, the European party island of Ibiza). **[Greenville’s boiler room would clearly fall into the first category of an “ecumenical Christian community”, rather than a church plant. There are many churches already in Greenville that converts can join.]***

(Pages 77-78 of Punk Monk)