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THE PEOPLE'S CHURCH OF CENTRAL KENTUCKY
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The People's Church of Central Kentucky is a church that is doing some exciting things in the area of Bardstown, Kentucky. Bardstown, Kentucky is located about thirty minutes south of Louisville, Kentucky. Bardstown can be reached from Louisville by either taking interstate 65 south and getting off at exit 112 and head east on highway 245 for about 16 miles, or take Bardstown Road south and it will lead right into the historic town of Bardstown.

Bardstown is a town that has a great deal of history in the state of Kentucky. People from Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland settled the town of Bardstown in the beginning. This happened in the late 1700's. People from these states came here looking for a better life than they had in the areas that they were living in. The actual city is named after a man by the name of William Bard. This was a settler who laid off the town into different sections or parts. The city that Bard established was not fortified like other settlements. The city relied heavily on outlying forts around the area for protection.

Bardstown has had famous individuals to cross its lines. People like Abraham Lincoln, Daniel Boone, Jesse James, and Stephen Foster have added their input or flavor to the city's landscape and atmosphere in years that have gone by. Stephen Foster wrote a song that most children sing in schools today. The song is called "My Old Kentucky Home". This song is now part of a famous musical that tells the story of Stephen Foster. The musical is called "Stephen Foster-The Musical". This musical has entertained tourists and visitors for more than forty years now. This musical has made Foster a legend in the city of Bardstown.

Bardstown has some historic landmarks and other parts of history that thousands of visitors come and see every year. One of the most known landmarks of Bardstown is the Old Talbott Tavern that was built in 1797. The reason that this place is famous and historic is because it was the first stagecoach stop west of the Allegheny Mountains. It was a place for travelers to stop, rest, and eat. Edgewood was a place that General Leonidas Polk used as headquarters while the Confederate Army was stationed in Bardstown. People like Henry Clay, Judge John Rowan, Cassius Clay, Felix Grundy have spoken at this establishment at one time or another for different functions that have been held there. St. Thomas Farm is another place of history in Bardstown. This place is known as the cradle of the Catholic Church. It was built in 1811. This place is the founding site of Saint Thomas Seminary and Saint Thomas Orphanage. A man did the first successful amputation of the leg at the hip joint in the United States in 1806. His name was Walter Brashear. The patient was a seventeen-year-old boy. Pottinger's Station is also found in Bardstown. This was one of the forts that protected the early settlement of Bardstown. A place that became known for a refuge for pioneers in the area was Goodwin Fort. Finally, Jereboam Beauchamp and his wife are buried here. This man was buried with his wife in the same coffin at his own request because he wanted to avenge her alleged seduction by Colonel Solomon Sharp. Beauchamp murdered him at his home in 1825. While he was imprisoned, his wife insisted to be there with him. When he was sentenced to be hanged, they tried to commit suicide by stabbing one another. When he was hanged in 1826, it was the first legal hanging in the state of Kentucky. Authors like Edgar Allan Poe and others have written about this tragedy that happened in 1825.

Religion has played a big part of what is now known as Bardstown, Kentucky. Bardstown's first school was Salem Academy. This school was built in 1782.

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Many schools of the Catholic faith followed soon after. St. Thomas School was built in 1814. Bethlehem Academy was established in 1819. St. Joseph College was built in 1820. The Nazareth Academy was built in 1822. The Baptists have about four churches in the area including the present day People's Church of Central Kentucky. These Baptists were also around in the early days of Bardstown, Kentucky. The Methodists and the Presbyterians were also around during the early days of Bardstown, Kentucky, but the Catholic Church has claims to have the most people from Bardstown as part of its denomination.

From a religious standpoint, the man that has had the most influence on the city of Bardstown is a man by the name of Bishop Benedict J. Flaget. He authorized the building of the St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral that was built between 1816 and 1819. This cathedral draws hundreds of tourists every year because of the designs that are seen on and in the cathedral. The church has a towering steeple and showcases much important art from Europe that were given as presents to Flaget at the end of the building of the church. This cathedral is still in use today and is attended by a great deal of the Catholic people that are in Bardstown.

The city in present - day Bardstown is different than the city of the early days of Bardstown. The city offers the best of both worlds because it has some conveniences of a modern day city, but it also has grazing cattle, rustic farmhouses, and horse farms. The city has fast food restaurants such as Taco Bell, McDonalds, Dairy Queen, and White Castles. The city is definitely a city because it has a Wal-Mart. The city has grocery stores, sporting good stores, and car dealerships. The city offers a place for antique shopping, elegant dinners, and even a carriage ride around town. The city gets its share of eager guests and visitors when the Kentucky Derby is being held in Louisville because it holds its annual Barbecue on the grounds of Wickland Mansion. The city is famous for being known as "The Bourbon Capital of the World". The city has two famous distilleries within its limits. Jim Beam and Haven Hill distilleries are found in Bardstown. City - wide festivals are annually held on some of the grounds of the historic sites of Bardstown. If the people want to relax for a day they can go to nearby Bernheim Forest: a forest that covers 10,000 acres and is full of wildlife refuge and nature centers. Bardstown is boasting a booming economy, an explosion of new residents, commercial building, and a great mix of manufacturing and professional work.

The Planter

As anyone can see, Bardstown is a booming place with a harvest of souls that can be reached for Jesus Christ. The People's Church of Central Kentucky is making every effort to do just that. A church planter that has the anointing of God upon him pastors The People's Church. The church planter's name is Douglas Bunch.

Doug Bunch was born on October 31, 1953 in Monticello, Kentucky. He is the eldest of five children. His family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio when he was eight years old. He did not grow up in a very glamorous environment. His family was very poor, but his parents taught him to work hard and honestly. Doug's dad had only a fourth grade education while his mom did not have much education either, but both of his parents had a great deal of common sense. His parents, especially his dad, were good at building relationships with people. Doug said that his dad would have made a great minister, but he did not get saved until he was 52. Doug said that he had very turbulent years when he was young because he did not grow up in a Christian home. He said that he got into some bad trouble as a teenager. He said that quickly went away by the time he was eighteen because he started a good job of driving a truck. A little time later he met a woman by the name of Donna Conner of Somerset, Kentucky. A little time after this he married Donna on October 26,

1974.

Donna had received Jesus Christ into her heart and was baptized at a young age in her home church in Somerset, Kentucky. Shortly after high school, Donna started to fall away from the church and her faithfulness to the Lord, but she always felt that she needed to return to her life of obedience to the Lord. After her and Doug got married she started to return to the church, and begged Doug to go with her. After five years of saying no to her, he finally went, and on July 3, 1979 at Campground Baptist Church in Somerset, Kentucky, Doug accepted Jesus Christ into his heart to be his Lord and Savior.

Doug has one daughter named Robin. Robin graduated from Georgetown Baptist College in Georgetown, Kentucky. She is a middle school biology teacher in Covington, Kentucky. She and her husband have one girl named Emily. Doug also has one son named Josh. Josh graduated from Campbelsville University. Josh is the current youth pastor and worship leader at The People's Church of Central Kentucky. He is not married. Doug says that these two children and his grand daughter are absolutely wonderful.

Doug's education background got off to a rough start, but if someone looked at it right now, he or she might not know this. Out of the five children in his household, the youngest son graduated from high school. In Doug's house, to graduate from high school was what he called "the big enchilada". There was not a big emphasis on education in his household, but later in life he developed a thirst for knowledge. Doug never did graduate from high school, but when he was twenty-eight, he went back and received his G.E.D. After this, he went to Boyce College on the campus of Southern Seminary for two years, and then graduated from Northern Kentucky University with a major in History and a minor in Psychology.

In 1985, Doug began to sense that God was calling him into the ministry. At first, he and his wife were skeptical because he was making good money because of a trucking company that he owned. He and his family lived in a nice home, and were making around one hundred thousand dollars in personal income a year. He knew in order to be a pastor in the Southern Baptist Convention, he had to get some formal training or schooling, in which at the time he did not have any. He also knew that he would be making a big pay cut to take on the salary of a Southern Baptist preacher. He felt God calling him into the ministry for about two years. In 1983, he felt that God was calling him into the ministry, but did not surrender to the ministry until 1985. After this, Doug went back to school to receive formal education because he knew he needed it if he was going to be an effective pastor. His pastor at his home church also told him that this is something that he should do so he entered Southern Seminary a short time later. Doug received his Master of Divinity with an emphasis in Missions from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. On January 4, 1987, Doug began to pastor his first church. He became the pastor of Oakland Avenue Baptist Church in Covington, Kentucky. He was the pastor there for about three and a half years. He then became the pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in 1991. He was the pastor of this church for about five years. Doug then became the pastor of Bloomfield Baptist Church in 1996. He was the pastor at this church for about four years. He is currently the pastor and church planter of The People's Church of Central Kentucky.

Doug is a loyal Southern Baptist who is very proud of the heritage of the Southern Baptist Convention. He believes in expository preaching and uses it as the model for his sermons at The People's Church of Central Kentucky. He believes that The Cooperative Program is an effective mission's tool. He believes that the Bible is God's infallible word. He believes in the miracles of the bible, the virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, heaven and hell, the resurrection, and the power of the gospel changes lives forever. It is his desire to encourage the churches of that he has pastored

or is currently pastoring to focus in on the ministry that God has called them to do. He wants to keep the "main things" the "main things" in the churches that he pastors.

The Church

This can be seen in the everyday life of The People's Church of Central Kentucky, but before the present can be seen in the life of the church, the past has to be looked at as well. Robert Logan, in his book Beyond Church Growth, says this, "As in the progression of Ephesians 3: 20,21, the nature of vision progresses beyond our ability to ask toward our ability to imagine what God is able to do with our lives and our churches"¹. Jim Cymbala, in his book Fresh Wind Fresh Fire (a book that every member of the staff had to read in the beginning stages of the church), talked about how once the Holy Spirit has given someone a vision, this person can cause a raging fire within his/her environment. Cymbala said that this person has to have faith that God will do what He says He will do.² The People's Church of Central Kentucky feels that these statements are absolute truth in determining how they were going to start their church. They started with a vision that came from God that went to the pastor and he shared with them. The vision is what got the church up and running and the vision is what the people of the church is striving for on an every day basis. They also had to have the faith that God was going to do what He said that He was going to do. So far, God has been blessing the church because of the faith that they have put into Him. The vision of the People's Church is as follows:
Our vision is to, by the grace of God, build a great evangelistic church. We are committed to R.E.A.C.H. the unchurched in our community and world in obedience to the "Great Commandment" (Matthew 22: 37 - 39) and the "Great Commission." (Matthew 28:16 - 20)

The R.E.A.C.H. in this statement stands for different aspects that the church is trying to accomplish as well as the overall vision of the church. The R.E.A.C.H. acronym stands for:
R- to reach thousands of people through the growth of the local church in Central Kentucky, missions around the world, and starting at least one congregation every three years. We will work to average in attendance 252 by 2002 and 505 by 2005.
E- to evangelize the lost in our ministry area through building relationships with the unchurched, sharing a verbal witness, and leading them into a hearing of the gospel in our weekly celebration event.
A- to assimilate into our community of faith those who have committed themselves to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ by involving them in ministry teams, church social activities, and small group participation.
C- to challenge each member to commit to the church, personal growth, and bringing others to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
H- to help each other find their spiritual gifts and apply them in missions and ministry.

The purpose of The People's Church of Central Kentucky is very similar to the vision that has been casted. The purpose of The People's Church is to love God and worship Him as we reach people and make disciples in the power of Jesus Christ. They get this purpose from Matthew 28: 16 - 20. From this purpose statement, and the vision that has been casted, the people of The People's Church have created an acronym for their mission or how they will accomplish the vision and the purpose of The People's Church. They use what is known as the E.A.R. principle, and they say whoever has an E.A.R. to hear, let him hear. The E.A.R. principle stands for the following:

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Evangelize the lost.
Assimilate the converted into the body.
Reproduce this process in the lives of others.

The church has also theology standards that they go by. The standards are as part of the church as the vision and purpose statements. The theology standards are as follows:

1. As a Southern Baptist affiliated body, the church will embrace the Baptist Faith and Message as a statement of faith.
2. In essential beliefs we have UNITY!
3. In nonessential beliefs we AGREE TO DISAGREE!
4. In all beliefs we show LOVE!

The biblical standards that the church goes by comes from 2 Timothy 3:15 - 16, Colossians 1:18, Revelation 1: 6, 1 Peter 2: 9, John 13: 34 - 35, Romans 12: 1 - 2, and John 15: 5.

Strategies

There never was really a core development strategy when the vision first came to Doug. He was tired of the way things were going at Bloomfield Baptist Church. Doug did not grow up in a Christian home so he did not know how the typical church worked. He did not get saved until he was in his twenties, and all he knew was that Christians should be doing what they can to evangelize the lost. Bloomfield Baptist Church was a deep traditionalist church that was full of traditions that people did not want to change. This drove Doug bonkers because he wanted to constantly change things so that more people would come to Christ. The people of this church fought him all the time over stupid issues such as whether or not a piece of furniture should be moved because someone donated it to the church. When Doug left to plant this new church, four of the families that was in the congregation left with him. Doug left under the assumption that the church agreed that it was okay to plant this new church, but some of the traditionalists called it a split. Doug tried everything in his power to prove that this was not a split, but a way to reach lost people, but some of the people in this congregation did not see it that way. So, Doug had four families with him by the time that the first bible study was held. This group along with just a couple other people that came because of invitations by the families became the core group of The People's Church of Central Kentucky.

Some of the assimilation strategy was mentioned above with the vision and purpose statements of the church, but here is some more information about the assimilation strategy of The People's Church of Central Kentucky. The decisions of the church will be based on the biblical based decision-making model. That is that the church will be staff-led as it is in Acts and Timothy. The staff will work closely together with the leadership team, who is made up of congregation members. This team will provide accountability for the staff and speak on behalf of the congregation. The congregation will be equipped to do the work of the ministry by going through the four membership classes based on Saddleback Community Church's model. The congregation will gather once a year in which a brief business session will be held. At this meeting the congregation votes on the five following things:

1. Annual budget
2. Purchase or sale of land or buildings
3. Change in Constitution and by-laws
4. A slate of candidates for the Lay Leadership Decision-Making Team
5. Hiring and Discharging the Senior Pastor

The People's Church of Central Kentucky has six traditions that are very important to the life of the church. These traditions are as important to the members as the vision statement and the purpose statement. They are as follows:

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1. It is understood that prayer undergrids everything that we do, out of which we will experience the stirring of the Holy Spirit, our only source of power.
 2. The persistent effort toward reaching unchurched people in our ministry area will rapidly become second nature to all active members.
 3. The People's Church will regularly involve lay ministers in volunteer mission trips all over the world, as well as sending lay leaders to participate in the planting of new churches as God leads.
 4. The concept of every active member possessing, discovering, and utilizing their spiritual gifts in the work of the kingdom will rapidly be viewed as very ordinary to all who are involved.
 5. Regular and rigorous critique of the methodologies used in various ministries of the church will be understood and expected by all church members.
 6. Finally, no tradition will be allowed to stand in the way of innovative approaches to reaching the people with the gospel.
- The People's church also has seven principles that they are always trying to accomplish. They are that the church will always be trying to do the Great Commission that God has called them to do. Every effort will be made to communicate the gospel to the world. The driving force behind everything they do is to make disciples of people. The only constants in the midst of change will be proclamation of the gospel and the bible is the inerrant and life-changing word of God. In everything that they do they give it their very best. The church develops ministries that meet people's needs. The main goal is for every Christian of the church to become a fruit - bearing disciple for the kingdom.

The launch mechanisms that were used varied in unique ways. The first mechanism that the core group used was mailers. They had back to back to back mailers that they used in order to let the people of Bardstown know who they were and what they were trying to accomplish. This was very successful.

They used the local media to also promote the church. They ran countless ads in the local newspaper using different types of promotions from humor to serious topics. Doug had the local news station to come out and do an interview with him about the new church. They put promotions on the local radio station. They put ads on the local promotional television station.

They used creative events and outreach to promote the church. They rented the local skating rink several times and offered free skates to the members of the community. This was very successful. They passed out free stuff in the community that was helpful in everyday life. Things such as lightbulbs, jar grippers, and cookies and other goodies. All these promotions were successful and have led people to the church.

The church itself has seen a few changes in its existence. The first place that Doug and the four families that came with him met was the Lion's Club in Bloomfield, Kentucky. After a few weeks he was noticing that only a few of the people were actually from Bloomfield and that most of the people were from Bardstown, Kentucky which is the neighboring county. So after much praying from Doug and the congregation, the church (known only as a bible study then) moved to Doug's home in Bardstown, Kentucky. After a while this bible study grew and grew, so they had to find a new place to meet. They found their new home in Nelson County High School. Every Sunday morning they had to carry their equipment back and forth from a nearby storage area to the auditorium of Nelson County High School. The church met there for several months in the year of 1998. God then delivered a gift in their lap. About two hundred yards down the road was a small Pentecostal church that was growing in leaps and bounds. The church got to big for the building so they had to build a bigger building on down the road. When they did this, Doug and the leadership team met with the pastor of this church and asked how much they wanted for the building. After much prayer and a leap of faith, Doug and the people of The People's Church bought this building from

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the Pentecostals and moved into it in the middle of 1999. On January 2, 2000, the first Sunday of the first month of the first year of the first century of the first millennium, the church launched with its first full-blown service. This was a time of true rejoicing and praising. They had forty people at their first service. Today, the people of The People's Church is still meeting in this building with hopes of someday building another and bigger building of their own someday.

The people of the church are unique and different in their own ways. The homogeneity of the church could be best described as being different in a couple of ways and similar in other ways. There are people in the church who are well off in the world, but there are people who struggle in the world. There are people in the church who are upper middle class and lower upper class and there are people in the church who are upper lower class and middle lower class. All the people of the church are blue collar, Anglo-Saxon young adults. The church has one senior citizen and a few children, but the average member is a young adult between the ages of fifteen and fifty years old. The average income of the families is between \$25,000 and \$65,000 per year. The housing of the families are mostly single family dwellings, but some live in condos and apartments. Average jobs include the factory, office, farm, and small businesses. The general hobbies of the members of the church include high school/college sports, hunting, auto racing, golf, and local festivals. The education is mostly high school with technical training. Finally, the predominant music is country music and pop.

The progression of the church has been outstanding. There were forty people present at their first service. Now, one hundred and twenty-five people call The People's Church their church home. The church is averaging between eighty and eighty-five people on Sunday mornings for worship. Out of these eighty members, half of these people were saved, and baptized. The other half had not been in church for several years because of things that might have happened in the past or other reasons. The city of Bardstown has a strong Catholic background. To see the way that this church is growing and leading people to Jesus is nothing short of a miracle by God. His hands are all over this church.

Worship Services

The worship style of the church has been unique from the beginning. Since the beginning of the church, the style has always been a modern day contemporary style of worship. The church does not own a piano or an organ. Doug said the church has agreed to never own one. They do not want to be associated with the traditional way of doing the service. Doug said there is nothing wrong with singing the old hymns, but to be most effective in Bardstown, contemporary music is what the church needs. Sunday mornings are filled with electric guitars, drums, bass guitars, keyboards, and a praise team leading the congregation in praise songs. The church itself is a Purpose Driven Church, but on Sunday mornings, it has a slight amount of Seeker Targeting going on. The reason that this is why they do it this way is because most of the visitors that come to The People's Church on Sunday morning are unchurched members. Doug usually preaches something out of the bible, but he will also incorporate the gospel message within his sermon. Most of the time Doug uses expository preaching, but on occasion he will use other forms of preaching. The congregation is free to clap their hands or raise them in the air or give a shout out to Jesus if the Holy Spirit leads them to do so. The church is truly an exciting place to be on Sunday Mornings.

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The rest of the week is filled with exciting things to do as well for the people of The People's Church. The People's Church has Fan clubs for all ages and for both sexes on different nights of the week. The Fan clubs are the small group Bible Studies that meet instead of having traditional Sunday School. On Monday nights, people of the church can go to a mixed bible study at one of the member's home. On Tuesday nights, the women can go to a lady's house and have a women's bible study. On Wednesday night, there are two bible studies going on at the same time at the church. The men have a small group bible study using one of the small rooms off the multipurpose area. The youth meet upstairs with Josh Bunch, the youth/worship pastor, and the rest of the youth workers. The youth use the worship area as a place to play games, learn things about one another, build relationships with themselves and their youth leaders, and hear a powerful devotion every Wednesday night. Once every month the entire church is invited to a local pizza parlor that has other things to do such as games and laser tag. This is a time of fellowship and building relationships.

There are other events that draw people into the life of the church. There are countless outreach projects that go on to try to reach the unchurched of the community. There are distributions that go on. Doug said that when there is a distribution that is going on, it means that the church is giving something away for free to the community, but these things will promote the church in some form or another. The church rents out things such as the skating rink or the local bowling alley, and encourages its members to invite unchurched people to these events. During the warmer months, the church has a monthly fish fry. This event is very important in the life of the church. It allows for members to fellowship with one another. It allows people of the church to minister to people of the community. It promotes the church. It is a fundraiser that helps out with the finances of the church. There are several other things that the church does to try to get unchurched people to visit the church, disciple the members of the church, and allow the members to have a chance to be ministers in an area that needs it.

In conclusion, The People's Church of Central Kentucky is a church that has their hearts and their eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ. In return, God is blessing The People's Church because of their faithfulness. A man that has the anointing of God on him leads the church. Doug Bunch received a vision from God and shared it with other people in his life. These people were faithful and now they are seeing the benefits of this faithfulness. The church is growing at a fast rate, and in a strong Catholic community, this is truly a blessing from God. Since the time that the doors first opened at The People's Church, the numbers have increased both in memberships and baptisms, but mostly because of people hearing the gospel message and accepting Jesus Christ into their lives. The members of the church have a passion for lost people, and they will do anything within their power to see that people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. They will build sets for various programs that the church may be putting on or they will go door to door passing out materials about the church in rain or cold weather. This church loves Jesus, the pastor loves Jesus, the staff loves Jesus, and they all want people to know the same truths about Him in the community of Bardstown, Kentucky.

1 Robert E. Logan, *Beyond Church Growth: Action Plans for a Dynamic Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 24.

2 Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind Fresh Fire* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997).

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