Planting and Growing Prayer Communities in Europe: A Best Practice Guide to forming 24-7 Prayer’s Boiler Room Community

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Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ 3

Purpose ..................................................................................................................................... 4
  How the Guide Works .................................................................................................................. 4
  Methodology ................................................................................................................................ 6

24-7 Prayer Development ........................................................................................................... 8
  Prayer ........................................................................................................................................... 8
  Teams .......................................................................................................................................... 8
  Boiler Room Communities .......................................................................................................... 9

Boiler Room Development .......................................................................................................... 10
  Vision .......................................................................................................................................... 11
  Mission ........................................................................................................................................ 11
  Process of Becoming a Boiler Room ............................................................................................ 11
  Need for Guide ............................................................................................................................. 12

Guildford Boiler Room Community Story .................................................................................... 14
  Best Practice: #1 Strategy ........................................................................................................ 21
    Prayer ........................................................................................................................................ 22
    Flexibility .................................................................................................................................. 23
    Kindness ................................................................................................................................... 24
    Rhythms ..................................................................................................................................... 25
    Best Practice: #2 Leadership .................................................................................................. 27
      Action ...................................................................................................................................... 32

Colchester Boiler Room Community Story .................................................................................. 33
  Best Practice: #3 Partnership .................................................................................................. 40
  Best Practice: #4 Funding ......................................................................................................... 46
    Relationship with Money .......................................................................................................... 46
    Fundraising Strategy .............................................................................................................. 48
      Fundraising Factors Model .................................................................................................. 49
  Action ......................................................................................................................................... 65

Ibiza Boiler Room Community Story ........................................................................................... 66
  Best Practice: #5 Asset Approach ............................................................................................. 73
  Action ......................................................................................................................................... 79

Macedonia Boiler Room Community Story ................................................................................... 80
  Best Practice: #6 Vulnerability .................................................................................................. 87
  Best Practice: #7 Urban ............................................................................................................. 95
  Action ......................................................................................................................................... 104

Stanford Boiler Room Community Story ...................................................................................... 105
  Best Practice: #8 Children ....................................................................................................... 112
  Best Practice: #9 Environment .............................................................................................. 120
  Action ......................................................................................................................................... 128

Conclusion .................................................................................................................................... 129

References ...................................................................................................................................... 132

Appendix ...................................................................................................................................... 136
Abstract
The distance between European society and Christian Churches has been rapidly increasing over the last hundred years. 24-7 Prayer is an international organization that has a global vision to reconnect all people to Jesus through prayer. Their re-visited Vision 2020 has focused on planting and growing prayer communities, known as Boiler Rooms, in Europe. Acting as a guide, the stories of current European Boiler Room leaders will explain the significance of nine community development aspects to include: strategic planning, leadership, partnership, funding, asset approach, vulnerability, urban, children, and the environment. Prayer communities that are aware of these nine best practices are able to increase Europeans opportunities to love God, be kind to others, care for the environment, and take the Gospel to the nations.

Keywords: Europe, prayer, community, strategy, leadership, partnership, funding, asset approach, vulnerability, urban, children, environment.
Purpose

The combination of prayer and community are processes that lead people to experience life fully since they encourage meaningful relationships with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Through a prayer community people are able to experience meaning, help the vulnerable, alleviate poverty, undergo healing, experience reconciliation, and form authentic relationships that encourage the actual worth of people. My purpose is to explain the best practices of planting and growing European prayer communities to be renewable, relevant, and effective ways that people can connect to God and further His Kingdom. For this reason I am going to provide evidence of 24-7 Prayer’s intentional prayer community model—called Boiler Rooms—and their recent commitment to plant and grow Boiler Room communities in Europe as a new approaches to Christ-centered community, care for the marginalized, and love for Jesus.

How the Guide Works

The fear of forming a specific “how to” document is in creating the false illusion that there is a “silver bullet” that will guarantee the success of a Boiler Room regardless of any situation or context. For this reason I prefer to refer to this document simply as a Guide. Oxford English Dictionary defines a Guide as “one who is hired to conduct a traveler or tourist and to point out objects of interest” (Oxford English Dictionary, December 2010). This definition supports my desire to recognize that a relationship with God is a life long journey with him that also connects us with people and provide opportunities for Christ-followers to point God out, as well as encourage and disciple other people to be his follower.
This will happen first as this guide collects and shares the stories of European Boiler Room Leaders. As many of us have experienced tour guided walks or explorations, what makes them so delightful is that guides have the ability to point out both the obvious and the easily missed landmarks and explain their importance. Jean Vanier (1998), the founder of the L’Arche communities supported this value of words and stories when he stated “To name something is to bring it out of chaos, out of confusion, and to render it understandable” (p. 25). Later he went on and explained, “As we start to really get to know others, as we begin to listen to each other’s stories, things begin to change… We begin the movement from exclusion to inclusion, from fear to trust, from closedness to openness, from judgment and prejudice to forgiveness and understanding. It is a movement of the heart” (p. 83). In the same way the purpose of a guide is to help form appreciation of the surrounds primarily through the process of sharing stories and naming the unknown. This also is the reason we humans find the process of story sharing so powerful. Stories invite both author and audience into a special personal relationship that connects our unique life experiences in a shared moment. Stories are born not just through the pen of an author, but also through the enchanting moment that author and audiences meet to form an intentional relationship of both giving and receiving.

Therefore, the collection of Boiler Room leader’s stories will share nine best practices that support the relational development of innovative prayer communities all over Europe. This will be maintained by incorporating current community development literature to the existing Boiler Room community practices as each of the nine best practices are defined. From this process a working document will be formed to catalyze
the formation of Boiler Rooms in Europe, as well as develop numerous innovative European prayer communities.

This document acknowledges that 24-7 Prayer’s method of developing Boiler Room is intentionally absent of handbooks, defined approaches, and guides to remain committed to the deeply relational process of forming prayer communities. For this reason the purpose of highlighting each Boiler Room leader’s story is to stay as near to the relational vision of Boiler Rooms as possible while attempting to add practical academic aid to the development of prayer communities.

Methodology

24-7 Prayer’s Boiler Room, approaches development by centering each prayer community on an intentional love for Jesus as a process to relationally develop the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual elements of individuals, as well as entire communities. In order to piece together 24-7 Prayer’s European prayer community model a minimum of two established leader from each community was interviewed and each pair of interviews was then used to compose a community narrative. I was also able to visit all of the prayer communities, except the Macedonia Boiler Room, to personally witness, experience, and evaluate each community’s intentional practices. Using these two experiences I then decoded each Boiler Room’s strongest community developmental element(s) by categorizing repetitive words or themes into the nine community development groups of: strategic planning, leadership, partnership, funding, asset approach, vulnerability, urban, children, and the environment. To provide each of these community developmental groupings with authenticity I researched current peer-reviewed articles and books, as well as blogs, websites, and videos authored by current
community developers and prayer community leaders to find similar patterns of development and success. In the same manner, a considerable amount of research focused on the European context to gain an understanding of possible cultural situation related to planting and growing prayer communities.

This guide begins first by describing the development of 24-7 Prayer as an organization to gain a common understanding of a prayer community’s vision and mission. It then provides a generalized review of Europe to explain a basic foundation for planting and growing prayer communities. It is important to note that the generalized statements made about Europe and Europeans in this document are not made in ignorance or to offend, but as an attempt to find a common focus and starting point to explain a prayer community’s best approach in Europe. It is understood that Europe is a vast continent that has an incredible amount of diversity, culture, languages, and people. However, the purpose of this document is not to detail those facts but to focus on the common features that promote establishing and growing European prayer communities. Lastly, the nine best practices for prayer community development will be individually defined after each of the Boiler Room community stories. In an attempt to honor 24-7 Prayer’s high regard for natural Boiler Room development, each community story will be shared by explaining the life of the people, particularly the leaders, that promoted the planting and growing of the prayer community. The intentional absents of linking community development elements to the initial introduction of each community story is to allow and encourage the reader to initially and independently reflect on each story. Then, directly after each community story one to two community development best
practice groupings will be defined. Each of these sections will be followed by actions
to encourage the reader to actively get involved.

24-7 Prayer Development

Prayer

24-7 Prayer’s formation began with an old, yet simple, concept, “The vision is
JESUS, obsessively, dangerously, undeniably Jesus. The vision is an army of young
people. You see bones? I see an army. And they are FREE from materialism” (Greig,
2004, p. 12-14). From this vision came a renewed urgency for people everywhere to be
praying. From the dirtiest underground clubs to the highest church steeples, the appeal
was made for every tribe, tongue, and nation (Revelation 5:9) to enter into God’s will of
justice and restoration by committing to pray. For the last 10 years, prayer and prayer
rooms have formed and spread through the intentional focus of 24-7 Prayer. Everywhere
that people choose to be intentional about prayer, transformation happened. Richard
Foster supported this mostly when he stated, “To pray is to change” (1998, p. 33). In a
world rocked by environmental, financial, relational, and spiritual crises, people wanted
change that would heal the broken world, and they found it in prayer. By joining the
efforts of 24-7 Prayer young and old alike were desperately seeking a form of God’s
justice through prayer that was relevant and livable.

Teams

24-7 Prayer started as prayer teams gathered and created pray rooms in free
spaces, from empty store fronts, to backrooms of churches, to open public parks. Mostly
theses teams consisted of individual young people, youth groups, and local church groups
that had a passion for joining together in creative prayer. The prayer teams developed as
they successfully hosted prayer nights that turned into prayer weeks, then months, then years. This happened as a group of people would commit to individually cover hour slots of prayer to communally share the responsibility of keeping a constant stream of prayers flowing. The teams first functioned locally in English towns and then started traveling nationally and then internationally to locations that were interested or in need of organized, interactive, and creative prayer spaces (M. Knight, personal communication, March 23, 2011).

**Boiler Room Communities**

As 24-7 Prayer matured through the success of prayer teams and created prayer spaces, the support of people that participated in prayer rooms developed a need to form sustainable prayer spaces, or Boiler Room community, for people to continue to invest in rhythms of prayer. Boiler Room communities commit to live out the six practices of creativity, hospitality, justice, learning, mission, and prayer. They often were planted in towns and communities that had a core group of people that committed to a lifestyle of unity around these six practices. During the first 10 years of 24-7 Prayer’s development, 11 Boiler Room communities formed in an attempt to love God, love each other, and love the world. These communities were known to create opportunities to personally “breathe God in” thorough the prayer community and then “breath God out” through actively serving others. As the years have progressed a heightened awareness of shared life together has increased.

The positive impact each Boiler Room has is immeasurable. Homeless are taken in, youth are cared for, elderly are involved, crime is lowered, streets are cleaned up, businesses are unified, schools are supported, justice is promoted, inspiration is
encouraged, and love is shared. This innovative approach of Boiler Room communities to put relationships before ritual has created, not only a positive growth in prayer communities, but healthy development of communities as a whole.

**Boiler Room Development**

Community is a big concept to define. It can have different meanings for many different people. As the founders of 24-7 Prayer started to form their concept of community they were drawn to the concept of boiler rooms. Boiler rooms by nature are the central place where fuel and equipment come together to catalyze purposeful energy. In times past, boiler rooms were located in the center of homes and as the boiler got hotter, more heat would spread through the entire house. In this same manner, 24-7 Prayer leaders hoped that their intentional efforts of prayer would catalyze the restoration of relationship, mission, church planting, and community development (Freeman, 2007, p. 91). These communities aim not to replace or reinvent church or other Christ-centered communities, but they do exist to help support, inspire, and re-establish the efforts of what God and his people have been actively doing.

More recently, Boiler Rooms have aligned with the rising popularity of new monasticism. New monasticism (NM) again, is complex and subjective. In a book edited by The Rutba House twelve marks of new monasticism were identified and Jonathan Wilson (2005), author of the introduction to this book declared, “new monasticism exists to sustain knowledge of the gospel of the kingdom that was proclaimed, embodied, and accomplished in Jesus Christ” (p. 2). He reaffirmed that “NM is a means of learning and living out the convictions that God is indeed the redeemer of all creation not by
imposition but by invitation to enter into the fullness of life as God intends and makes possible through Christ” (p. 3-4).

These definitions fix together a commitment to place Jesus as the central purpose, power, and foundation of prayer communities that endeavor to love God, each other, and the world.

**Vision**

Boiler Rooms have a dual purpose that aims to combine the love of God in prayer with the love of neighbors through three principles of being true to Christ, kind to people, and taking the Gospels to the nations (24-7 Boiler Room Rule, 2008).

As 24-7 Prayer completed their first decade of intentional prayer, the leaders gathered again to remember the vision and encourage prayer development. Through this meeting they reaffirmed their commitment to support the spread of prayer, specifically through the development of Boiler Room communities. Their Vision 2020 document stated their desire to plant hundreds of these prayer communities in Europe as resource centers that will provide support to local churches and restore justice to marginalized people.

**Mission**

The task of a Boiler Room is to form communities around the two purposes of prayer and practice through the three principles to love God, be kind to others, and take the Gospel to the nations by establishing rhythms of creativity, hospitality, justice, learning, mission, and prayer (24-7 Boiler Room Rule, 2008).
The formation of Boiler Rooms is a very relational process. In an interview Jon Petersen, the International Community Director of 24-7 Prayer, expressed the relational process as different stages of interest. People begin this process first by hosting prayer rooms or events. From there groups can express community building interest by gathering a core group of people that begin living the six practices of Boiler Room. As interest heightens groups can be recognized as associates of 24-7 Boiler Rooms, then through a deeply relational process affiliated groups can be commissioned as a recognized Boiler Room. Once recognized as a Boiler Room, a community will receive support and resources to sustain and encourage their development. Often this is done through commissioning leaders, visits, training, staff, simple financial backing, and consistent encouragement (J. Petersen, personal communication, December 2010).

**Need for a Guide**

As 24-7 Prayer leaders seek to find relevant and productive means of fulfilling their vision to plant and grow hundreds of Boiler Rooms in Europe they must consider accessibility of their vision and mission to groups of people interested in developing prayer communities. The need for European prayer community will be fully described in the section “Focus on Europe” as it details the urgent need for authentic and participatory Christ-centered community that allows Europeans an alternative to society’s current experiences with church, community, and Jesus.

Additionally, as groups of people interested in planting and growing prayer communities beginning their efforts, the availability of well organized guides or road maps, such as this, will help them efficiently decipher methods that develop effective and sustainable prayer communities. Even more so, as the approach to live in community,
especially prayer community is considered highly counter cultural it will be imperative that successful prayer communities, such as 24-7 Prayer’s Boiler Rooms, are documented for referral and reference.

Further this guide seeks to exemplify that an intentional focus on spiritual development will promote positive holistic community development. This is supported, as this guide will encourage spiritual development as a process of intentionally investing into seemingly non-spiritual practices as it recognizes the inseparability of spiritual and physical elements within a community. This is directly related to 24-7 Prayer’s attempt to utilize spiritual development of prayer communities, not just through actively praying, but by advocating for a combined lifestyle of prayer that demands active involvement in the issues effecting their wider community. Currently this process is considered a “pioneering” approach to building the kingdom of God because it requires Christ-centered communities to care for the people outside their community just as much if not more then the members within their community. Especially among church cultures this approach is considered different and new, as it requires formation of these communities to often happen outside of the traditional Christian church setting. For this reason, the newness and difference of what prayer community development actually is also sustains the need for this comprehensive guide. Altogether, the significance of this document is to organize and detail 24-7 Prayer Boiler Room’s best practices to encourage the continued growth of European Boiler Room communities, as well as the diverse development of independent prayer communities and provide more opportunities for more people to build authentic relationships with Jesus.
**Guildford Boiler Room Community Story**

The Pastor and The Social Worker: A Best Practice of Strategy and Leadership

Location: Guildford, Surrey, England

As prayer communities form they initially will need to form solid strategic plans and leadership. These two aspects are the framework that ultimately decides a community’s success. This first story of Guildford Boiler Room brilliantly introduces a prayer community’s efforts to incorporate strategic planning and effective leadership.

He is a veteran pastor with decades of experience under his belt. She is a compassionate social worker committed to her job and deeply in love with her husband. Neither Ian Nicholson, nor Liz Slinn ever imagined that they would be a part of such a large and fast spreading movement. Both classify themselves simply as normal individuals living in the city of Guildford, Surrey, England. Yet, as they became a part of the 24-7 Prayer movement their contributions have deeply pioneered a new opportunity for people to encounter Christ through intentional prayer communities (L. Slinn, Person Communication, 1/27/2011; I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011).

Their journey begins with Ian and his role in leading a local church, especially the youth. Through his relationship with 24-7 Prayer he heard about a group of young people in Reading, England who had started an intentional prayer community called a Boiler Room and so he took his young people over to meet them. Both Ian and his youth group were inspired by how this group’s commitment to prayer could impact people personally and communally. However, as an experienced church planter Ian knew that bringing a group of people together was a lot of work (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011).
Ian also was cautious about promoting fizzle faith fads and didn’t want to reproduce another expression of church that only attracted other Christians. He recalled how his church had planted a youth culture church and though it had been fruitful it really wasn’t growing. “There was such a desire to see fresh expression of church that were not primarily congregational but experiential; to have church defined more as a verb then a noun” (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/11). However knowing how to get started was the hard part.

So, a group of people desperate for an authentic everyday relationship with Jesus and their whole community started meeting to pray. Then they started talking about how Christ centered community could become a reality for them in Guildford. These meetings mainly took place at the offices of a local Christian charity called the Matrix Trust. It was there that Ian invited his coworker Dave Slinn, and his wife Liz, to come and pray (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011).

Liz Slinn had never heard of 24-7 Prayer or read any of their stories or resources. She recalled that upon first hearing about them she was confused and a bit skeptical of this group claimed to pray 24 hours a day 7 days a week, and even more unsure of what exactly they meant by the term ‘prayer room’. “I remember when I first got involved in 24-7 Prayer, I went to one of their prayer rooms hosted at the local Millmead Church [Guildford Baptist Church]. When I first walked in I felt this strong peace” (L. Slinn, personal communication, 1/27/2011). And with that Liz found herself woven into the Guildford Boiler Room story.

She started going to a ‘40 Days of Prayer’ event hosted by this potential community and got involved in some of the leadership and strategic planning meetings.
Liz Slinn commented on how when they started trying to do community there really was no plan or structure. Yet, as they continued it became clear that there was going to need to be some structure, but that it must be founded on inclusive relationships:

It was really hard to add structure because most people had such bad experiences with leadership, which made it hard. But there was a need for some sort of structure. We started having more meals together. We started to get to know each other. We had a discipleship team named Transit show up. They came for two years while we were shaping. They really helped us keep going because they had the time to give. (L. Slinn, personal communication, 1/27/2011)

From there, the Guilford Boiler Room began to shape itself through the people that intentionally came forward to be members. Initial growth of the community was all word of mouth. People came because they heard that there was a group of people starting a prayer community based on the 24-7 Prayer Boiler Room values. In the first couple of years they had 20 to 30 people join: singles, married, students, neighbors, friends, families, young, and old (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011).

Ian's role as a leader was shaped as he guided the group through answering questions like “What do we mean by leadership? What is church to us?” Ian’s familiarity with church and church planting helped the group work through these issues and also form a deliberate and flexible plan for growth. Ian described a practical way of seeking growth when he stated, “When pioneering new church there is always insecurities. Through this process of asking questions we started seeing lots of growths” (I. Nicholson,
personal communication, 1/20/2010). This statement supported this community’s commitment to communication and even more so to the process of building relationships.

Another big growth point for this community was finding value in space. They intentionally reduced the number of cooperative meetings to just twice a month to encourage small groups to be creative in their regular gathered times of prayer. At this point Guildford Boiler Room decided to officially claim the role of a recognized Boiler Room through 24-7 Prayer. This meant that they had to be intentional about joining prayer to practice and they had to incorporate healthy rhythms of the six community values of creativity, hospitality, justice, learning, mission, and prayer. The night of their official launch they gathered at a local curry restaurant with about 70 community members, family, and friends (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011).

Guildford Boiler Room embraced their gift of strategic planning through relationship and started organizing resources for developing leaders to support church growth. This was seen first in the way they intentionally developed leadership roles and structures internally in their community. They developed an interwoven threefold process of leadership with a Core Team as an oversight group that decides how the Boiler Room would develop, who needed training, and what the current issues were. This group was supported by the Catalyst team, who was responsible for encouraging the effectiveness and efficiency of practical projects in the community. Then the Collective teams were responsible for supporting both teams by being the practical hands and feet that served Guildford community (L. Slinn, personal communication, 1/27/2010).

Outwardly Guildford Boiler Room shared their gift of strategic planning and relationships by providing missional training and resources to individuals interested in
being sent as missionaries to different places in the world. This intentional process actually fed into one of the most challenging and growing moments for Guilford Boiler Room. After training a number of different families from their community, they actually followed through and sent them to various communities. This cut the numerical size of the Guildford community in half and many people in leadership wondered if it was a wise choice to have made so early on in their formation (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011).

Through the struggle of saying good-bye to some of the dearest members of their community, they were able to turn one of their most challenging moments into one of their most appreciated. Because the families that left opened up space in the prayer community, they were able to revisit the value of space and openness. This results in a unifying of the community and a redefining of relationship and the importance of outward focus for their prayer community. Liz reflected on her experience, as a leader, with space in the prayer community as she shared a short story:

   Me and Anna [another Boiler Room member] started getting together to pray for our friends. One started coming to Alpha [UK based course to learn about Christianity], [and] is now a regular part of our community. She is declared a Jew, married to a Muslim, but she loves Boiler Room and is a part of our community because we are about relationships.

   (personal communication, 1/27/2011)

Even more, Guildford Boiler Room continued to support the importance of trusting the call of God over the rationale or logic of owing building space or property. As Guildford Boiler Room developed and changed it used creativity as a means of
obtaining physical space. When they heard about an old bowling pavilion space that was going to be available they approached the owning organization and offered to take on the upkeep of the grounds and building in exchange for free rent. The organization agreed and now Guildford Boiler Room has the Allen House, a facility with a large meeting room, prayer room, garden, and recreation. The Allen House is not the Boiler Room, but is a means of helping this Boiler Room invest in to their mission (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011).

Over the last 5 plus years this group has definitely pioneered the way Boiler Room is done and lived. A quick visit to their website shows they have worked to establish community rhythms that bring people together to focus on building a relationships with Jesus. As this prayer community looks to the future they are excited to develop their gift of hospitality and dream of opening a pub, accommodation, or community center that would focus on hosting people, caring for travelers, and welcome people in transit. Over all Liz Slinn wrapped up the vision of Guilford Boiler Room when she stated:

I would love to see it grow in a way, not that we have hundreds of people, but hundreds of people that want to pray, do mission, and change their community. That we would develop people who are desperate to go somewhere else and do what we are doing. I would love to see people get healed emotionally, but grow in a way that we see people healed and discipled by their friends. We are looking to send people in mission. (personal communication, 1/27/2011)
All together these two leaders experiences demonstrate the need for strategic planning and effective leadership. As a prayer community begins to form both strategic planning and leadership can be defined through a simple and natural process. Strategic planning and leadership will be defined as the first two best practices.
Best Practice: #1 Strategy

Being a part of 24-7 Prayer’s Boiler Rooms, as well as having a strategic plan is about as easy as mixing oil and water. As any good visionary knows a strategic plan is vital to the success of any organization or project. But what does a strategic plan look like for Boiler Rooms?

To sit down and talk with a handful of European Boiler Room leaders, the process of describing ‘model’, ‘structure’, or ‘strategy’ can cause a range of emotions from intense recoil to aggressive support. This is seen as some Boiler Room leaders question models as substitutes for trusting in the will of God, while other leaders find defined structures to be vital to their establishment and growth. (B. Heasley, personal communication, 2/15/2011; R. Harman, personal communication 2/8/2011). As Liz Slinn mentioned, negativity toward structure often is because so many people have had such awful experience with leadership and strategy (personal communication, 1/27/2011).

Many leaders in 24-7 Prayer like to describe their process of community development as viral and epidemic. What they mean by this is they want to empower a system that can move quickly, be flexible, and efficiently adapt through various cultures in an unseen, but powerful way. Just as a virus will spread regardless of physical, national, social, economic, political, or religious boundaries, so to does 24-7 Prayer hope that the urgency to pray and form community will spread (Freeman, 2007).

However, there is a defined strategic plan to how 24-7 Prayer Communities form that both satisfies those opposed to structure and those in favor of it. This is known as the ‘paradox’ strategy. Joseph Steinke, a 30-year veteran of church ministry and current U.S.
Based National Communities Leader for 24-7 Prayer defined this best when he explained, “Healthy, sustainable communities stand in the paradox of ritual and relationship. The best metaphor is the body…. the heart is responsible for both a beat and our soul … rhythm equals life” (J. Steinke, personnel communication, 12/21/2010). What he means by this is that it is possible to accept what the world declares as polar opposites, rituals and relationship, traditional and contemporary, old and new, rhythms and freedoms, as a God-inspired plan to reconcile all people everywhere to God, each other, and the world. The Paradox Strategy begins and continues as a practice of four adaptable elements of prayer, flexibility, kindness, and rhythms.

**Prayer**

One of the founding approaches of any Boiler Room leader is that their strategic plan comes from a place of prayer. This was extremely obvious in the story of Guildford Boiler Room as they spent their first season simply meeting together to spend time in prayer. This is the ultimate foundation of what 24-7 Prayer communities are about. They are about inspiring people to enter into more and deeper conversations with God. Because prayer is the first step in the process of strategic planning it also helps to form both the vision and the mission of what each Boiler Room is about. Ian Nicholson said this best when he commented on Guildford Boiler Room’s vision as a process of, “Trying to build communities around prayer… lifestyles of mission and justice, coming out in a commitment to prayer and relationships” (personal communication, 1/20/2011).

It is important to note that this season requires patience. God has an amazing way of swooping in and getting the work done over night, but at the same time there is a call on Boiler Room leaders to be ready to dig in and patiently wait on God. Brian Heasley,
Ibiza Boiler Room co-leader, commented on this when he explained, “I think that people sometimes start with praying a lot and then they start planning and then they move away from prayer. But it is important to always keep a long sustainable prayer. We prayed for the prostitutes for five years before we were able to have conversations with them, six years before we were able to have one of them walk into our center. We give up to easily” (personal communication, 2/15/2011). Prayer isn’t about sprinting but about endurance. In the same way a strategic plan is not about speed, but stamina.

Another powerful aspect of prayer is it keeps you asking questions. People build their friendship with the triune God from a place of inquiry. Questions are one of the foundational ways faith is developed. Just as children mature as they ask questions about what is happening around them, so Christians grow when they ask God what is happening around them. Ian Nicholson supported this when he spoke about how Guildford Boiler Room formed as a process of asking questions, “There were a lot of questions. What is this about? How are we involved? … When pioneering a new church there are always insecurities, but through the process of asking questions we started seeing growth. A lot of this was built around prayer weeks” (personal communication, 1/20/2011).

**Flexibility**

Another key aspect to forming a good strategic plan is practicing flexibility. Flexibility is a process that is grounded in humility and change. As a group of diverse people gathers together, it is natural that each will bring unique expectations. Difference can be used as strength as long as people are willing to adapt their pride and gain selfless awareness. This will be a slightly harder hurdle for European Boiler Rooms to get over,
as naturally their culture is quite individualistic. Individualistic societies are a minority society and they typical bred attitudes of “personal opinions, individual interest prevail over collective interest, and autonomy is the ideal” (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p109). However European nations are also countries that are quite open to change and are not as threatened by difference (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). A combination of these two cultural aspects can encourage Boiler Room leaders to recognize the European strength of acceptance to challenge lifestyles of autonomy in an effort to form sustainable prayer communities.

**Kindness**

Third, kindness is a key ingredient to a strategic plan because it is such a physical form of Christ’s active grace. When Christ-followers come together in a desire to start community it must come from a place of kindness. By adding this element into the planning process groups will be intentional not only about building meaningful relationships within their group, but with those outside of their group as well.

A note of caution, many times people consider starting a community based largely around dissatisfaction or discontent with their current community. There often will be attitudes of ‘They just don’t get me. They don’t understand what I am trying to do. Or I’m not getting anything from this community’. Care should be taken when this is the attitude that motivates community formation as it will often breed more division then unity.

One of the major functions of Boiler Room communities is about unifying the churches in the common Christ commissioning. If we as believers fail to reconcile ourselves with our own brothers and sisters, how can we expect to form communities any
differently? Joseph Steinke, U.S. National Boiler Room leader, supported this when he stated, “communities are only as strong as their leaders” (personal communication, 12/21/2010). For this reasons Boiler Room leaders must be strong in sharing kindness so that they are capable of forming communities strong in sharing kindness.

Kindness is also the key way that you invite others to join you. When you begin to practice your strategy you are going to need the presence of people to make it work. As I interviewed Boiler Room leaders across Europe there was a resounding need for people to join in the prayer community’s efforts. Even as Liz Slinn, Guilford Boiler Room leader, reflected on her initial contact and motivation to be a part of Guildford Boiler Room it formed mostly around the kindness of her husbands’ boss to invite them into the beginning of the strategic plan. It wasn’t the locations, number, or structure of the meetings that drew her in, but simply the practical use of kindness that motivated Guildford Boiler Room leaders to positively interact with those around them. All together kindness becomes even more important as it is one of the foundational aspects of connecting and forming sustainable partnership, which will be further described in the Colchester Boiler Room “Focus on Partnership” section.

**Rhythms**

Lastly establishing rhythms is a key part to a strategic Boiler Room plan. Assumptions can be made that good planning or strategy comes from being able to budget finances well, communicate effectively, build a good website, be an extravert, or organize impressive spread sheets. While these aspects of planning are helpful they are not necessary to the formation of successful Boiler Rooms. Multiple Boiler Room leaders expressed they had no plan or idea how they were going to form the communities that
have eventually developed, but as they simply committed to regular times of prayer, worship, and dinner their community organically began to form (L. Slinn, personnel communication, 1/27/2010).

Further Joseph Steinke explained:

Rhythms are rituals of life that sustain healthy relationship with God, ourselves, and the world. Every community needs to find their own expression of practices. The key is to not make rhythms mandatory in a way that crushes the life out of it. 24-7 Prayer is good at keeping the life in rituals. They take rituals that usually bring a lot of anxiety and allow people opportunities to participate out of a sense of love not a sense of anxiety (personal communication, 12/21/2010).

In our world where commitment is a legitimate fear, it is important for prayer communities to form practices that invited people into rhythms of joy, peace, forgiveness, and justice (Ohan, 2010). This will naturally help form communities that reflect the life of Christ in the best way possible.

The strategic plan of Boiler Rooms is founded and continued in practices of prayer, flexibility, kindness, and rhythms. The beauty of these key elements is the unique way they can be used and adapted across a wide variety of places and cultures. 24-7 Prayer uses the “Paradox Strategy” as a model to encourage the pairing of polar opposites in a way that joins old and new, young and old, tradition and contemporary to be a living presence of Christ love in the world today. The strategic plan is as simple sounding as it is demanding to follow, but starting with these foundational elements will naturally weave Boiler Room leaders into the larger strategic plan of God’s will.
**Best Practice: #2 Leadership**

So, what kinds of leaders are best for Boiler Room? Some people believe that leadership is natural; either you are a natural born leader or you are not. However, leadership is a skill that can be taught (Harkavy, 2007). It is true that certain people are born with natural skills that can develop brilliant leaders. However, the types of leaders that are needed for Boiler Room can choose to learn and practice to be successful Boiler Rooms coordinators. This type of leader will be described first by understanding leadership according to society’s standards and then redefining Boiler Room leadership through the concept of being a servant leader.

In the later 20th century, especially in Western societies, it became quite popular to copy the business model as the best practice approach to developing the church. Lead pastors compared to the CEOs; Elders became the equivalent of a Board of Directors, and church member the parallel of consumers. This model saw huge success and during this time mega churches were born, peoples lives were changed, and the Gospel was preached.

This is an important time to consider especially for Christian leaders, because it is at this time that “how church was done” became more of a model then a community. This was not all bad. Churches formed during this time had and still do have powerful impact in the world. Many of the biggest mega churches are directly responsible for housing homeless, feeding the hungry, and taking care of the poor and the needy. But something, perhaps unseen and unintentional, happened and it directly impacted Christian leadership. Leaders roles stopped being a shared responsibly among the community and started being the call of just one, or a few, great men with in a given church community. This began an
ever spanning and widening power distance gap between those who were leaders or involved in church and those who were members or attended church.

This chain reaction through the church culture resulted in many churches being more about projects then processes, programs over people, and methods over relationships. In connection, Goleman (2000), an authority on effective leadership styles, defined six different leaders in the cooperate world. He then defined four positive types of leadership as authoritative, affiliative, democratic, and coaching. He explained a good leader doesn’t stay in any one of these roles all the time but uses discernment to judge which time and setting calls for which leadership style. He challenged that leaders who mastered more of these positive styles of leadership would be able to practice better, and even the best, management with in their organization.

Reflecting on this, it is easy to think of multiple churches that have pastors that fill these roles. To some extend that is an amazing thing; all of those styles in moderation do produce positive results within an organization. However, what Goleman (2000) did not define, nor should he have since he was speaking of leadership among corporations, is that Christ-centered community needs leaders that are not fully described by any one of these styles. In fact, if you want to be a leader among God’s people you must have one simple, yet completely challenging style of a servant leader.

The strongest rationale behind this has nothing to do with organizational patterns, profits, or people, but it does has everything to do with following the commands of God. In one of the great known bible stories, Jesus, while at the Passover dinner with his disciples, takes the time to intentionally stop what he was doing and get on his knees to hand wash each and everyone of the disciples feet. The disciples sat there with utter
shock plastered on their faces as Jesus chose to do one of the lowliest, humbling, and dirty jobs in their culture. When he finished he looked around at them and summarized his service by saying, “For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (ESV John 13:15). In so saying, Jesus stressed the utter importance of people who want to be leaders to take the lowly, humble, and dirty jobs as one of their top priorities if they desire to join Jesus in servant leadership.

Furthermore, Boiler Rooms are every bit as intentional about training their leaders to be servants. Katy Smith, from Colchester Boiler Room, remarked when people come to her asking to be part of the leadership or leading process she applies “the Hoover test”, a process that involves asking people first to serve before they lead. “If they are willing to stay after meetings and Hoover the floor, then they are more likely the type of leader Boiler Room needs” (K. Smith, personal communication, 2/3/2011). As a leader she summarized her view on what it takes to be a good Boiler Room leader when she stated, “Serving and Teachable are the two key characteristics to a good leader. Being willing to work with and for others is vital to making communities work” (K. Smith, personal communication, 2/3/2011).

Guilford Boiler Room equally shows a strong connection to mastering the skill of developing servant leaders. As one of the key communities that trains and equips Boiler Room leader, they are well aware of how important it is that leaders fill the roles in the community to serves others. This is seen strongly in the way they prioritize relationships at the foundation of what they do. To serve someone is to know them closely, intimately, and perhaps even a bit uncomfortably. Just like Jesus did when he washed his disciples feet, knowing how to serve means being physically close, it means being pushed out of
your comfort zone, and it means being in relationship with people (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011).

One of Guilford Boiler Room’s greatest gifts is their ability to be about relationships. This gift stems from their commitment to be and develop servant leaders. If Boiler Rooms want to form communities that are deeper then just weekly meetings that check people in, serve them a product, and the kick them out until the next week, they are going to need to be intentional about building relationships. Guildford Boiler Room supported this when they intentionally limited the number of corporate meetings to just once a month and then pushed their prayer community members to build deeper relationships with the people naturally in their lives (I. Nicholson, personal communication, 1/20/2011). Liz continued with this as she commented, that as Boiler Room leaders, it is important to encourage people to be in authentic relationships with their neighbors, families, co-workers, and friends to better love and serve the people ordinarily in a community member’s life (personal communication, 1/27/2011). Both of these examples reinforce that building relationships is founded in having the heart of a servant.

Recently a classmate of mine’s fiancé suddenly and tragically passed away in his sleep. While we attended his memorial we were told a beautiful story of how he lived every day in the moment and never held anything back. His boss stood on the stage and explained how Aaron Lee Haskins Jr. lived his life by the ‘Platinum Rule’. He explained the Platinum Rule one-upped the Golden rule because as Aaron stated, “It’s about treating other better then we want to treat ourselves”.


As current Boiler Room leaders looks for people to engage with the vision of prayer community it is going to take deeply committed servant leaders, like Aaron Lee Haskin Jr. that have dedicated their lives to “treating people better then they would treat themselves”, people dedicated to their roles as leaders primarily because they are devoted to a life of servant hood.
**Action**

**Guildford Boiler Room’s Approach to Get Involved**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Go spend time in an existing Boiler Room Community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer Walk through your community/ get to know community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask yourself “What is my motivation to be a leader? Is it about serving?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start Slow and Start Small</td>
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**Guildford Boiler Room’s Suggested Book/Resource List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Shaping of Things to Come by Alan Hirsch</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Forgotten Ways Alan Hirsch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture By Michael Frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punk Monk by Andy Freeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Church by Neil Cole</td>
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Colchester Boiler Room Community Story

The Mother and The Father: A Best Practice of Partnership and Funding

Location: Colchester, Essex, England

After a prayer community has begun to form an effective way to plan and lead they will need to consider establishing partnerships, as well as effective means of funding. The idea of working with others in a community is an effective way to build practical and sustainable relationships. It is also important to understand funding a prayer community so that God can be credited as the provider and sustainer of each prayer community. Colchester Boiler Room story demonstrates both of these practices.

She is a hilarious mother. He is a gentle father. She has skillfully mastered the art of pulling faces to express her emotions. He regularly tends to his collection of worms in the back garden. Together Katy and Richard Smith take on the role of parenting, not only to their little miracle baby Moses, but also to a quiet, yet powerful, Boiler Room Community in Colchester, Essex. Colchester community has been intentionally praying long before Richard and Katy Smith were ever married, or before they ever moved to Colchester, and most definitely before they ever imagined they would be commissioned by six local churches to pioneer a new approach to engage their community in prayer.

Katy grew up a daughter to Christian parents that just ‘got God’. She explained her experience with Christian parents as one that was very cool. “My parents modeled it [Christianity] well. Our house was a very open place. We had a lot of character around” (personal communication, 12/29/2010). Katy could never remember a time where she wasn’t involved in her Christian faith journey, though she would be the first to admit that there were ups and downs along the way.
When she was 11 years old she started struggling with some really bad headaches. They got so intense that her family scheduled her for a brain scan. During that time Katy was aware that a lot of people were praying for her to be healed. One day someone particularly spent time praying with Katy for her to be healed of her headaches and then they went away! She described this moment as a landmark time and one that really helped her, especially during her teenage years, to consistently choose a relationship with Jesus over worldly distractions. She moved to Colchester as she began to study art at the local university (personal communication, 2/3/2011).

Similarly, Richard Smith grew up in a family of believers that went to church. However, the depth of his recognized Christian journey started a bit after his childhood. When Richard left home at 18 years old, he moved to Colchester to attend school and became aware of the bold way people distanced themselves from God and church. He found freedom as he realized that not believing in God was an option. He soon decided to be a declared atheist. Nevertheless, Richard found himself frequently meeting and hanging out with other Christian. They invited him to a church meeting in London and Richard figured it couldn’t hurt to go along for a bit of a ‘sing-song’. He vividly remembered how surprised he was to actually meet Jesus. He attributed it to a man who boldly declared his thanksgiving for being loved by Jesus. Richard found himself drawn into this relationship with Jesus and amazed that he had spent five years with out him (personal communication, 2/3/2011).

Back in Colchester, Richard became determined to be a part of a community that was built around a relationship with Jesus. He eventually found a network of people that were praying and he visited some of their prayer rooms. He remembered the freedom and
depth of being in the prayer rooms and just being able to talk with God about anything. During this time he met Mike Holden and Katy Andrews (Smith) who were particularly connected to 24-7 Prayer, youth work, and local churches (personal communication, 2/3/2011).

As Richard got more deeply involved in prayer rooms his life became more purposeful and intentional. Together Mike, Katy, and Richard started meeting up and lamenting that there were no prayer communities in Colchester. They dreamed of communities that loved people, that healed, and that drew people into life changing encounters with Jesus. They dreamed of a church that lived right alongside the poor, the hungry, the homeless, and the hurting. So they agreed to meet together for one year to intentionally pray for Colchester community. “When we started praying we didn’t know if we were brave enough to be what we actually prayed for” (K. Smith, personal communication, 12/29/2010). Yet despite their fears, their insecurities, and their uncertainty and they started praying (R. Smith, personal communication, 2/3/2011).

As they prayed they began to hear of others who were praying and they decided to join them. Katy explained their heart’s desire was to spread prayer to cover different times in the day, weeks, and eventually year. So they started prayer walking on Friday nights in addition to their other prayer commitments. They started communicating to their churches and those around them about their desire to form a Christ-centered community around prayer and practice. Katy also explained they were cautious to say they wanted to start a ‘church’ because they were not interested in just attracting Christians from other churches. They wanted to focus on people in their community who were consistently on the outside of church and church culture (personal communication 12/29/2010).
Their little group of three decided to form a board of advisors and so they asked a diverse group of church leaders in Colchester community if they would be interested in sitting on a board to advise good ways to build Christ-centered community. Both Katy and Richard recalled Colchester was a unique place, in that the large majority of local churches were intentionally working on a unified front. This made the approach to church leaders, as potential advisory board members a simpler process. Once the board came together they decided to meet quarterly and they often would meet at advisory board member houses to share progress and a meal. They found this really productive as it invited the board members to be more involved in the formation process, and also physically invest into the support of their prayer community leaders. It also helped form a relaxed environment that was very conducive for building deeper relationships, which helped with accountability and respect (K. & R. Smith, personal communication, 12/29/2010).

Four years ago Katy and Richard Smith's community officially became a Boiler Room through 24-7 Prayer which recognized they were intentional about loving God, being kind to each other, and taking the Gospel to the nations. In particular this was seen through their commitment to the six values of Boiler Room communities. As they faithfully served Colchester community through the combination of prayer and practice, they also remained quit small. Katy mentioned one of their main focuses was on supporting and building up local churches. This really helped give them a role in Colchester that was not threatening to local churches, but encouraged them (K. Smith, personal communication, 12/29/2010).
Richard also mentioned the importance of their prayer community being committed to sending people to share with others what they have learned and experienced. He explained how Mike Holden, a co-founder of Colchester Boiler Room, was sent to a community in Africa to continue pairing prayer and practice to encourage positive community growth. They also have had other couples be sent out to do kingdom work in different places. Richard strikingly attributed their community’s strength in conflict resolution to this valuing of flexibility and sending. He commented that holding these values really challenged them, as leaders, to encourage people’s desires and focus, even if their dreams were not exactly the same as the prayer community’s. He explained freeing people to pursue their dreams helped support their community’s ability to stay in healthy relationships, even with people whose passions and visions were different from Boiler Room’s vision and mission.

Last year Katy and Richard Smith were approached by a collaborate of six local churches in Colchester and asked to lead a community project that would enable Richard to be employed full-time by the churches as a Boiler Room leader. The churches were interested in supporting community workers that intentionally spread the types of values Boiler Room promoted. This was very unique and inspiring for Richard and Katy as it confirmed God’s work and provision in Colchester. They agreed to the position and the churches rented a large community house in one of the faster developing parts of Colchester. Katy and Richard would reside in the home as caretakers and would use the space to build unity, prayer, love, respect, and Christ-centered community from their home. Traditionally this prayer community had been more mobile as they shared each other’s homes in hosting community events and gatherings. The commitment to a certain
space helped solidify the focus of their work and made it possible for new people to join. It also made it harder for other people to stay connected to them based out of a single location.

As this prayer community developed they found a niche for joining in with the lives of those around them, especially the vulnerable and the needy. Katy remarked Colchester Boiler Room has a special gift of living compassion. She explained, “When I talk about compassion I am thinking action not emotion. A sense of wanting justice for those who are oppressed and treated unfairly, praying for the homeless, having meals with them, and continuing to have our prayer room open to strangers” (personal communication, 2/3/2011). In this way Colchester Boiler Room has come to carry the mantel of what it means to be a community involved in active compassion.

Prayer community members help raise financial support through a shared communal responsibility of hosting community events and seeking out ways to engage with the vulnerable in their community. As mentioned above, six local churches also financially support Colchester Boiler Room. Additionally they tithe ten percent of their received money directly to 24-7 Prayer.

As this prayer community settled into their new environment and roles in the wider community they are excited about the possibilities that are surfacing around them. Growth is particularly on this community’s heart as they see people’s connections with Jesus and healing as massive indicators of a prayer community’s maturation. Katy commented they have seen significant growth in their Boiler Room when they intentionally started asking people to join them. She also mentioned that it is important to find significant roles for people and to invite them fully into the fabric of what it means
to be a Boiler Room member. Richard equally responded that growth in their community was directly related to Jesus’ work in people. He also stated this as a preeminent reason that people are drawn to this prayer community, because it offers them a place to encounter the reality of Jesus (personal communication, 2/3/2011).

As Katy and Richard dream of about the future for the prayer community they would love to see more people discipled in a way that equips them and then sends them out to do the work of Boiler Room all over the town of Colchester. Healing is also really important to this community as they prioritize restoration and reconciliation work in the wider Colchester community. They also envision a prayer community that is strengthened and supported as they develop boldness and confidence to ask people to join them.

In conclusion, this story clearly reflects the effectiveness of forming partnerships, as well as creative means of funding. These two practices noticeably stand out as this prayer community attempts to invest in them as creatively and selflessly as possible. The importance of partnerships and funding methods in this prayer community story define the next two best practices.
Best Practice: #3 Partnership

So what is the meat and potatoes of Boiler Room? How do Boiler Room communities actually go through the process of forming? How do they plug leaders in? How do they utilize their strategic plan? It all boils (pardon the pun) down to understanding and implementing good partnership.

Partnership is a process where people realize that the only way to successfully reach a group’s vision is for each person to contribute to the process. It’s a concept that revolves around the idea that people, not programs, achieve vision and mission. Participating in forming good partnerships lays foundations for expandable visions and functional missions that will increase a group’s sustainability and influence (Butler, 2006).

This section will describe the overall importance of partnership, as well as each phase of collaboration to include exploration, formation, and operation (Butler, 2006). Pairing real Boiler Room leaders experiences and opinions on each partnership phase, will support the holistic process of partnership. It is my hope that a clarified description of good collaboration will inspire new and current Boiler Room leaders to incorporate good partnership practices to further the development and sustainability of each prayer community.

Phil Butler (2006) wrote an amazing book called “Well Connect” that described partnerships done right are powerful ways to further God’s kingdom. He explained the benefits of working together as being more efficient, strong, effective, flexible, resourced, safe, and expandable (p. 27-28). He further supported the significance of partnerships as he explained the collaborative process is the ultimate design of God’s kingdom, as it
deepens the experiences of relationships, spirituality, and the life journey. Though Butler’s process is explained more linearly than most Boiler Rooms circular reasoning, his key principles remain relevant and useful as they challenge purposeful and practical action.

So how are good partnership started? Butler (2006) described the first phase of good partnership as exploration. He expressed this process begins first by observing, listening, and multiplying relationships (p. 121). Many times the first step people take when they have a vision or passion for change is to call a meeting. Butler is emphatic as he challenged calling big group meetings is the fast way to kill any good partnership as it usually results in an unknown messiness that leaves key people out, turns people off, and encourages chaos. In exchange he challenged good collaboration to start off being intentional about the context and people that surround a given partnership. Butler further encouraged the exploration stage to be about information collecting through research of an area's history, current activity, and future. He also described the importance to meet key community members and leaders to ask questions about what other individuals or organizations are doing (p. 133-34).

Colchester Boiler Room has done an amazing job of incorporating this phase into their formation. Both Richard and Katy Smith, co-leaders of Colchester Boiler Room, spent over ten years simply living life in the town of Colchester. While they lived in Colchester they were intentional to join networks or groups of people that were passionate both about prayer and vulnerable people. This helped them gather information in their town about, who was doing what and where the gaps were. From this experience they were able to see that there was a gap between diverse groups of marginalized people...
and the greater church population. These learned and listened observations helped the co-founders of Colchester Boiler Room to explore what Christ-centered community would look like for the large unchurched population in Colchester town (R. & K. Smith, personal communication, 12/29/2010).

Butler (2006) suggested the formation phase is the second part to any good partnership. This phase is all about building from the relationships and information that were gathered during the first phase. Butler explained how this phase allows people to approach key people in the area and ask them to formally meet in a group to talk about developing a partnership. He cautioned again to remember how quickly formal meetings can kill any progress or potential of partnership and to revisit more information gathering if deep relationships have not been formed or key resources have not been gathered. Further, Butler defined the formation stage as the action that is taken to bring people together. He explained that a foundation of creating partnership is around developing a group’s ability to trust. He described common vision, values, respect, competency, reliability, and faithfulness as essential elements to shape trusting environments.

Butler (2006) also clarified the formation meeting should not be a time of giving people all the answers to the challenge(s) that have been discovered or explored, but rather a time to collectively ask questions like who are you, what is your motivation, what is the challenge and context? He further explained this method brings consensus as it investigates the question of roadblocks and solutions to develop real break through.

Butler (2006) At this point of the formation process key members will be asked to decide whether the partnership should be a “Go or No-Go”. This should be based off the established relationships, shared information, and the understood definition of partnership
as “any group of individuals or organizations, sharing a common interest, who regularly communicate, plan, and work together to achieve a common vision beyond the capacity of any one of the individual partners” (p. 34-35).

Lastly as Butler (2006) explained the formation stage is completed as the group assigns responsibilities and the partnership duration, according to the decision to move ahead and “Go” with the partnership or not to continue in a “No-Go” verdict. The end of the formation phase is a time to reflect and celebrate the hard work of the partnership process. Even if the decision is a No-Go it is worth reflection and celebrating as a process that can teach valuable lessons about developing solutions to explored challenges.

Again Colchester Boiler Room stands out as a shining example of this phase of the partnership process. As the three original co-founders found themselves praying and dreaming of starting prayer communities in Colchester, they worked off their established base of people they knew were interested in prayer and community life. They approached seven key leaders of Christ-centered communities and asked them to be a part of a council of advisors. “We invited key people into the processes. We were looking for a diverse group of people who could give us wisdom and support through the process. We would meeting quarterly, but the meetings were founded out of relationships” (K. Smith, personal communication, 12/29/2010).

During this time Colchester Boiler Room was able to confirm a group of local people that were willing to support them in their vision and mission. As this notoriously small Boiler Room began to simply live out their aspirations, they found local churches to be extremely supportive and open to their efforts. Colchester Boiler Room was motivated to continue a more formal process of exploring their prayer community and
found that their local relationships really helped them gain clearer vision and mission. For example when one of the advisors wanted there to be more involvement in the local school, Colchester Boiler Room willingly applied their vision and mission to include focus on schools work. This willingness to work together and form a vision and mission collectively to achieve the goal of holistic Christ-centered community was further confirmed when six local churches approached Colchester Boiler Room and agreed to financially support them by organizing a paid Community Worker position for Richard Smith to support the progress of the Colchester Boiler Room’s values (K. Smith, personal communication, 12/29/2010).

Butler (2006) The last component to good partnership is called operation. “To get any real, lasting results, a partnership not only has to come together, it has to stay together” (p. 177). Butler specifically described this as a process of carrying out the desired outcomes, responsibilities, and completion times. Broadly he spoke about this as encouraging partnerships to develop environments with open communication, evaluations processes, planned funding, and methods of conflict resolution. Through recognition and work through these different areas, groups can continue to stay together, as well as increase their ability to function and expand on their collaboration.

Over the four years, that Colchester prayer community has been a recognized Boiler Room, their commitment to communication, relational evaluation, creative funding, and generosity in conflict resolution has been an added sources of stickiness to keep them connected. Richard Smith explained this well when he described conflict was approached in the community as a value of flexibility and releasing. He did this as he told a story of a couple that joined their community with their own vision and mission for
transformation. Instead of wasting energy trying to force the couple to be about Colchester Boiler Room vision or mission they made a commitment to be a sending community. This devotion made space in the community to encourage people to dream new and different dreams that would require them to be sent to do innovative mission to further God’s Kingdom. Richard concluded that being a sending community wasn’t about making carbon copies of themselves to send, but required flexibility as they celebrated difference and new beginnings (personal communication, 12/29/2010).

In conclusion, partnership is powerful and something that perfectly represents the tangible Kingdom of God. Prayer communities that interweave partnership into their formation will find themselves enveloped in a process that deepens relationships with God, others, and the world. This is supported as many Boiler Rooms perfectly represents the importance, effectiveness, and sustainability of including partnership into the process of developing Christ-centered prayer community.
Best Practice: #4 Funding

An important question to ask is how are Boiler Rooms funded? Funding is one of those hidden little realities that few people want to talk about. Talk about funding too much and people question the motivation; talk about funding too little and people question the seriousness. However, it is important to realize that being wise stewards of money, funding, and fundraising is an important foundation when building a Boiler Room.

This section will simply discuss money as one possible means to develop sustainable Boiler Rooms. To begin this section will dialogue about what money is and how to be in healthy relationships with it. This will lead into a practical step by step processes to put together a strategic fundraising plan. These sections are meant to assist Boiler Room leaders in the development of sustainable Boiler Room communities.

Relationship with Money

To begin, money is awkward. It’s awkward to ask about, to have, and even sometimes to give. Especially among Christians, the flow of money is not a particularly popular topic of conversation. This is seen as many Christian money transactions are done quietly, when eyes are closed, or in the privacy of the home. Further there are many biblical warning about money being the root of evil, its power, and its ideological characteristics. This often leads to an overwhelming sense of fear in regards to the power of money. Goudzwaard et al (2007) spoke about this as he clarified the role of money has changed, from a symbol of trade to an actual marketable product, letting money appear to have a life of its own (p. 93).

He further explained society used to define good life as the ability, “to care for people, for the well-being of society, and for the environment”, but now the majority of
society defines good life through the acquisition of material possessions (p. 93). This is very idealistic viewpoint, but for the sake of understanding that society has changed over the years I will us this opinion as a very simple explanation to societies current relationship with money. Collectively it is no wonder that many Christ-followers soberly take to heart warnings about money and its controlling power, and instead choose to distance themselves from it.

However, the root of the problem lies not with money, but in our relationship with money. 1 Timothy 6:10 is probably one of the most famous bible verses connected to money being evil as it quotes, “For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil”. To save from getting into a long theological debate, my desire is simple to highlight that the focus on that sentence comes with the word “love”.

Love can be an abstract idea. Yet, biblically, love is described, more then just an emotion or a feeling, but as a relationship of connection. Love is connecting. The bible supports this as love is often described in relation to action, “God loves or For God so loves...” (John 3:16) followed by actions to connect. Further action, and particularly God acting, is the foundation of spiritual connection. Paul’s comment to Timothy in regard to love of money is more a challenge about the power of love, not the fear of money. It’s a push to put money in its proper place; a place that does not let lifeless money control, but in a place where controlled money brings life.

This is not an attempt to preach prosperity gospel, but it is an attempt to encourage Christians to have authority over money in a way that allows them power to use money for the good of loving God, other people, and the earth. Money left to develop in the brokenness of this world becomes as fierce as a wild animal. Yet, when people take
the time to build tamed relationships with money, powerful expressions of God’s Kingdom can be unleashed.

So how can tame relationships with money be developed? A simple way is to see if money investments produce love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Paul, the apostle, declared to the Galatian church that evidence of these types of behavior was confirmation of having good relationship with the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). In the same way, if money is producing fruit that represents the character of God’s Holy Spirit, it can be assumed that the purposefully, spirit-filled relationship with money is for God’s good.

Colchester Boiler Room encompasses the value of right relationship with money. Richard Smith, co-founder of Colchester Boiler Room, explained through their dedication to building Christ-centered prayer community they became custodians of one of the largest and most expensive houses in their neighborhood. The collective of six churches that sponsor Richard and Katy’s community work understood the importance of having space for the lifestyle of inclusive community. Richard and Katy did not ask for an expensive or big house, but they are intentional about using it to bring the fruits of the Holy Spirit, as they host mother-toddler groups, prayer events, provide housing for needy community members, host ‘messy’ church services, and organize regular community dinners. They also do not let money control their decisions or actions for how they live community, but through using money wisely they have organized a powerful way to build the tangible Kingdom of God in Colchester (K. and R. Smith, personal communication, 12/27/2010).

Fundraising Strategy
This understanding and representation of right relationship with money, inevitably leads to the question of how to acquire money that adds to investing in right relationships for Boiler Room? It is important for Boiler Room leaders, especially leaders wanting to start Boiler Rooms, to be challenged to think about organizing a strategic fund raising plan. To get started one must collectively plan for fundraising. Some Boiler Rooms successfully run off of no financial support, donors, or earnings. However many Boiler Room, and in fact all European Boiler Rooms that I interviewed, needed funding in order to operate according to their community’s mission and vision. Chris Wolff, adjunct professor of Funding for Sustainable Organization at Northwest University, described that functional fundraising plans are comprised of six steps: need, advantages, impact demonstration, value of donors, market, and method. He further described application of this model has proved to not only secure current funding needs, but also obtain sustainable funding (personal communication, 2/10/2011).

For this reason the following section will provide an explanation of how to put together a workable fundraising plan for Boiler Room, adapted from Chris Wolff’s six Fundraising Factors Model. These steps further will be supported with practical example from Colchester Boiler Room’s funding process. Ultimately, how to raise funds is left to the discussion of each Boiler Room leader and can be as simple or complex, casual or professional, undocumented or recorded, as a community needs. By the end of this section Boiler Room leaders will have one example of a workable fundraising plan that can be used in a range of setting, from personal use to professional submission of grants or foundation funding.

Fundraising Factors Model
1. Need

This is a process of communicating why Boiler Room community is needed in a specific context. Overall this sections should link together 24-7 Prayers commitment to prayer and practice through the six boiler room values in response to a communities growth points, needs, and hope. This should include issues, facts, and evidence that support the need to form Boiler Room in each specific setting. To make the need statement more powerful use people and resources that are professional, involved, authoritative, and/or current (Geever, 2007, p. 21).

Example:

*Churches in Colchester, Essex, like anywhere in the UK, have experienced a widening gap between the unchurched and church people in their town. This wide gap is hindering people from experiencing a fully reconciled relationship with Jesus. This is strongly apparent as current Christian church attendance is down and people willing to identify with the organized Christian faith is decreasing (Francis, et al. 2009). Katy Smith, co-founder of Colchester Boiler Room, supported this as she explained a need for the church cultures in Colchester to link diverse people into a form of church that is applicable to everyday life. She add the important thing is not to start another church that would simply attracted and shift Christians between churches, to explore a completely different way of being church in Colchester (personal communication, 12/27/2010). Richard and Katy Smith, as the co-founders, have spent over ten years living and serving in Colchester. During that time they did not come across any Christ-centered communities that were holistically joining prayer and practice in an attempt to*
reach people often rejected from traditional church culture. As the culture in Europe has shifted there is a deep need for churches to understand that shift, if they desire to continue sharing who Jesus is to the world. Colchester town is no different, as it lacks new and creative forms of Christ-centered community that specifically seek to reach unchurched, vulnerable, and rejected people in the town through a community formed around rhythms of prayer and practice.

2. Differentiated (advantages)

This step is about communicating what a Boiler Room does that makes it advantageous to a community. Again this will require integration of the core values of 24-7 Prayer, but it will also be about explaining specifically what each Boiler Room community offers both their members and the wider community (C. Wolff, personal communication, 2/10/2011). Time should be spent investigating other groups or organization that could be doing similar work. Note: If at this stage groups or individuals are located that are doing the exact same work as Boiler Room, leaders should consider the possibility of partnering, joining, or inviting in the already existing individual or groups.

Example:

Colchester Boiler Room is a unique form of Christ-centered community because they foundationaly are formed on prayer and practice in an effort to love God, be kind to others, and take the Gospel to the nations. Richard Smith explained how his desire to be more involved in prayer and community led him to seek out people who were praying.
Through that process he connected with the Colchester prayer network and eventually met the other two, soon-to-be, co-founders of Colchester Boiler Room.

As these co-leaders served in Colchester community they learned exactly who was doing what and where. The three of them started to notice that having communities that were dedicated to prayer made a difference. Personally they realized this as each one had a story of how prayer had changed their lives through healing, meaning, and compassion. Practically in the wider Colchester community they were able to witness prayer brought unity, relationships, and healing among churches, families, and neighborhoods. Katy Smith supported this as she listed peoples reasons for joining Colchester Boiler Room to be opportunities for deeper trusting relationships, encounters with genuine hospitality, experiences of realistic mission, and simply the ability to soak in the presence of God (personal communication, 12/27/2010).

The way Colchester Boiler Room goes about being different is through shared meals together, regularly scheduled prayer times, volunteering with community service groups, upkeep of publicly open and creative prayer space, and habitually seeking advices from diverse church leaders. Another aspect that sets this Christ-centered community apart, is their ability to function outside of the traditional Church space. For the majority of their time as a prayer community, Colchester Boiler Room had no defined building or place to meet. Instead, they simply met in each other’s homes or in public meeting places in their town. Within this last year, Colchester Boiler Room received resources to provide for Richard Smith to be hired as a full-time Community Worker and continue his efforts as co-leader of Colchester Boiler Room. A community house is also funded for Richard and Katy Smith to facilitate Colchester Boiler Room from. All
Planting and Growing Prayer Communities in Europe

Together this prayer community has found themselves in the middle of pioneering a new form of church through providing practical everyday Christ-centered community to the marginalized people in Colchester.

3. Impact Demonstrated

This piece contains the tangible evidence of how Boiler Room has an influence on the need and the advantages of the community. Focus should be taken to describe the process of a Boiler Room and how it provides a greater good in the town’s community. It also should discuss the longevity of Boiler Room. For Boiler Rooms it would be good to define what growth means to the community and how they have seen that growth happen with in their community.

Example:

Katy and Richard Smith both explained Colchester Boiler Room officially started when they were sent by their local church to plant a prayer community in one of the fastest developing estates in Colchester. During the first couple of years, their community saw growth as a process of offering people opportunities to meet Jesus, be healed, and join in active compassion. Colchester Boiler Room started prayer walking on Friday nights and that turned into a multi-church supported outreach called Street Pastors. They started praying in schools and at various locations in their local community. After three years of committing to bringing Christ-centered community and creative forms of prayer to Colchester this community was approached by a collective of six local churches and asked to facilitate a faith-based community outreach. The churches recognized the work Richard and Katy Smith were putting into forming prayer community and they wanted to
support them by organizing a paid Community Worker position that would sustain their work. Sense Colchester Boiler Room accepted this position they became custodians’ of a large community house that allows them to more effectively live lifestyles devoted to prayer and community. Their transition from mobile to stationary only changed their outward activities as they are now able to focus more on rhythms of hospitality, shared meals, prayer room events, evenings of learning, and serving young mothers. They continue to pioneer new opportunities for their communities to meet Jesus, experience healing, and participate in active compassion.

4. Value of Donors

This section will explain how Boiler Rooms define the worth of donors. This section should highlight how donors are people who influence the change Boiler Room wants to see in the community. It should explain relationships are established and sustained with donors as an opportunity to join in the active blessing of the community (C. Wolff, personal communication, 2/10/2011). This section should offer an alternative to the notion that asking for money is a sign of being weak, unprepared, or poor managers. Instead the significance of the donor/Boiler Room relationship should focus on the strength of giving, both in what the donor gives to Boiler Room and what Boiler Room can give to their donors (Klein, 2007, p. 63).

It’s important to remember that formation of good Boiler Room is being in good relationships with all the members of a community. Regardless of whether a Boiler Room is interacting with governments, churches,
businesses, neighbors, families, marginalized people, or donors they must
priorities building good relationships because the core of what makes up
those groups are people. This section should strive to answer the question,
“Are donors being cared for in a way that values their involvement in the
community, while continuing to enhance the vision and mission of Boiler
Room?”

Example:

The value of donors to Colchester Boiler Room is directly linked to their ability to
function quite well on a small amount of personally invested financial revenue. In fact,
through interviewing all European Boiler Room leaders, this was a common theme for
European communities. Alpin Nikolov, the co-leader of Macedonia Boiler Room
described the financial situation of many Boiler Rooms when he commented, “It’s a
matter of bare existence. Everything was done on pure enthusiasm and a low budget”
(personal communication, 2/10/2011). In the same way Katy and Richard Smith began
putting into Colchester Boiler Room first. Katy explained when they first started as a
community a lot of what kept Colchester Boiler Room going was what the leaders were
willing to put into it. Kim Klein (2007), author of Fundraising for Social Change,
commented that a successful fundraising strategy always begins with getting a yes from
the first donor because the first person that should be asked for money should always be
yourself (p. 80). For this reason a main way that Colchester Boiler Room seeks to be
funded is through the personal financial contribution of their leaders and community
members. This is not a requirement to be a part of the community, but is a best practice
that this community models in an effort to encourage members to lives lifestyles that are
willing to give to the prayer community. This also explains that donors are valued as members of the community, because most people that give to the prayer community are a part of it.

Further, Burk (2003) concluded that three straightforward ways to increase donors’ gifts has everything to do with how organizations treat their donors. She continued as she explained that when donors know “1. That the gift was received... and you were pleased to get it 2. That the gift was ‘set to work’ as intended 3. That the project or program to which the gift was directed had is having the desired effect” they are more likely to not only give again, but give more (p. 31). She noted that bidirectional communication was key with attracting and retaining donors in healthy relationship.

In the same way, but perhaps more casually, Colchester Boiler Room displays these donor-valued characteristics as they welcome interacting with all different types of people. They form relationships with people not based off of what those people can give to their community but more from what their prayer community can bless people with. This often leads to people feeling so included in the process of Boiler Room that they regularly attend activities hosted by the prayer community including meals, prayer events, social gathers, and learning activities. At these prayer community function information about the community is casually shared and discussed. In this way they have set up good bidirectional communication that lets donors know gifts were received, used, and effective, as many donors are simply drawn into the normal practices of the prayer community.

Aforementioned, they also have established a “Council of Advisors”, made up of key leaders from different church. The council meets quarterly to share concerns,
progress, and hopes. The meetings usually take place in homes over dinner, which
naturally promotes the values of community that Colchester Boiler Room strives to build. These meetings also have established an environment of accountability and evaluation, as Richard and Katy Smith are able to share with the advisors the community’s failures and successes.

As Colchester Boiler Room grows it will be important that their fundraising approach also develops. Currently, this community displays a few excellent traits of how they value donors. This is seen strongly in their dedication to meet personally with people, to share life with people through community dinners, services events, open times of prayer, and lastly through their constant invitation to people to join their work. Not only are these powerful examples of valuing people, but they are also proved methods to successful thank people (Burke, 2003).

One key way this community could grow would be to invest time developing more formal ways of thanking their donors by regularly sending thank-you notes. As simple as this practice is, it is easy to over look or completely forgot how important prompt and written notes of gratitude are to the development of not just active donors, but active participants in a community. Burke (2003) explained how vital thank-you notes can be in forming and sustaining relationships as she challenged organization to be as prompt as possible in writing personal, concise, handwritten notes that acknowledge the donor as a person who actively participate in the social change the organization is working to achieve (p. 35-50). This is a simple and good practice that any Boiler Room community can participate in.

5. Market
This piece describes exactly who would be an ideal donor to financially support Boiler Rooms. Researching local organization or people that share similar vision, mission, or values is often a good place to get started. Its important to begin locally because the majority of people that give money, make donations to local efforts. After investigating possible local funders, regional, national, and then international donors can be sought. Due to Boiler Rooms’ intense commitment to prayer and community, local churches would be key investors. Also, due to the fact that over 33% of all charitable giving goes to religious institutions it would be wise for Boiler Rooms to connect with faith-based organizations, individuals, or foundations that would be interested in promoting Christ-Centered community. This is not a statement to be turned off by or get upset at. Talking about the market, especially in relation with spirituality can lead to feelings of discomfort. Especially for the Boiler Room community that strives to grow outside of structure and institution, any reference to the market or use of the market can seem almost blasphemous (C. Wolff, personal communication, 2/10/2011). For that reason, the term market used in this context simply describes people, especially groups of people, who would be interested in the types of community Boiler Room seeks to form.

Example:

*Colchester Boiler Room’s main market is the local Christian church in their town.*

*This is most appropriate because the original purpose of Colchester Boiler Room is to*
support and help bridge the gap between unchurched and local church people. A key reason to connect to local churches for major funding is because they are the most assessable group of people that will share the same vision and mission of loving God, being kind to others, and taking the Gospel to the nations.

It also will be important that they seek out faith-based organizations that are quite flexible in experimenting with different forms of church. Boiler Room is an attempt at pioneering new forms of Christ-centered community and it is important for them to find groups of people that are willing to flow with the organic and often sporadic growth patterns of this community. Also it will be important to connect with other faith based organizations because many conservative Christian churches will struggle to financially support Boiler Room communities that do not adopt certain denominational requirements.

It also is significant for Colchester Boiler Room to continue to focus on meeting individual people that have a passion for the work of prayer, justice, and reconciliation in Colchester town. Again because Boiler Room is forging a new expression of Christ-Centered community, they will need the freedom to work in new ways that many faith-based organizations would need more documentation or evaluation prior to funding.

A growth point for Colchester Boiler Room community will be to challenge themselves to keep seeking out more key people in their community by connecting and building relationships with other churches, faith-based organization, and individuals. Colchester Boiler Room will not have to be concerned about selecting their market based on amounts, time, or autonomy as an essential aspect of this community is about being inclusive and appreciating however much or littler a person or group can give.
6. Methods

This is the actual process a Boiler Room will take to actively engage in fundraising. There are multiple venues for raising funds such as, earned revenue, governmental contracts, institutional grants, mass appeals, and relational. This section should also include a description of how Boiler Rooms will measure their success (C. Wolff, personal communication, 2/10/2011). It is important to note that the approach to raising funds is highly dependent on the context, culture, and time of a Boiler Room community. Traditionally Boiler Rooms apply relational approaches to fundraise. For this reason the following example will describe the highly relational method used by Colchester Boiler Room to raise funds. This relational method is most strongly supported by this Boiler Rooms value of creativity, friendship, and career choices.

Example:

Primarily the fundraising approach used by Colchester Boiler Room is through their dedications as leaders to practice giving to their prayer community. Katy Smith supported this as she explained the most effective leaders, in their community, were people who simply wanted to serve others (personal communication, 12/27/2010). The importance of service within Boiler Room is founded on the significance of supporting people mainly through giving, both with acts of service and financially, to the prayer community. Further, Colchester Boiler Room chooses to use this as a method for raising funds because as the leaders practice lives of generous giving, they naturally become models to members in their prayer community. Steve Lawton, a Colchester Boiler Room
member, commented as he lived and served in the prayer community he became aware of how people gave and what community needed. He further commented that because of the prayer community’s commitment to transparency and the generous lifestyle of the community leaders he was encouraged to actively and continually give to the community (personal communication, 3/35/2011). The key to this approach is to consistently model lives of generosity, which helps sustain and grow prayer communities of generosity.

The second method of raising funds for Colchester Boiler Room is the approach of being creative. Creativity is used here as a practice to encourage prayer communities to think outside of the box, especially outside of the traditional religious box. For this reason the process of fundraising for any Boiler Room isn’t just about forming relationships with donors to exchange monetary funds, but it is largely about the creative techniques of bartering. For a Boiler Room community the practice of bartering is a more relational method to acquire the goods and services that are needed to function as a prayer community. This is because, to a Boiler Room, the barter system is a means to develop deeper relationships through partnership within their wider town. This process challenges Boiler Rooms to prioritize and seek out creative mediums of exchange over the simple trade of money. This is exemplified as Colchester Boiler Rooms facilities doubles as the co-leaders residential home as well as a community space. For this reason Colchester Boiler Room will continue to prioritize imaginative methods to barter for goods and services that are needed. This will happen as they continue to explore their town to find partnerships with people who share common vision and values. Fundraising by this process will happen as frequently as goods and services are distinguished among assets of people in personal relationships with Colchester Boiler Room community.
A third method by which Colchester Boiler Room seek to gain funding is through their value of authentic friendships. Because Colchester Boiler Room seeks to establish friendships with the people, whom they also wish to serve, they are intentional about forming relationships that give and receive bidirectionally. This simply means that because Colchester Boiler Room respects people that are a part of their community by caring about them wholly as people. Colchester Boiler Room’s practice to see people holistically challenges their prayer community to care about each person, more then just as a person they serve, or someone that donates money, or as the person that leads, but as a multifaceted person that is able to contribute to the prayer community in many different ways. Burk (2003) researched ways to increase raised funds and explained the importance to call donors simple to check in with them, or to set aside time to have coffee, or house meetings to personally explain the progress of the organization. She stressed that much of what goes into building healthy donor relationship had nothing to do with asking for money and everything to do with knowing people. In the same way, Colchester Boiler Room communities form and secure funding, as they are intentional about building friendships.

Fourthly Boiler Rooms have utilized investment in career training to equip leaders to earn revenue that will support Christ-centered communities. Colchester Boiler Room has demonstrated this through their leadership’s acquisition of a paid Community Worker position that provides needed resources and earned income to help maintain the prayer community. For this reason, Colchester Boiler Room leaders should consider encouraging career training for interested prayer community members, to develop skills that would enable them to work in paid local community positions. An even more
intentional suggestion to promote fundraising for Colchester Boiler Room, would be to encourage leaders to gain training in fields of study that highly revolve around social service and community development. When leaders live and work in their community, they increase the opportunities to build more practical and present relationships with people in their community. Also when leaders have jobs that will allow them to blend their commitment to Boiler Room with earned revenues they will have practical ways of pursuing funding and service at the same time.

Lastly Colchester Boiler Room will continue to approach faith-based institution in their wider community that share a common set of values and beliefs. Connecting with local churches will happen as Colchester Boiler Room helps support prayer and unity among the churches by organizing prayer events at local churches and within the wider community. Colchester Boiler Room Leaders are also intentional about visiting local churches to continue to promote the relevance of planting prayer communities in Colchester town. Colchester Boiler Room community is functioning financially well so the main priority is to maintain good relationships with the local churches that currently fund the prayer community, as well as continue to build relational bridges with the wider Colchester community (K. Smith, personal communication, 12/27/2010). All of these methods will be evaluated based on Colchester Boiler Room definition of growth as a process of people being able to verbally, artistically, or actively express their ownership and involvement in the prayer community, as well deeper relational encounters with Jesus.

Summary
Money and raising money for the development of Boiler Room is a process of understanding what money is and what healthy relationships with money looks like. Comprehension then can help fuel the right motivations, desires, and purpose for raising money to grow Boiler Rooms. Taking the time to organize a fundraising plan that will build on Boiler Rooms values of people, lifestyle mission, creativity, friendship, and training, will provide a practical working model for forming prayer community. The model describe in this section is just a possible structure that can be used by Boiler Room leaders to help them organize a form of funding that is practical and sustainable.
**Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colchester Boiler Room’s Approach to Get Involved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start practicing a rhythm of praying/ join people who are praying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find ways to share life with the people around you. Do you know your neighbors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make space to invite others into</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write a strategic fundraising plan</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colchester Boiler Room’s Suggested Book/Resource List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bible, particularly the Gospels and Stories about Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Community and Growths</em> by Jean Vanier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Red Moon Rising</em> By Pete Grieg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Ibiza Boiler Room Community Story

The Messy and The Missional: A Best Practice of Asset Approach

Location: San Antonio, Spain

The attitude prayer communities have toward the wider community directly affects their ability to be established and develop in that community. An asset approach capitalizes on an attitude that welcomes people’s gifts, strengths, and worth as an essential component to the formation of prayer communities will provide space for diverse people groups to be involved and have ownership of the developing process. The asset approach will be best displayed through the Ibiza Boiler Room community story.

His shoes were covered in vomit as he ambled through San Antonio, Ibiza. His casual demeanor is oddly comfortable as he walked through the famous West End of this European party hotspot and his posture seeks something. Drugs? Prostitutes? Alcohol? He practically blends in with the rowdy crowd of young Europeans that have come to party hard on an island that boast the most clubs, pubs, and bars per square foot then anywhere else in all of Europe; yet something sets him apart.

He seemed all to aware of those around him, as if he was concerned for them, and when he stopped to check on an almost forgotten figure slumped against an ally wall he instantly began to command the attention of those around him. What is he doing? And why?

Brian Heasley claimed to be no saint. He has been known to describe his life as “quite messy” and yet on the island of Ibiza he appears to fills the shoes of a saint quite well he often is the man described above (B. Heasley, 2009). Brian and Tracy Heasley purposely came to Ibiza six years ago to try something new, to pioneer something
different, to risk being church among a group of messy people. Brian supported this as he commented:

> Our aim wasn’t to do mission work here, but for lack of a better word it was to plant church. We see in some instances that Boiler Rooms are churches. And this instance, where it is a pretty blank canvas and not a lot else going on, we feel that we are here to plant the church.

(247IBIZA2008)

It is no easy task to pioneer church in this context. With no rulebook or solid plan, they simply are “a group of people who have arrived here as Christians to plant and establish community here on the island, a Christ-centered community of Jesus followers” (247IBIZA2008).

This journey began in March 2004 as Brain and Tracey Heasley and their two young boys felt called as a team to relocated to Ibiza. Brian clearly described they felt a need to go and bless the communities in Ibiza essentially because “God wanted us to” (personal communication, 2/15/2011). He wasn’t about selling anything or even about being relevant, he and his family simply wanted to bless people and be present in the context of one of Europe’s most massive party scenes (B. Heasley, personal communication, 2011).

They started without really knowing how their community would form, but what they did know is they wanted to help build the kingdom of God. As Brian stated on his blog:

> We want to model a way of planting and establishing bases that is sustainable, reproducible and true to our DNA. We need to develop a
rhythm of working within our communities that allow for intense outreach, connections, friendship and involvement but also models a lifestyle that is reflective, recharged and intimate. (2009)

As a result they simply began “being” in their community. They intentionally set up a process of going out five nights a week to the most popular party spot on the island, ‘The West End’ and would look for vulnerable people in need of help. From intoxicated clubbers and mingling prostitutes, to busy bar staff and local residence, the 24-7 Ibiza team was intentional about meeting the people in the Ibiza community. They started forming friendships and deepening their relationships. This was important to Brian as he recalled he became a Christian and how he got involved in 24-7 Prayer as a process of building meaningful friendship with people who were modeling Christ well (personal communication, 2/15/2011).

Missional became more than just having or doing a mission. Brian described the priority of both paired prayer and mission. He further explained this impacted their work as it pushed them to love anybody by simply welcoming anyone regardless of messy backgrounds or current life situations. Again they define Missional as they valued blessing as evangelism and being present as being relevant. They embody the concept of ‘actions speak louder than words’ and sought to point people to Christ by modeling what it means to be servant leaders (B. Heasley, personal communication, 2/15/2011).

24-7 Ibiza continued to grow as they formed a process of hosting short-term summer mission teams that come and join Brain and Tracey anywhere from two weeks to four weeks. Brian and Tracy have formed a program around serving the community, particularly the clubbing community. They then invited people from all around the world
to come and join them to sustain and enlarge their efforts in Ibiza. These teams help confused clubbers find their hotels, give rides to inebriated individuals, pass out bibles, listen to summer workers, and build relationship with bar staff/owners.

The teams wear the same black “24-7 Ibiza” team shirt, which has helped to set them apart from the normal party crowd. Over the years the presence of Ibiza Boiler Room’s street teams has grown to be a recognized symbol of help and friendship. These teams powerfully take on the vision of the 24-7 Boiler Room as they see the good in people and seek to encourage the worthy potential each person contains.

The work of 24-7 Ibiza was enlarged as they opened a space near the West End that functions as a center to more effectively serve the Ibiza community. Brian described the center continued their vision to bless people, especially those who are often forgotten or never given assistance. The center has a lounging area, computer with free internet, casual entrainment, and a prayer room. When speaking with Brain about the center he passionately described the importance of the prayer room in their center, it was open to all and really helped draw people into the heart of why the Ibiza teams were there in the first place.

Brian continued to emphasize the importance of prayer as he commented,

“We pray a lot. I think that people sometimes start with praying a lot and then they start to plan and then they move away from that. But it is important to always keep a long sustainable prayer. We prayed for the prostitutes for five years before we were able to have a conversation with them, six years before we were able to have one in our center. We give up to easily” (personal communication, 2/15/2011).
This statement perfectly described Ibiza Boiler Room's long dedication to prayer as a key to their success and sustainability. Prayer and Mission independently or together are not easy, but a steadfast commitment to both is what pushed this team to have an immense impact on the Ibiza community.

Additionally, Brain advised that a good way to know if your community is growing is to ask yourself, “If we stopped existing in this community, would we be missed?” (personal communication, 2/15/2011). There is no doubt that this community would be missed as many individuals in Ibiza call the 24-7 Ibiza team when people are in trouble or in need of help. Their presence has brought the Ibiza community opportunities to meet, interact, and grow in their relationships with God, their friends, and the people around them.

This prayer community is financially supported through the commitment of traditional churches and individuals. Brian commented that this prayer community’s greatest need is to have people join them in their work and become passionate about the kind of work that is being done on the island of Ibiza. Further this prayer community is no strangers to innovation. During their years of serving the Ibiza community they have tried a number of different types of outreach. One simple idea that worked was when they bought a van, which has come to be known as the vomit van. They would purposefully drive the vomit van around the West End looking for intoxicated or vulnerable people in need of safe rides home (B. Heasley, personal communication, 2/15/2011).

Another time of originality was when this prayer community took on the challenge of sustainable living. They decided to live on a farm and used the context of space, nature, and retreat as a way of serving Ibiza community. Brain commented on this
period as a time of extremely hard and rewarding work. He explained living simply is one of the hardest things, yet this prayer community used many aspects of the environment to challenge their work and deepen their faith experiences. In the long run they decided to move their team back into the city of San Antonio. They look back on their time on the farm as a positive rhythm that taught their team powerful lessons about holistic community.

Even now the 24-7 Ibiza community finds themselves in transition as Brian and Tracy have conveyed to 24-7 Prayer their decision to move back to England in 2012. Brian and Tracey Heasley have issued a statement asking for a couple that is interested in leading a Boiler Room, to re-located to the island and take their place as leaders. Both Brain and Tracy continue to show their faith in God, as they believe that God will motivate the right people to come and continue the work God is doing in Ibiza (B. Heasley, 2011).

This community often is recognized as being ground breaking as it powerfully takes the risk to be present as the Body of Christ in a context that often is considered impossible or to dangerous to work in. The community is one of mess, mission, and meaning. They do what Boiler Room does best, as they are purposeful about Christ’s values and messy people. This motivates them to live a lifestyle that connects and draws people into loving and lasting relationships with Jesus. Simply said, they are being the change this world needs, one clubbing scene at a time.

All together this story stresses the vital aspect of incorporating an asset approach in the development of prayer communities. This story passionately explains the
importance to people as contributors to the developmental process. Asset approach will be the fifth best practice to be described in this guide.
Best Practice: #5 Asset Approach

There are so many approaches to help hurting people. Some do a lot of good and some have caused a lot of damage. There are a lot of people who have the best intentions at heart, yet a majority of the effort they put into assisting people rarely seems to produce lasting and positive impact. This raises the question, is there a best practice to doing good in the world? Even more specific, is there a best approach to doing and being ‘good’ as a Boiler Room community?

This section will first describe what kind of ‘good’ Boiler Room community’s want to produce by introducing what poverty is and how people try to alleviate it. This will lead into a clarification of the asset approach to community development and the benefits it brings. Lastly an account of how Boiler Room community can actively engage in the asset approach to development will be referenced through recent literature and examples of current Boiler Room community practices.

To begin, poverty alleviation is a big part of community development. The growing gap between the wealthy and the poor has made it clear that the problem of poverty is not being solved. Large organizations like the United Nations have set lofty goals to cut poverty in half by 2015 and western nations have poured endless amounts of money into poor countries, yet poverty still continues to grow (www.un.org).

Jonathan Lembright, adjunct professor of Community Development at Northwest University, spoke about the flow of material resources to the poor did not help solve poverty, but frequently increased it. He supported this as he explained the ‘trickle down effect’ as the unsuccessful notion that gifts of material good will filter down to those who need it most. In reality the tickle down of charitable aid often never reach poor groups, let
alone extremely poor groups. Further in an article Hanlon (2004) quoted Jan Pronk, well known author of effective aid, when he stated, “that despite the best efforts of donors. ‘In many instances aid is still serving the interests of a ruling elite rather than those of society as a whole’” (p. 382).

So why are these efforts so ineffective? After all, God taught his people to live generous lives that give food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and shelter to the homeless (Isaiah 58:7). Corbett & Fikkert (2009) answered this question as they described poverty defined as lack of material goods, combined with the idea that the elite are called to be the God-saviors of the inferior poor will “harm both the materially poor and non-poor” (p. 67).

Corbett & Fikkert (2009) continued as they described true poverty as broken relationship with God, self, others, and creation. They supported this as they claimed, “Poor people typically talk [of poverty] in terms of shame, inferiority, powerlessness, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, depression, social isolations, and voicelessness” (p. 53). Therefore one key reason why poverty continues to exist and grow is because aid efforts tend to focus on gifts of material resources instead of process that will restore the fourfold shattered relationship among the poor.

This is where the asset approach heavily comes into play. This method realizes that poverty is more than just a one-dimensional lack of goods, but is a complex separation, more of relational aspects, then material goods. The asset approach promotes the abilities of the poor to be the solutions to extreme poverty and works to provide processes with the poor to empower them. It also notes that the elite do not save or bring God to the poor, God has saved and been among the poor always. However God has
chosen to bring his kingdom among the weak, the forgotten, the poor, and the vulnerable. God simply invites all people to join him in the most unexpected places and among the most unexpected people, to bring his Kingdom now (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009).

Corbett & Fikkert (2009) explained that helping alleviate hurt is a process of offering relief, rehabilitation, and development. They explained it is not bad to give money, but it is good to know what area of help to invest in. Relief is short-term help to stop “immediate suffering”, this should lead to the longer rehabilitation phase, which aims to “restore people and their communities to the positive”, followed lastly by development, the longest phase, which “moves all the people involved... closer to being in right relationship with God, self, others, and the rest of creation” (p. 104).

They also commented that more aid focus should be given to rehabilitation and development because these phases require more time and focus to produce good help. In summary, when just material resources are given for longer than short-term relief of distress, more harm than good is done as it communicates messages of inadequacy, inability, failure, and disrespect towards the poor receiving the aid.

So what are the first steps Boiler Room communities can take to enter the threefold help process of relief, rehabilitation, and development? Corbett & Fikkert (2009) turned to:

- Asset-based community development’ (ABCD)... ABCD puts the emphasis on what materially poor people already have and asks them to consider from the outset, ‘What is right with you? What gifts has God given you that you can use to improve your life and that of your
neighbors? How can the individual and organization in your community work together to improve your community? (p. 208)

These questions are vital to how Boiler Room goes about establishing community in European cities because it strips away the negative ideas that leaders have all the answers, can save people, that poverty is an issue of just material lack and that poor people are humans of less worth. This is supported further as every Boiler Room leader confirmed that God moved and was present in their city long before their hearts desired to help the poor by living out Boiler Room values. The asset approach powerfully recognizes people’s worth in respectful and peaceful ways, as it introduced a key component of active participation. The participation that Boiler Room develops most strongly is partnership within their community. The section “Focus on Partnership” details how exactly to engage a community in a type of participation that will equally invest in the asset approach (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009).

Corbett & Fikkert (2009) further mentioned the positively of participation promoted ownership and sustainability. They stated, “When the project is ‘theirs,’ [poor people] are more likely to sacrifice to make it work well and to sustain it over the long haul” (p. 14). When Boiler Room communities involve people in the practice of prayer to transform their neighborhoods, towns, and cities, they invest in a process that makes the most of people’s gifts, to be sustainable and helpful to the wider community.

Currently a large majority of European Boiler Room communities are intentional about the implementation of an asset approach. Structured and detailed ways to go about listing and categorizing a community’s resources can be found by visiting resources like “The Asset-Based Community Development Institute” online at www.abcdinstitute.org.
However Boiler Room communities tend to invest in the asset approach a little more casually.

This is seen strongly through multiple Boiler Room’s commitment to actually see people, not just as numbers to fill up services, but as potential friends, family members, and co-workers in God’s kingdom. Brian Heasley, commented on Ibiza Boiler Rooms process of asset approach as he stated “We are about: Being- hanging out, being friends, sitting at tables going to clubs. Blessing- taking every opportunity to be kind to people, serving in the west end, etc. Building- intentional in building community with evangelistic mindsets and kingdom principles” (Curious in Ibiza Blog, 2006).

Sally Harman, co-leader of Stanford Boiler, further explained their community invests in asset approach through regularly shared house meals. The success of their house meals is because it isn’t an event simply hosted by their Boiler Room to satisfy a need in the community, but it was an opportunity to let people bring their gift of cooking and sharing life together into the same space. She continued by saying the purpose of house meals is not only to provide their community with space to share gifts and talents, but it also is an easy way to invite the larger outside community to come and share their gifts, be it helping prepare food, setting up, or sharing their life story and experience over a delicious roast dinner (personal communication, 2/8/2011). This exemplified the ease for Boiler Room communities to intentionally use the asset approach through prioritizing relationship, inclusive services, listening, and open spaces, which will allow for a wide variety of people and their personalities to get involved in Boiler Room as they contribute their talents to the mix of prayer community.
In conclusion, asset approach is a natural process that Boiler Rooms go through as they are planted and grow in a community. This is a healthy approach because it recognizes the worth of people and encourages their active participation in forming Christ-centered prayer community. Applying an asset approach can be detailed, structured, and organized, but it also can be present simply in the process of forming friendships, inviting people to help cook dinner, or asking someone to share their life story. The more intentionally Boiler Room communities can encourage using the asset approach, the more directly they can expect people to share ownership in a process of shaping present and effective prayer community that utilize their gifts to worship God.
**Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ibiza Boiler Room’s Approach to Get Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find ways to be a blessing to the people around you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be patient and willing to wait on God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask yourself “What gifts/skills/resources do the people around me naturally have that will enable us together to build Christ-centered prayer community?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ibiza Boiler Room’s Suggested Book/Resource List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Ragamuffin Gospel</em> by Brennan Manning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical</em> by Shane Claiborne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Orbiting the Giant Hairball: A Corporate Fool’s Guide to Surviving with Grace</em> by Gordon MacKenzie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Macedonia Boiler Room Community Story

The Orthodox and The Tattooist: A Best Practice of Vulnerability and Urban Location: Skopje, Macedonia

As prayer communities question the best way to be founded and grow they must consider those most in need of holistic community, as well as the actual physical settings of the prayer community. Macedonia Boiler Room community story presents the significance of intentionally addressing vulnerability, as well as purposefully focusing on the urban environment. Through this community’s story practical examples will be revealed as the issues of vulnerability and urban environments are concentrated on.

Eastern Europe. Macedonia. Skopje. He was a fourteen year old boy and for the first time he was living in a country where socialism had come to an end. It was Easter and a group of Christians were putting together an event that was showing the Jesus of Nazareth film. Up to this point his only experience with faith or religion had been through his family’s three-times a year commitment to the Orthodox Church. So, the young man named Alek, sat taking in this film about Jesus, who was fully God and fully man. Alek was amazed. He found himself in love at first sight with his savior, Jesus. He went on and explained he found a Bible and in a matter of days he read through all the Gospels. Twenty years ago, evangelical churches in Macedonia, especially traditional Orthodox, were considered more of a cult then a traditional faith practice. Yet, Alek was determined to live a life focused on loving Jesus (A. Madzarovski, personal communication, 2/17/2011).

In the same city, another young man lived as a hard-core professional tattoo artist. For five years he had been addicted to heroin and haunted with the idea that if he died he
would not go to a good place. He started wondering more about spirituality and then one day he met a fellow tattoo artist that also happened to be a Christian. Slowly the young heroin addict and tattoo artist named Alpin found he deeply desired to know God. One day Alpin kneeled in his parent’s kitchen and prayed a humble prayer “God, if you are real, let me know you” (A.P. Nikolov, personal communication, 2/10/2011).

The orthodox and the tattooist; their confession of faith drew them both to wanting more of God, his promises and his community. Separately they began to attend the same church. At this time, Alpin was diagnosed with Hepatitis C and struggled through his need of methadone (a narcotic dependency drug). Constantly wanting to deepen his relationship with God, Alpin was baptized and he started to pray that he would be completely released from his health problems and drug dependencies. Alpin explained after he prayed, he went to the doctor and was completely healed from the Hepatitis C and drug dependency. He commented, “It transformed my life!” (personal communication, 2/10/2010).

During this time Alpin recalled how he stopped hanging out with his normal group of friends and how important it was that he found such a good friend in Alek. They found themselves constantly dreaming of what it would be like if church happened in the place that they came from and loved, like the smoky music clubs, the moody tattoo shops, the dark streets, and the lonely neighborhoods. They saw visions of the poor and hurting people in Macedonia meeting God, just as they had experienced, and being transformed. And so they started to pray (A.P. Nikolov, Personal Communication, 2/10/2011).

Early in 2001 these co-leaders went to a conference in Frankfurt, Germany called Emerge. Alpin remembered:
We were blown away by the conference because we saw so many underground faces, not traditional Christians. This time we saw Christianity (had) a different face. This made us start dreaming of how we could reach out to our generation. (personal communication, 2/10/2011)

This experience encouraged Alpin and Alek to start changing their approach. They began to consider their specific context and asked new questions about reaching young people using a cultural language they understood. They didn’t specifically have a Boiler Room in mind but they were about starting a community of people that were intentional about following Jesus. Around this time they met 24-7 Prayer and heard about Andy Freeman’s book Punk Monk. The book explained similar types of values that Alpin and Alek were wanting to have in their community (A. Madzarovski, personal communication, 2/17/2011).

Alpin and Alek recognized quickly they needed to understand their city if they wanted to form meaningful Christ-centered community. Skopje has about half a million people, which is about half of their entire country. This country went through massive transition as it shifted from a socialist country to a democracy. Governmental institutions were privatized and social status changed overnight. Corruption was common and unemployment was rising. As Alpin and Alek had a vision for reaching all of Macedonia with the good news of who Jesus was, they realized the diverse opportunity of their city was a good place to start (A. Madzarovski, personal communication, 2/17/2011).

By this time Alpin and Alek had become good friends with 24-7 Prayer and every year they attended organized gatherings to meet more people dedicated to lifestyles of
Planting and Growing Prayer Communities in Europe

83

Christ-centered prayer community. They also led a number of different outreach events in their city and focused on meeting people in the underground culture. Alpin revealed:

> God really opened our minds to creativity. We started experimenting with different types of events, mostly drama. We really challenged ourselves to be relevant (by) using media... for Balkans this was unheard of. They are very traditional. What we were doing was breaking ground. (A.P.Nikolov, 2/10/11)

They were extremely supported by their local church. People got excited about the work that was happening in the Christ-centered community and in 2006 their church officially blessed them and sent about 15 to 20 people into the underground culture of the city to start a prayer community. Alpin remembered at first he was very focused on getting people saved and about having a mission, but he realized soon it wasn’t about that. Through that process they had turned a bit exclusive. So the group returned to simply being intentional about Christ-centered community as they regularly ate together, prayed together, and worshiped together. (A.P. Nikolov, personal communication, 2/10/11).

There were many community challenges to overcome. As great as it was to be in the city and to have lots of opportunities, they also had to battle the intense poverty that had settled into the city of Skopje. The majority of their prayer community was struggling with the country’s 50% unemployment rate. The city was also home to the largest gypsy settlement in Europe and many young gypsy children lacked access to education and social services. There was also tension in their own prayer community as Alpin and Alek were placed in leadership roles over people that had been in the church
for a long time. Alek remarked they had to deal with this by staying true to themselves and not letting the negative pressure effective them. Their community also had to battle the cultural reality that many people lacked awareness to be initiators, which made it hard sometimes to motivate the prayer community to start new ways of being a Christ-centered community in the city (A. Madzarovski, personal communication, 2/17/2011).

Yet this Jesus-focused community continued to stick together and grow. By this season they had established deep relationships with 24-7 Prayer. 24-7 Prayer was regularly sending mission teams to Macedonia and started asking Alpin and Alek if their faith community wanted to join the 24-7 Prayer Boiler Room family. Alpin and Alek, along with the rest of their community, started talking about what a Boiler Room would look like for them (A. P. Nikolov, personal communication, 2/10/11).

The Macedonia Christ-centered community really liked the way Boiler Room communities committed to the six values of creativity, hospitality, justice, learning, mission, and prayer. So they decided, for a season, to be a small expression of a Boiler Room. This started as five members of their group agreed to live together. This was very uncommon in Macedonia as most people lived with their parents. However this house formed community as they practiced regular rhythms of the six Boiler Room values and reaching out to local addicts (A.P. Nikolov, personal communication, 2/10/11).

This small prayer community continued for a year and then had to transition as people got married and moved. Yet, the Macedonia Boiler Room continued to grow as it learned that Boiler Room community is more about the people then the place. They creatively partnered with the local Campus Crusade to share building space, which obligated them to just a small financial gifts based on what the community could afford.
This transitioned the community again as they now had space that let them meet once a week for learning, worship, and prayer. The space currently has an ‘open coffee bar’ environment and many prayer community members spent their time using the space to simply talk and build relationship.

Macedonia Boiler Room’s strongest gift is the people. The way the people in their community care and are hospitable really sets a high standard for prayer community formation. Their strengths continued with an intense gift of creativity. This community particularly loves forming imaginative ways to make music and form worship. They expressed this as they often hosted alternative music, painting, and poetry events. Alpin commented:

We are good at breaking new ground. Creativity is, wow! We had a band; we have poets that hang out together…. Many are drug addict, tattoo artist, painters. People are making their own music. Most of them are rejected by the church, but we have broken free and have released people into a freedom of expression. (A.P. Nikolov, personal communication, 2/10/2011)

This type of growth continued to happen in Macedonia Boiler Room as people join a prayer community that was more like a family. They also recognized growth when groups of diverse people would claim to feel comfortable and accepted in the prayer community. Macedonia Boiler Room found that this often led people to become more involved and have ownership of the prayer community. Alek reflected growth as longevity; the longer the community and people stayed together the more growth is recognized (personal communication, 2/17/2011).
This prayer community continued to pioneer new ways of being the church as they became involved in social justice. They did this as they campaigned against sex trafficking, provided education and resources to the needy gypsy community and supported impoverished communities in Uganda. Even as poor as Macedonia Boiler Room was they still found it within their means to care for the poor and vulnerable locally and overseas. Macedonia Boiler Room intentionally lives every day with one aim, to spread hope. Hope in a better future, more relationships, deeper healing, justice for the poor, the hungry, the naked, the orphaned, and mostly hope in the kingdom of God. A righteous desire burns profoundly in the hearts of Macedonia Boiler Room members, which evokes an active response to live tangible hope:

Boiler Room is [a] paradoxal thing. Nothing will happen without paying a price. Boiler Room community is not for softies, yet you can be soft and be strong in the Lord. It is a matter of the heart. You can have flaws, that does not matter, what matters is your heart” (A.P. Nikolov, 2/10/2011).

In conclusion this community story has highlighted the significance of including an intentional focus on serving vulnerable people and having an urban presence. The practical way this prayer community developed as they concentrated on people in need and the city indicates the next two best practices of addressing vulnerability and the need for urban prayer communities.
**Best Practice: #6 Vulnerability**

Who are the vulnerable people? Why should Boiler Rooms care for the vulnerable? How can Boiler Rooms intentionally be planted for, with, and around vulnerable people? Answering these questions helps to develop Boiler Rooms capable of fully sustain the vision and mission, not only of 24-7 Prayer’s Boiler Room, but also of Jesus. Especially to develop the vision of planting prayer communities in Europe, it will be important that special attention is taken to be purposeful about planting these communities in spaces that care, include, and love diverse groups of vulnerable people.

Therefore, this section will answer who, why, and how prayer communities can focus on the vulnerable. This will happen first through an explanation of development and whom the process affects most. Second, I will present the importance of vulnerable people through a discussed through Jesus’ character, human self-worth and justice. Lastly, relocation will be discussed as one of the key ways prayer communities can actively focus on vulnerable people groups.

To start, the attempt to recognize vulnerable people is done most easily by explaining what development is. There are so many different definitions and approaches to development, such as, political, environmental, social, spiritual, etc. (Sen, 2000). Yet, defining development with just any one of these methods results in a process that is sorely unbalanced and ineffective. Sen (2000) spoke about this as he defined true development as a process of “expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy” (p. 3). He further explained increasing freedom is a process of removing the “unfreedoms”, of:

Poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as
intolerance or over activity of repressive states... hunger, or to achieve sufficient nutrition, or to obtain remedies for treatable illness, or the opportunity to be adequately clothes or sheltered... lack of... educational facilities or effective institutions for the maintenance of local peace and order. (p. 4)

From this list, it is evident that deficiencies of freedom, results in repressive political, social, environmental, and spiritual systems. It therefore can be concluded that gained freedom, or development, is one of the primary ways that people are protected. Lack of freedoms will increase a persons’ ability to be hurt or wounded. Said another way, lack of freedom increases the vulnerability of a person or group. Vulnerable people are defined as those who lack freedoms. The more vulnerable a person or group, the less freedoms they have. Therefore development defined as a process that offer people freedom or protection, simultaneously defines who vulnerable people are by explaining that lack of freedoms increase the chances of being hurt, either physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, or some combination of the above.

A description of vulnerable people then begs the question, why does this matter for a prayer community? There are a few key reasons why prayer communities should prioritize care for vulnerable people and the first reason has everything to do with Jesus. Jesus existence blended ideally into God’s redemption plan for all his hurt creation. Jesus’ mission was overwhelming perfect and a full description would take far longer then this document, or any one document could contain.

However for purpose of this section, one key aspect to bring to the surface of Jesus life was his willingness to be vulnerable. God, through Jesus, not only joined and
eventually saved the hurting and broken, but he did this by himself becoming vulnerable. This is supported most strongly in the bible verse:

[Jesus], being the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in the human likeness.

(Philippians 2:6-7)

This feature of Jesus ministry is worth noting, because as Christ-followers we are called to model our savior. This is accomplished through a mirrored image of Jesus’ life mission. For that reason Boiler Rooms, as Christ-center communities, must model Jesus through themselves being vulnerable. Macedonia Boiler Room co-leader, Alpin Pop Nikolov, commented that first his drive to form community was about converting people and getting them saved. However, he further shared this didn’t form the type of community they hoped for. He then explained when they started to focus a model for mission around Jesus vulnerable service to people in need that Christ-centered community really started to form.

Another central reason that prayer communities should focus on helping vulnerable people is because of human’s innate worth. As the world has developed it becomes more and more popular to look at human suffering as an issue of violated rights. This is supported by organizations like the United Nations as they promote the Millennium Development Goals campaign, which directly aims to end poverty by 2015. The foundation for this campaign is based off the thought that everyone has the right to certain basic human needs, like food, shelter, health, education, etc. (www.un.org)
Wolterstorff (2008) detailed even more when he said that human worth is more than just people being born with basic rights, as this begs the question of, who gave those rights in the first place? He commented on worth, from natural born rights, is an unfinished explanation of where original worth came from. He also challenged that human worth can’t be because humans are made in the image of God because that would only solicit suggestions of equality with God; which would lead to humans classified as “little gods” and a devalued reverence of God. He concluded that what really formed human worth is the fact that God loves people. He supported this as he described that the act of loving is a process that gives worth. Human worth is born because God chose to love the people he created.

This is influential to support why prayer should work with vulnerable people, because God’s love makes them worth it. If God finds all people worth loving, then Boiler Room community also should make an effort to love all people, especially the people that society has declared are not worth loving. Again, Macedonia Boiler Room strongly supported this way of being a Boiler Room as Alpin retold their prayer community tendency to welcome people that more traditional church cultures would reject. He then explained these ‘rejects’ offered worthwhile gifts to the community and helped pioneer new ways of creative worship to God (personal communication, 2/10/2011).

Lastly this leads into the importance of prayer community’s concentration on vulnerable people because it also is an active work for justice. Justice has always been important to Boiler Room. From the beginning, the founders of Boiler Room realized the significant of justice. They demonstrated this most as justice was interwoven into their
community’s foundational six values. This was necessary as Andy Freeman (2007) defined justice for Boiler Room as a perfect blend of action with kindness. He further supported justice, within Boiler Room, was about purposeful responses to alleviate poverty and need, as well as increase responses of prayer and peace.

Freeman (2007) concluded that the reason Boiler Room community must be about justice is because justice is at the very center of God. This is described as he commented:

The mercy and justice that beat at the heart of God must move us to do the same… If justice is the foundation of God’s throne, it should be the foundation of our lives too (Zechariah 7:9)…. What justice should we expect in our lives if we fail to show it to others (Isaiah 58)? Mercy and justice flow through God’s character. They should flow through ours too.

(p. 194)

Community that is founded on justice is living a representation of God’s heart. Boiler Room communities that define justice through actions in purposeful kindness demonstrate to the world the character of God as one that cares for the vulnerable.

So how can prayer communities actively focus on vulnerable people? A vital way to care for vulnerable people is through purposefully relocating to areas where the most vulnerable are. The discussion thus far has hinted toward investment in an asset approach. This topics importance and length can be referenced in its own section “Best Practice #5: Asset Approach”. As for now the usefulness in relocation will be developed as a way Boiler Room can be sustained to care for the most vulnerable people.

Perkins (2007) wrote at length about the subject of relocation as a strategy for building effective and sustainable communities. He supported this foundationally as he
described Jesus as the supreme example of relocations; “Jesus relocated... He came and lived among us. He was called Immanuel-‘God with us.’ - The incarnation is the ultimate relocation” (p. 90). Perkins continued that Christ followers should be challenged to model Jesus ministry and should therefore prioritize relocation as a means to have the greatest impact among the vulnerable.

Macedonia Boiler Room leaders recognized the importance of relocation, as they desired to reach out to the underground and forgotten cultures that were absent from traditional church. Alpin and Alek, co-leaders of this prayer community, both supported the need to start taking Christ-centered community to the people they wanted to love. This lead the two Macedonia Boiler Room co-leaders being sent by their church to live among the vulnerable people their city as they formed authentic Christ-centered community. Eventually this directed the formation of a Boiler Room that was intentional about being relocated outside of traditional church in a hope to simply be present among those most in need of God’s blessing.

One of the most powerful ways that Macedonia Boiler Room has used their gift of relocated outside the traditional church is to actively seek justice for the vulnerable. This is done as the prayer community has started a preschool for Europe’s largest population of Roma gypsy children, who often are unjustly left of out of the education system and suffer other forms of extreme poverty through lack of clothing, food, and housing. It is not always easy to connect with the gypsy population as they constantly are physically and socially on the edge of society. Yet, because Macedonia Boiler Room chooses to step out of mainstream church culture, they find themselves in a position to more authentically relate to the vulnerable and victimized people in their community.
Further Perkins (2007) outlined eight effective ways people can relocate that will produce the most impact as he encouraged people to chose the most vulnerable places or people in their communities or abroad and move there. He also challenged prior to relocation to build relationships with people mainly by being an attentive listener. He explained listening deepens the level of commitment, which is vital to establish endurance. He further suggested to start prayer and bible studies, as well as join local churches or faith-based groups to anchor the relocation process in foundational Christ values. He then summarized his strategic relocation plan as he encouraged purposeful attention to work with young people, as well as allowing the community to have ownership of need-based solutions.

A point of concern is the effectiveness of relocated prayer community leaders in comparison to indigenous leaders. Brian Heasley, Ibiza Boiler Room co-leader, also commented on this as he suggested that European Boiler Rooms will only be successful if native leaders support them. Perkins (2007) also spoke on this subject as he warned relocation of leaders to foreign community should never happen as a process of replacing indigenous leaders, but can be a process to join with and train up native leaders. Perkins repeatedly encouraged that relocated leaders should work themselves out of jobs within 10 years as they coach and learn from indigenous leaders.

In conclusion Perkins (2007) instructed relocation as a key way that communities can be intentional about caring for vulnerable people. He also encouraged groups of people that want to have the most impact among the vulnerable to be willing to relocated as he commented:
Relocation is the strongest affirmation, the foundation and the theme to making a community work. You can’t initiate authentic, biblical Christian community development without spending significant time in the community. (p101)

Similarly, Boiler Rooms have demonstrated the powerful impact relocation can have and the significance it is to sustaining and developing effective Christ-centered prayer communities that care for vulnerable people.
Best Practice: #7 Urban

Why try and mix the urban issue with the desire to develop prayer communities? Isn’t any attempt at mixing stiff urban with gentle community about as easy as mixing oil and water? What difference does planting 24-7 Prayer Boiler Room communities in European cities really make?

Urban issues can be as jagged and complex as any given London city street. This can create negative thoughts about cities that can lead to avoidance and de-valued views. Yet, for the sake of this section I simply want to justify the positive attribute of urban Boiler Rooms. First I will briefly explore historical European Christ-centered community’s that prioritized urban context in their vision and mission and explain those vales parallel to current examples of European Boiler Room. The remaining bulk of this section will then focus around urban Boiler Rooms unique opportunity to pioneer a radical new form of urban hospitality and the difference that makes in the world.

To begin, it is important to recognize the long relationship of prayer communities to the city in an effort to justify the importance and ability for Boiler Room to function in urban context. This is best exemplified through the history of prayer communities formed from the order of Saint Francis of Assisi. The Saint Francis’ Order is revolutionary because it shaped an assessable, faith based community that pursued reform in society, especially in regard to the urban context, as they strove to care for the vulnerable and the poor (Thomas, 2010).

Saint Francis of Assisi (1181/82-1226 A.D.) was the Italian son of a wealthy merchant during the 12th Century. He saw first hand the damage wealth, riches, and power can have over people, their community, and even entire cities, as he lived during a
time of great conflict in European cities. Later as he formed his order he was intentional about building communities that helped the poor by living among them, loving all, and being a servant leader (BSFA Rule and Constitution, 1931/2). The brilliance behind this was in the recognition that lives of simplicity provided frequent opportunity to join, love, and serve those most in need by merely committing to be in urban spaces.

Additionally Franciscan’s paired this life of simplicity with the recognition that wholeness is found when all context of the world are seen as occasions to bless and be blessings, especially in those places where pain and suffering are at their highest (i.e. urban context). Thus Franciscan urban communities quickly became known for peacefully challenging the status quo, as well as being deeply relational. For this reason Franciscan community began to thrive as they joined diverse cultures, prioritized kindness, and reconciled relationships (Ohan, 2010).

Eight hundred years later Franciscan communities are still successful and deliberate about pushing the boundaries as they challenge reform in society to bring justices and restoration to the most vulnerable. Like their ancestral counterpart this requires Franciscan communities to continue an intentional focus on urban ministry. Conn & Ortiz (2001) explained cities have become harbors of societies poor and vulnerable, as cities have shifted out of the industrial age. This leaves few hopeful opportunities for urban dwellers as poverty has increased exponentially. Further Zylstra (2010) reported “Fewer than 30 percent of the world’s 2.5 billion people in 1950 lived in cities. By 2050, almost 70 percent of the world’s estimated 10 billion people will do so” (p. 14). These combined reports clearly show the influx of people migrating to the city urgently calls for a more intentional and informed urban ministry presence.
In the same way Boiler Rooms have equally realized the unique gift in the urban context to prioritize the vulnerable and bring justice through blessing. Macedonia Boiler Room, as Alpin Pop Nikolov explained drew people to join their community because it offered a space where people could actively serve within authentic community. Further, Susan Rychiger, a leader of an affiliated Boiler Room in Thud, Switzerland summarized the significance of the city quite simply when she said, “It’s because this is the heart piece of our community. Lots of people travel here. People have to have a heart for the city. You don’t find such poor people as you do in the city” (personal communication, 2/25/2011). The city is the heart. Poured prayer and community into that center will produce systemic blessing that compliments, not only 24-7 Prayer’s organic structure and growth, but also God desire to restore and reconcile people.

So, how are Boiler Room communities, planted in European cities making a difference? The history of urban prayer communities displays such a strong commitment to being different from mainstream society, as they creativity set new standard for community formation. This truth is seen as current prayer communities, like Boiler Room, advocate for hospitality, justice, shared spaces, interactive prayer, and care for neighbors. Yet, is this all it takes to plant urban Boiler Room? The ‘how’ of establishing urban Boiler Room is always a hard question to answer. 24-7 Prayer purposely left the Boiler Room creation process simple and unstructured to push Boiler Room planters into their local context to clarify unique approaches.

However, for the purpose of laying Boiler Room foundations that cast urban visions, I will attempt to describe how the bizarre relationship between hospitality and the urban context makes it possible to sustain prayer community in the city. This will happen
as I explore current literature on the topics of hospitality, urban, and community and then compare the combined authors conclusions to both historical and current examples of European prayer communities. To conclude, this will demonstrate a united relationship between revived hospitality and urban environments to make it possible to deeply impact people for the Kingdom of God.

The practicality of pairing hospitality and the city to build sustainable and useful Boiler Room came from how Newman (2007) described the horrible ways hospitality has been devalued over the years. She explained hospitality was brutally disfigured when society turned it into acts of sentiment demonstrated best by fluffing pillows and baking pies. She continued as she explained privatized hospitality as it revolved around gender issues (woman’s work), appearance, and politeness; marketed hospitality were it is sold: inclusive hospitality which prioritizes diversity over Christ; and finally homeless hospitality were assumptions of an owned home or space is needed (p. 23-31).

Newman (2007) went on and explained hospitality was much more then societies twisted perspectives, but is itself an act of worship. Further, this explanation of distorted hospitality was reminiscent of how warped urban environments have become. White (2006) supported this as he shared a story about his experience in the city doing missions work. He describe how twisted the city had become and those showing the most obvious signs where the mentally ill. He explained many of them wandered the streets, individually, lost, and confused. The pinnacle of this story was when he saw one individual homeless man outside his house obsessively having a conversation with a tree. White recalled the sight was odd.
The oddness is what struck White (2006). He thought about the deeper into the city someone went the more odd it became for individuals to chose to talk to a tree over a person. When he questioned why it was so abnormal for a man to converse with a tree in the city, he realized its because the environment of the city was meant to be, “a place where God’s people could be, at the very least to provide conversation with a real humans rather than with bark” (p. 77). This story began to introduce, not only the distortion of the city, but also hinted towards how hospitality factors in.

Conn and Ortiz (2001) continued the explanation on urban distortion as they explained society started to view urban places as evil and dark when they increasingly experienced crime, poverty, and unemployment more within the limits of a city. This was further supported as many diverse people and groups started coming to the city wanting in on the goods of a city, but not necessarily the God of the city. Quickly the God-intended quality of the city was stripped away. People started misusing what God prepared as a place to bring people together in beautiful expression of community, reconciliation, and love, and instead used the city as nothing more then lifeless groups of buildings and commerce.

The result of these types of negative patterns on both hospitality and the city has left them harshly undervalued, forgotten, and misunderstood. Yet, hospitality and urban places have the potential to partner together in an effort to undo their paralyzing distortions and empower each to revive God’s intended purpose for both, as a means to worship him completely.

So how do Boiler Rooms form a partnership between hospitality and urban places to have positive God-kingdom influence? The answer comes in redefining what revived
hospitality and urban context really are. This will happen first through a description of revived hospitality and city and then a comparison to Boiler Rooms currently investing into revived urban hospitality.

Newman (2007) began to hint at what revived hospitality was like as she encouraged people to stop investing into cheapened forms and commented “Christian hospitality cannot be domesticated or managed; it takes us on an adventure…” (p. 177). Homan and Pratt (2002) continued, as they described a St. Benedictine community’s commitment to hospitality, as they stated hospitality is a combination of protection, acceptance, connection, openness, love, sharing, flexibility, listening, risk, and courage. They practically talked about hospitality, not a 10-step program to politeness, but as a devotion to simple practices, like less scheduled days to open space for interruptions, opened hearts to listen to people tell their life story, and shared meals with people. This exemplifies that revived hospitality, though it may not be efficient, definitely is effective as it deeply reaches out to people and includes them in life.

Likewise, Claiborne (2006) hinted at what a revived city was like as he spoke about his urban community “The Simple Way” and their devotion to lives of community in simplicity. He commented that a life of simplicity wasn’t just a call to give material processions away, but it was a commitment to distribute life resources to those in community. He wrote a community devoted to simplicity can alleviate poverty as the rich and poor come together in love and share life together.

The love of togetherness is even more supported as Martino (2009) described sustainable cities. He spoke of togetherness as he defined urban spaces as a combined process of people and place being “diversified” and “concentrated” (p. 238). He
commented that natural city are within society and they are meant to be places that bring balance to political, environmental, social, and economic issues. He further recognized many cities are not functioning as sustainable places because they have been infected with “industrialism, capitalism, consumerism, urbanism, and environmental degradation” (p. 241). Seeking to build sustainable city is a process of welcoming simplicity, alternatives, collectivity, harmony, and relationships.

Claiborne (2006) encouraged this type of community, and therefore a revived city living, as he centered on the need for revived hospitality. He explained “The Simple Way” lifestyle is one that gets to know their neighbors, throws block parties, make space for people, becomes the voice for the voiceless, loves people by listening, and invest into the root of problems not just the symptoms. He further stated, “As we practice hospitality, there comes a point where the suffering around us drives us to ask what it would take to reimagine the world” (p. 150). When revived hospitality is done in the city it produces revived urban spaces and when there are revived urban spaces there is more revived hospitality. By pairing urban and hospitality together, the ‘reimagined world’, Claiborne spoke of actually becomes a reality.

Newman (2007) commented the practice of prayer fuels hospitality as she maintained, “Prayer…trains us to let go of our independence… to confess our dependence on God and one another… In doing so, we become members of one another, more fully capable of practicing hospitality” (p. 69). Hospitality is therefore naturally woven into the Boiler Room values, as it is a community founded on prayer. Claiborne (2006) and Martino (2009) description of simple and sustainable urban places clearly demonstrated a partnership between hospitality and the city. They did this by clearly
laying out revived urban space is about people and revived hospitality is a process that joins people. Revived urban hospitality retells how God redeemed, is redeeming, and will redeem the process, place, and people that are His creation.

For this reason, Boiler Room community offers a unique and practical way for people to engage both hospitality and urban spaces. Macedonia Boiler Room co-leader, Alpin Pop Nikolov, stressed the importance to welcome people into their community. He further explained they lived out a form of revived hospitality as they intentionally listened to people’s stories, spoke for the voiceless, made room in their community for the rejected, and protected those hurt and left out of society’s social services. In fact every European Boiler Room had a way of reviving hospitality as they fought injustice, committed to being present in the local community, and deliberately were inclusive. In the same way Boiler Room communities, especially those deeply in urban places, have seen their lifeless cities begin to take deep breaths as they come alive.

Sally Harman from Stanford Boiler Room supported this as she explained the apathy of their town simply to live. She described that passion was sucked out of the people and life in their town had become quite listless. She then described their Boiler Room community’s loyalty to prayer and acts of openness, welcoming, and connection had stirred passion back into the people of their town. She continued to say her dream was to have a place that was passionately alive again and had a lifestyle of welcoming risky, yet deep, relationships.

In conclusion, hospitality and urban spaces synergize each other. They should be lived and practiced together. When they are put together they don’t just add a new advantage, but they uncontrollably multiple the place and process of God’s redemption.
Revived urban hospitality is real; it has been at work, is at work, and will continue to be at work in God’s redemptive plan. The challenge for Christ-followers as they form prayer community is to purposefully join hospitality and urban spaces together in an attempt to uphold an active worship of God.
**Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macedonia Boiler Room’s Approach to Get Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize Relationships: be friends with the people you want to be helping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As you form community do not forget to look outside your community to include forgotten and vulnerable people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get a mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocate to the people you want to help / consider an urban location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macedonia Boiler Room’s Suggested Book/resource List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The New Celts</em> by Roger Ellis and Chris Seaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Vision</em> by Pete Greig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church</em> By N.T. Wright</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stanford Boiler Room Community Story

The Young and The Restless: A Best Practice of Children and Environment

Location: Stanford-Le-Hope, Essex, England

This last story introduces the worth of children in prayer communities, as well as the need for prayer communities to be more intentional about caring for the environment. Children are a massive benefit to prayer community development as they have many unique and productive gifts that make them worthwhile members of a prayer community. Further, care for the environment among spiritual communities is a strength that promotes people's ability to experience holistic restoration. The natural way that the Stanford Boiler Room includes these two practices in their story is both inspirational and challenging.

What happens when a group of restless adults and passionate young people come together? In the case of Stanford Boiler Room, it creates irresistible hospitality and fosters pioneering of God's Kingdom. For this community, it started in the heart of one young teenage girl. Sally Harman was just an average girl, born and raised in Essex, she found her heart captivated at a young age by the Acts 2:42 church. Daydreaming of community, she discovered a deep longing; a longing to find unity, to see healing, to build relationships with Jesus. At eighteen she had a prophecy spoken over her about her purpose to live in community. With a yearning confidence she let those words be forever written on her heart (S. Harman, personal communication. 28/2011).

He came onto the scene a bit later. Rob Harman was a young, energetic, and unchurched boy. Though not confident an unseen God would bring social success, he didn't take lightly his interactions with God. When he made the decision to follow Christ
he focused his entire being on pursuing God and growing in his relationship with Jesus. It's no surprise that these two young hearts were being prepared for something great, that they would meet, fall in love, and join their hearts desires together in pioneering God's Kingdom (R. Harman, personal communication, 2/8/2011).

Robb recalled how they started living their dream of building community, “To begin one thing we did, when we got married, was that we had an open door policy. God really has honored that standard. We always opened our house. Hospitality was always really big for us” (R. Harman, personal communication, 2/8/2011). After fifteen years of marriage they continued to challenge themselves to love the lost, take in the needy, and be kind to their neighbors. Relationships were most important to them.

For the entirety of their adult lives they were a part of traditional church, never missing a Sunday service and through that love of relational intimacy they grew hungrier for inclusive and radical community. Sally spoke about the idea of a prayer community being tangible when their church cell group started regularly meeting together once a week for dinner and prayer. She talked about God really moving in their group and a collective challenge to do more (S. Harman, personal communication, 2/8/2011).

They started praying for a large group of local youth that were being labeled as troublemakers. They focused their prayers on how they could help serve the youth and in a couple of months, their prayers were answered as a collection of local churches started sponsoring a youth outreach bus. During this time they started hearing more about 24-7 Prayer, as some of the leaders at their church were involved in the organization.

Around the same time, Robb and Sally bought a new home. Though it was right across the road from their current residence, they found themselves hesitating to move in.
One of their friends, a member of their local church and 24-7 Prayer approached them with the idea of starting a Boiler Room community. Sally response to remembering this request was, “We didn’t quite know what to do, but we just said we were community” (personal communication, 2/8/2010). Robb and Sally spent some time talking about it and Robb described he felt responsible to use the financial success of his business to invest into furthering God’s kingdom. They talked about what that would mean for them and decided that offering their newly purchased house, rent free, for one year was a reasonable financial commitment they could make. So the 217 Stanford Boiler Room was born (personal communication, 2/8/2011).

Robb continued, “I remember asking Pete Greig, ‘What are we suppose to do?’ but Pete Greig said, ‘I don’t know.’ They wanted us to be organic, free flowing” (personal communication, 2/7/2011). So Stanford Boiler Room just started doing what they did best. They opened up 217, as locals affectionately call it, as a 3-bedroom public Boiler Room house. They organized the three large upstairs bedrooms to serve as space for travelers, pilgrims, missionaries on furlough, and people on retreat. They started having “house meal” together once a week, as well as organizing groups for prayer (S. Harman, 2/8/2011).

Andy Freeman, a leader of 24-7 Prayer, came down and met with Robb and Sally and talked with them about meeting all six of the Boiler Room values. Sally recalled how encouraged and humbled they were in being recognized because they didn’t feel like they were doing anything surprising or impressive. Robb further comment for the first time in 30 years of going to church they finally started having a lifestyle that didn’t solely
revolved around Sunday morning church, but was “endeavoring to be church Monday through Sunday, church all week” (personal communication, 2/8/2011).

Robb and Sally beautifully told the importance of 217 as Robb began and explained:

The house has really given us an identity and focus. It makes us realize that not one person carries the vision. Maybe that is because culturally, as English people, we see our house as our domain, our kingdom, and having a public house made us rethink what we are doing” Sally continued “People started to recognize us as a community and a lot of that came from us having place. It made us, as a group of people, be committed to one place. Plus it raised our prayer commitment to have set prayer spaces in the house. I think if we lost the house now, we would still have community, but getting the house really gave us a kick-start. It physically made us commit to living the way we were spiritually challenged to. (personal communication, 2/8/2011)

The people of Stanford Boiler Room have risen to many different challenges. They organized paying for house bills, maintenance, community outreach, poverty fund, and support of missionaries. They push themselves to cover weeklong prayer events, be involved in social justice projects, and welcome new visitors.

As their first year came to an end, everyone agreed they had to remain open another year. So Robb and Sally, along with the rest of the community, recommitted. Robb and Sally were asked to be the main leaders and reluctantly they accepted the role. They were hesitant because they had already made a large investment by giving the house
rent-free and they wanted to make sure that they were functioning as a community centered on Christ and not them. But after being urged by the entire community to accept the positions they agreed (R. & S. Harman, personal communication, 2/8/2011).

As Stanford Boiler Room began its second year they became even more aware of their contextual community. Sally commented that Stanford and Corringham were quite ordinary and normal towns. She stated it was a place that nothing extremely bad or good ever happened. That there were no extremely poor or wealthy, no areas of town stood out as particularly bad or deprived. It was by all outward appearance ok. But then she described crippling mediocrity, how “normal” had dulled down the neighborhood and white washed people desire for passion and for living. She explained Stanford Boiler Room was seeking to restore a sense of life back into the community. As they began this journey they found out how lonely the people in their ‘normal’ and ‘ok’ town were. People were desperate to have large networks of relationships and were attracted to the idea of communities that offered them opportunities to create, build and sustain relationships (R. & S. Harman, 2/7/2011).

Growth for this community was seen in numbers, but even deeper it was the intangible way people in the community were maturing and coming alive in God that really marked their growth. The prayer community accepted the offer to have a group of discipleship students come and help build community and for the last two years groups of international young adults have journeyed to the little town of Stanford to spend a year learning about the bible, prayer, and service (R. & S. Harman, personal communication, 2/8/2011).
One of the unique ways that Stanford Boiler Room was able to be intentional about sustainability was by scheduling times of rest for the entire community. Sally explained three times a year the community completely closes down. They use this as dedicated time to God and opportunities to remember that he is the one in control, the primary mover and maker of their community. It also gives every community member a time to rest and be still. Sally explained the importance of a rhythm is made all the more powerful when pauses are strategically place within the beat. In the same way Stanford Boiler Community find moments of stopping as a simple way of refreshing and obeying God’s commandment to rest (personal communication, 2/8/2011).

Stanford Boiler Room is the newest and fastest growing Boiler Room by far, but this hasn’t come without its own set of conflicts. Robb explained frustration came from their interactions with the local church. Some local churches struggled with the purpose and vision of Stanford Boiler Room. This quickly created confusion and conflict and 24-7 Prayer was asked to come and help facilitated reconciliation meetings. Sally commented, “It really was a pride issue. We got a vision from God and went and ran with it. Sometimes it brought out the worst in us, but we were wanting God’s best” Robb continued, “We still haven’t come to a conclusion, but we are working together with the local churches to try and answer some tough questions.” Sally concluded, “We live in such a small town, to stay connected would be the best way forward” (personal communication, 2/8/2011).

As Stanford Boiler Room looks into their immediate future they are hoping to plant a second boiler room house and have begun working out the logistics of how the community would help send and plant this new location. Sally further described the
significance to have a youth focus and was excited by the new connections the community was making with local school to facilitate days of creative prayer. When Robb and Sally considered what they needed most to help Stanford Boiler Room continue its vision they commented, “A bigger oven!” All this leads back to the value this community places on sharing life with people as they invite people in to meals, listen to other’s life stories, and include all into their Christ-center prayer community (R. & S. Harman, personal communication, 2/8/2011).

In conclusion Stanford Boiler Room has displayed a needed incorporation of children and environmental care into the establishment and development of prayer communities. These two strengths continually helped found and grow the most effective and sustainable prayer community as they attempt to pioneer a new approach to spiritual development. These methods to value young people and care for nature are the inspiration for the last two best practices to focus on children and the environment.
Best Practice: #8 Children

Children, and even young adults are often thought of as unproductive, inexperienced, and awkward burdens of society. Even in societies that claim to value children, they often are tokenized as blissfully vacant members of humanity. So what makes a focus on children important to a Boiler Room community? Isn’t a focus on the vulnerable in general enough attention on people in need? Why is it important that children have an active role in sustaining Boiler Room community? How do Boiler Rooms provide participation space for children in their community?

This section will provide answers to these questions first by exploring the value brought to a community from children, birth to eighteen years old, as well as young adults, nineteen to thirty years old. It will describe the attitude towards children and the role of adults to support holistic community development. Then, as the contributions of children and adults are described within a community it will be important to clearly define good child participation practices for a community. Finally this section will examine Boiler Room communities that have successfully included a child focus into their practices and how that has sustained and grown their prayer community.

Children are valuable resources that add and build community assets through their useful ideas, creative involvement, and resilient experiences. The value of children becomes even more beneficial when adults act as guides to support children and encourage them to behave as change agents in a community. The documentary, “Born into Brothels” by Zana Briski (2004), explored this idea of empowering children and proved that when given support children are more capable of experiencing healthy
development. Briski’s approach also leads to a redefined role for adults in healthy child development.

To begin, children are the most vulnerable, voiceless, and abused group of people in the world (Wordsworth, McPeak, & Feeny, 2005). Children are repeatedly victimized as they lack voting rights, are forced to work for their livelihood, cannot own property, or are prevented from attending school among other injustices. Their predicament worsens as the adults who should promote their freedom, most often suppress their role in society. This happens when children are seen, as problems society has to fix rather then positive assets.

However, Briski’s (2004) photography work with the children of prostitutes in the red light district of Calcutta explored the notion that successful children have opportunities to grow and learn life skills. Briski used the medium of photography to provide opportunities for children to develop their life experiences and expand their originality and resilience. This showed her commitment to believe in the preexisting worth of children and the importance of providing outlets to express and develop their value.

This type of work is further supported by Benson (2006) who believed the successful maturation of children depends on their frequency to engage in beneficial areas of development. Benson described 40 Developmental Assets (Appendix) in an effort to conclude that giving children a model of what they should be over what they should not be is a practical way to affirm children’s value and teach them success. Briski and Benson’s work reinforces the idea that children are significant and if given channels
of opportunity, are capable of creating and enlarging their personal value, as well as the value of entire communities.

As transformational as Briski’s (2004) photography efforts with young people were, she ultimately failed to create sustainable changes because she did not include local adults in the process. Boyden and Feeny (2003) stated “There must be respect for children’s integrity and capacity for responsible thought and action, while allowing for the provision of adults guidance and support” (p. 14). This demonstrates the importance of both children and adults having an active role in healthy child development. As Briski’s documentary showed as much as she wanted to support and provide great opportunities for the children in the red light district of Calcutta, she limited the impact of her efforts by not giving local adults the opportunity to play a part in their children’s development.

Ultimately, her efforts fell short by failing to realize the importance of adults and children being affirmed of their value collectively. The development of children overlaps the development of adults to form the process of holistic community development. “‘Communities’, in the broadest sense of the word, are constructed. To support children or youth working together is, by definition, to be engaged in community development” (Hart, 1992, p. 35). This statement combined with the vital statement, of adults acting as guides to children, reinforces the idea that child development is a collaborative process of children and supportive adults working together in an expression of community. When adults recognize and promote the meaningful contributions of children in society they help form healthy communities that benefit all (Stephenson, 2004).
If Briski (2004) had focused on partnering with children as an element of getting children and adults to be communally valued, she would have seen more holistic and sustainable community development. One simple way she could have included adults, would have been to invite the parents of the children to her photography classes and even giving the parents a chance to participate in the learning experience. This type of approach might have communally helped adults and children collectively to see the benefit of photography and the value of each person in the community.

Therefore, both children and adults are valuable resources for a community. Exposure to child-focused development promotes the significance of incorporating children in efforts to establish holistic Boiler Room community. It also has helped to define the importance of adults’ leadership within Boiler Room community and the importance of defining their role as guides. I believe that by using examples like “Born Into Brothels” and Benson’s (2006) 40 Developmental Assets model, the valuable roles of children and adults can shape creative, practical, and transformational prayer communities that provide for the needs of all.

So, how do Boiler Rooms incorporate healthy child-focused community development with in their community? Aside from utilizing helpful tools like Benson’s 40 Developmental Asset model, This happens most successfully when adults recognize their responsibility to act as facilitators for children to become active participants in Boiler Room community. In order for adults to become healthy facilitators for children they must redefine their role of authority as that of partnership.

Western culture, specifically Christians within western culture, have developed a misunderstanding of what authority is and its responsibility particularly in regard towards
children. This misunderstanding has developed due to an interpretation of authority to mean power and control. This misinterpretation of authority is far from the biblical representation of how God displayed authority as partnership, which leads to an active from of love. For children to be active participants in life they need to have relationships with adults who have a biblical understanding of authority.

Western culture, Christians struggle with the idea of biblical authority particularly towards children. Common questions revolve around the debate ‘Is God an authoritarian? Or is God love?’ The reality is that God is a perfect blend of both authority and love. He displays this best through his desire to form relational and participatory partnerships with all of humanity. In the same way, adults need to define their roles toward children by using God as their model developing partnership based on love. Hart (1992) supported this idea when he argued that child-participation, in matters that affect their lives, is not a process to replace adults. Instead it is an opportunity for adults to expand their responsibility toward children by engaging their authoritarian roles to promote true partnerships built on love. This is not a new concept, but a true understanding of responsible authority as God first demonstrated. For this reason adults should not view child participation as an act of replacement of their power or handing over control, but as an expansion of the responsibility God has given adults to care for children.

Lastly, partnership is a two way street. It is important for adults to recognize that children are able to share wisdom, skills, and assistance. The Bible supports this idea as Jesus himself commanded “‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these’” (Matthew 19:14, NIV) and “‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the
kingdom of heaven’” (Matthew 18:3, NIV). These bible verses show how Jesus
desperately wanted children to be valued, to be included and to be loved. Hart (1992)
described child participation requires adults that willing listen, support, and guide. In a
world that promotes individualism and self-fulfillment of dreams this task can seem
daunting, but to truly love children means valuing them enough to include them in the
issues that affect their lives. This type of love, through participatory partnerships, most
clearly reflects the active love God has for his children.

As a result, the responsibility of authority is not about power and control, but
about partnership and love. This is best displayed through God and the way He chooses
to involve his children in the processes that most affect their lives. In the same way adults
in Boiler Room communities should model God by implementing responsible authority
that promotes participatory partnerships and active love. Children must be seen as
beneficial partners. This is not an easy task, which is why God has chosen to give this
responsibility to loving adults who can handle the pressure of listening, supporting, and
guiding, some of life’s hardest and most challenging tasks:

Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper
behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep
company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us.
His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn’t love in order to get
something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.
(Ephesians 5:1-2, The Message)
If Boiler Rooms were intentional about loving children in this way, children would be able to explore, grow, and mature into successful people that love God, are kind to others, and take the good news to the world.

So what are some practical examples of Boiler Room communities involving young people? Boiler Room community, from the very beginning has included young people. Pete Greig’s vision for 24-7 Prayer was fundamentally about including young people into lives of prayer and practice. As Boiler Room communities have formed they have intentionally reached out to the young people in their community. Macedonia Boiler Room strongly supported this as Alpin Pop Nikolov explained their community formed from a desire to include the underground youth culture often rejected from traditional church cultures. He further expressed the young people that he and Alek Madzarovski, co-leader of Macedonia Boiler Room, had a heart for helping ended up being an essential component of their community’s worship, prayer, and present in the city of Skopje.

Guildford Boiler Room equally attributed much of their success to the young people committed to their community. Ian Nicholson spoke about how it was the passion and commitment of the young people in his youth group that were the tipping point to forming and growing Guildford Boiler Room (personal communication, 1/20/2011). Liz Slinn also spoke about a key component to Guildford Boiler Rooms success was because a group of young people came as a part of a discipleship course to support and develop their prayer community. She continued by explaining the young people in Guildford have special gifts of time, creativity, energy, passion, fearlessness, and loyalty that solidified and unified their community (personal communication, 1/27/2011).
Lastly Stanford Boiler Room also recognized children and young adults as motivators in the formation of their prayer community. Sally Harman supported this as she explained their community really started to come together when a group of adults began to serve young people through a local youth out reach. This eventually led to the community focusing on caring for young people by hosting youth events, intentionally inviting young people to participate in Boiler Room activities, and encouraging young people to led community projects.

Further, when Sally Harmon was asked what growth was for Stanford Boiler Room, she used the example of a young person in their community who recently explained their progress and the depth of their faith journey was directly linked to their involvement in Boiler Room. Growth and youth involvement were so tightly interwoven to Stanford Boiler Room’s journey that they demonstrated a significant value of children and young people can have lasting benefits for an entire community.

Even though a community focuses on working with vulnerable people it is particularly important to give children, and even young adults, additional attention. When prayer communities focus on children they actively help to make right the many injustices children are exposed to on a regular bases. It also gives children the opportunity to develop their natural gifts and talents to live successful and meaningful lives. Most importantly children are significant part of community because it takes children and adults working together to develop holistic prayer communities that will love God, be kind to others, and care for the world.
**Best Practice: #9 Environment**

Care for the earth is often an overlooked and underdeveloped aspect of community, especially Christian faith-based community. When it is considered it usually comes after ‘everything else is sorted out’. Especially among Christian communities it is common to be so focused on caring for people and having personal relationship with God, that care for the environment is sorely underdeveloped if not completely lacking.

These statements lead to one concerning question, why should Boiler Room communities be interested in taking better care of the environment? Currently European Boiler Rooms do make attempts to integrate environmental care into the prayer community practices. However, even Boiler Room communities do not prioritize equal care for the earth in regards to their mission of loving God, being kind to others, and taking the Gospel to the nations. For this reason I will attempt to explain why Boiler Room communities should be invested in better care of the environment through a combined literature and practice review. To begin, I will simply share my personal reflection from three key pieces of literature that were my original motivators for the integration of environmental care in faith based prayer communities. To conclude a current description of Boiler Room communities care for the earth, as well as the environmental opinions and attitudes of their leaders, will motivate care for the earth into Boiler Room practice. Collectively this process is meant to enlarge Boiler Room community’s mission to a more holistic effort to love of God, be kind to other, care for the earth, and take the Gospel to the nations.

My first exposure to the concept of integrated faith-based environmental care came from the review of Groody (2007). He described globalization, justice, and
spiritually are not compartmentalized practices, but actually are synergistic processes. He concluded as he defined spiritually as a journey and transformation as a process of seeing with hopeful hearts. He then described this happens through practicing a lifestyle of discipleship. Groody further explained discipleship as a process of restored relationship with God, others, environment, and ourselves. Specifically, the urgency to be reconciled to the earth came as he commented “Not only do 20 percent of the population in developed nations consume 86 percent of the earth’s goods, but according to a spokesperson of the World Wildlife Fund, ‘If all the people consumed natural resources at the same rate as the average US and UK citizen we would require at least two extra planets like Earth’ by 2050” (p. 257). Even more powerfully he commented, “We cannot continue to exploit nature with out serious consequences for our own self-preservation and well being. To put it succinctly, in destroying the environment we destroy ourselves” (p. 257-258). The earth is a very fragile place that needs tender care. However statements like the above overwhelmingly prove that the large majority of western society is unaware of how pressing the earth’s needs are.

Groody (2007) concluded by advocating fellow Christ followers to care for the earth by reconnecting to nature and living a life of simplicity. His urge people to reconnect with nature simply through a commitment to spend time outdoors as he cautioned ignored or prostituted attitudes towards the environment ultimately hinder a person’s ability to be completely transformed. Groody clearly placed care of the earth right alongside the importance of loving God, others, and ourselves as a process of holistic spiritual transformation. Incorporation of the environment into a faith-based
lifestyle is not a new approach, fad, or even good idea, it is an essential component to the process of God reconciling the entire world into holistic relationships.

My second significant introduction towards combined faith and care for the earth came from an article by Gnanakan (2006). He further supported faith-based environmental care as he untangled the misconception that human creation in the image of God and authority over the earth allowed them to abuse and exploit the earth with no regard to the affected it has on their relationship with God and others. He defended care for the earth as he commented “Creation is an intimate and valuable partner with it creator, not just an object constructed for pleasure” (p. 111). Further he explained the broken environment was directly the result of human’s rebellion against God. “Creation, therefore, which was originally to be the source of blessing has turned to be a curse all because human begins chose to rebel against God” (p. 112).

Gnanakan (2006) continued explaining the term dominion to mean love, interconnection, and responsibility towards others and not self. He also explained dominion should be a lifestyle choice of servant hood, stewardship, and respect. Through his explanation of domination he corrected the often misinterpreted of the term and equally demonstrated how dominion is a deep commitment to care for and not careless for the environment.

Lastly Gnanakan (2006) compelled readers to care for the environment as he described the negative impact of anthropocentrism and biocentrism. According to Gnanakan, “anthropocentrism places humanity at the center”, where biocentrism values the Earth “for its own sake and not for human benefit (p. 115). He further described forms of Western Christianity have developed habits of anthropocentrism, while many
environmentalists identify with biocentrism. However, though both value important parts of God’s creation, these two ways of thinking do not define a good interaction with the environment (p. 115).

Gnanakan (2006) then introduced theocentrism as “everything finds existence, meaning and purpose in its relationship to our Creator and Redeemer God” (p. 116). He explained that while all of creation is for the good of God, it equally was created to invite each person into purposeful roles that bring harmony and balance. The balance of harmony should be applied not just to our relationship with God but with all of his creation to include ourselves, others, and the earth. Altogether Gnanakan’s work explained how Christian’s can live a life not conformed to the patterns of this world, but through the renewed inspiration that placed God in the center and provided roles of actively caring for the earth.

Lastly authors Bucknall, Kraus & Pillani (2001) added another dimension to environmental care as they directly connected environmental care to poverty alleviation. They started by explaining poverty to be a lack of opportunity, empowerment, and security (p. 6) They then explained lack of environmental resources, such as decreased natural supplies, access to water and sanitation, air quality, ecological fragility, safety from natural disasters, property rights, and access to environmental information will lead to increased poverty through lack of opportunity, security, and empowerment (p. 7).

Bucknall, et al (2001) further concluded that focus on the environment does not distract from poverty alleviation, but intentional focus on environmental care leads to practices that “have the highest poverty impact” (p. 9). They supported this as they described those affected more by poverty turn to natural resources for their livelihood as
they seek outdoor shelter, food, water, and employment. They also described what compounded the poor’s interaction with the environment as the intense depletion and pollution of the environment makes their existence more dangerous, laborious, and barren.

However, Bucknall, et al. (2001) were hopeful as they described “Poverty-Focused Environmental” projects that were intentional about care for nature. They concluded a purposeful inclusion of the environment into the strategy for poverty alleviation was a sustainable process to restore well being among the poor. They recognized that an environmental focus among the poor would require operational changes in many projects, but that such purposeful change would provided lasting opportunity, empowerment, and security not just for the poor, but for everyone.

Altogether these three pieces of literates helped develop an understanding of caring for the environment through urgency, relationship with God, and poverty alleviation. It also helped explain that environmental care is an important and fragile aspect of life that must be tended and respected. Care for the earth is a vital part of connecting to God, others, and ourselves.

Care for the environment is something that Boiler Room communities throughout Europe practice. Though care for the environment is never a directly verbalized or written priority for Boiler Room, a few communities have naturally integrated rhythms that link them to the environment in a way that deeply honors a value for environmental care.

Stanford Boiler Room, by far, has demonstrated an intentional focus on the environment. Robb and Sally Harman spoke about how they have spent time actively as a community promoting projects and events that specifically cares for the environment. For
example Stanford Boiler Room leaders encourage community members to participate in environmental rallies in London and they also attempt to encourage their community to wear earth-friendly clothes by hosting ethical fashion shows (personal communication, 2/8/2011).

This community perfectly exemplifies that care for nature is a foundational process to developing holistic community. As the newest Boiler Room community in Europe, they also are one of the most verbal and active environmentally friendly communities. Robb and Sally Harman are the first to express they don’t have all the answers to incorporate a perfect focus on environmental issues, but that they understand it is a very important part of their entire community and they are intentional about learning as much as they can (personal communication, 28/2011).

Robb Harman continued his explanation of their prayer community’s cares for the earth by sharing how they are intentional about raising fair trade issues which has compelled their awareness to purchase fairly traded teas, coffee, and chocolates. Sally Harman also commented on their prayer community’s work to make their entire town an official fair trade town. This happens as they have begun to speak with higher political officials and business in their community to endorse fair trade practices. Altogether this community’s care for the earth is an important way that they invest into Boiler Room’s commitment to support acts of justice through the whole town of Stanford (2/8/2011).

Sally Harman concluded her comments on Boiler Room and environmental care when she stated, “What we do seems really average. It doesn’t seem amazing. We are just doing life. We are not overly intentional, God just hijacked us. He has been amazing!” (Personal communication, 2/8/2011). This community demonstrated environmental care
comes naturally with following God; it doesn’t have to be complicated or perfectly planed, or well known, it just has to be present. This prayer community most powerfully demonstrates one group’s commitment to expand their mission to purposefully include the environment and the opportunity for an entire town to experience holistically restored relationship with God, others, themselves, and the earth.

Ibiza Boiler Room is another community that demonstrates well a community’s care for the environment. Brian Heasley spoke about this community’s journey and the environment’s vital role. He described how at one point the community made the decision to be very intentional about the earth and decided to move from their city location out to a rural farm to practice lives of simplicity and prayer. One example is they practiced prayer in seed planting and weed pulling and paralleled it to their work in the city to plant blessing and weed out curses in the club culture.

Brain Heasley explained it was hard to live lives of simplicity with environmental focus, but equally it had many community blessings. This prayer community only spent a season on their farm, but through that season they learned many lesson about loving God, being kind to others, and living the gospel out loud. As the prayer community returned to the city, Brian explained they continued to respect and care for the Earth by recycling, eating healthy foods, and promoting awareness in Ibiza community. He also made an important point when he commented, “Spain is very big on the environment. It is the way” (Personal Communication, 2/15/2011). This is a good reminder that in a European context it is expected that individuals and entire communities would intentionally care for the earth. For Boiler Rooms to be sustainable in European their communities must be actively caring for the environment.
Care for the environment is a vital aspect to living in community. It is a natural part of God’s creation and Christ-followers must build communities that promote good practices to develop connected relationships to nature. Boiler Room communities have done well to pursue God and be drawn into lives that care for the environment. However, it is important to realize that as natural as it is to respect the earth, it also can be extremely hard. That is why it is so important for an entire community to commit to care for the earth. A community committed to care for the earth, makes the process more simple, enjoyable, and present. As my final point I also want to include a challenge for Boiler Room Leaders to consider expanding their creed to “love of God, kindness to others, care for the Earth, and Gospel to the nations”. In doing this Boiler Room community will need to be more intentional about the environment in their community, training, and values, but this change will help form places that reconcile holistic relationships, through all of God’s creations, in both in word and deed.
Action

**Stanford Boiler Room’s Approach to Get Involved**

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<td>Be willing to live an inclusive lifestyle because you believe its God’s truth, not just for the sake of other joining you.</td>
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<td>Prioritize prayer in the community. Don’t get too busy you forget to pray.</td>
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<td>Make the community accessible to all ages by having diverse approaches.</td>
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<td>Don’t get discouraged if everyone is not on board. God will attract the right people to the community</td>
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**Stanford Boiler Room’s Suggested Book/resource List**

- *Celebration of Disciple* by Richard Foster
- *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith* by Rob Bell

Make sure you read the Bible the most. No Christian book can substitute the values that are in the Bible.


**Conclusion**

Christ-centered prayer communities have a powerful way of being relevant in European culture to encourage authentic, purposeful, creative, and caring environments that seek to connect people with Jesus. As European cultures are seeking answers to spiritual truths it is important that Christ-centered communities provide opportunities to allow people to untraditionally explore the values of traditional church as they form an active relationship with Jesus. 24-7 Prayer’s Boiler Room communities have a unique and innovative process of reaching out to European society in a way that honors the core relational values of Christ.

This best practice approach begins by defining a good strategy through regular rhythms of prayer, flexibility, and kindness. It encourages that strategic Boiler Room planning doesn’t have to be perfect or well organized, but it does have to be centered on Christ. The second key practice was shaped by developing leaders that understood the value of leadership as a responsibility to model servant-hood. Partnership was then defined as the third best practice to develop positive European prayer communities. This was heavily supported as Butler (2006) encouraged more collaboration among Christ followers to accomplish the common vision of furthering God’s kingdom in these present times. This best practice highlighted the importance that good partnerships require every member working together to achieve common goals that no one partnership could accomplish on their own.

Fourthly, the best practice approach defined the significance of funding. As healthy relationship with money is utilized, prayer communities are able to maximize their effectiveness and sustainability, while crediting God as their provider and sustainer.
This section also helped construct a model of putting together a funding plan that could help prayer communities find the needed resources to operate. The fifth best practice for developing prayer communities was identified as an asset approach. 24-7 Prayer’s Ibiza Boiler Room demonstrated this best as they focused on establishing a community with a mission to bless the people in their town. Further an asset approach explained the impact of community development when it allows the people it seeks to serve to have ownership of the process by being a part of the solution. Following this, addressing vulnerability was introduced as the sixth best practice as it urged prayer community developers to understand vulnerability as a lack of freedom, as well as introduced relocation as the most effective means to alleviate vulnerability.

Concentrating on addressing vulnerability directly linked to the seventh best practice of focusing on the urban environment since the city has the highest concentration of poverty. The practice of having an urban presence encouraged the use of revived hospitality as a means to catalyze entire communities to intentionally love God and be kind to others. The eighth best practice was explained through the value of children. It clarified the benefit children are to a prayer community and how their participation is vital to a prayer community’s effectiveness and sustainability. Lastly the ninth best practice was explained through care for the environment. This section highlighted a good relationship with the environmental as a pillar of holistic relationship reconciliation. It also explained environmental care as a responsibility of humans’ dominion and a process to actively alleviate poverty.

The impressive way Boiler Room leader’s stories were able to highlight the nine community developmental best practices proves that 24-7 Prayer’s communities are a
holistic approach to from hopeful community for all people’s spiritual and physical benefit. While 24-7 Prayer’s Boiler Room communities are the foundational inspiration for this outline of best practices, no one community contained active incorporation of all nine of these elements. However, my direct observations and involvement in these communities conclude that the more of these best practices a community contained the more capable they were to love God, be kind to other, care for the environment and take the Gospel to the nations.

Currently Boiler Room developers encourage new prayer communities to practice the six values of creativity, hospitality, justice, learning, mission, and prayer as a means to being planting and growing a prayer community. However incorporation of this best practice guide will provided new and current leaders with personal stories and researched practices that will further the inspiration, effectiveness, and sustainability of any prayer community. 24-7 Prayer’s Boiler Room communities have helped develop a new approach to living Christ-centered community that is capable of encouraging every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that Jesus is Lord, while at the same time investing blessing into their wider community.

Personally the lessons contained in this guide are ones that I will have to spend my entire life practicing. What makes this guide so relevant is that each best practice ultimately encourages people to love Christ more outrageously by simply including him in the normal everyday life practices. It realizes that a relationship with God is a life long journey that can be confusing and hard, but with helpful road signs, a community of support, and a life a prayer it can be the most rewarding experience of all time.
References


Bucknall, J., Kraus, C., & Pillai, P. (2001, September 17). Poverty and Environment: Background Paper for the World Bank Environment Strategy. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=gmail&attid=0.2&thid=12eb925d710970&mt=application/pdf&url=https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=3D%26ik%3Dd7420ba2b0b%26view%3Datt%26th%3D12eb9251d7160970%6attid%3D0.226disp%3Dsafe%26realattid%3Df_gkoh7ryx1%26zw&sig=AHICbQRExUnAncnmQ0BVUiPw26slF7Q


Planting and Growing Prayer Communities in Europe


### 40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

**Support**

1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

**Empowerment**

7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

**Boundaries & Expectations**

11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts.
12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior.
14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. Positive peer influence—Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior.
16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

**Constructive Use of Time**

17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.

**Commitment to Learning**

21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

**Positive Values**

26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. Honesty—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

**Social Competencies**

32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

**Positive Identity**

37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.