

Justin Jenkins

Founder and Lead Pastor

Velocity Church; Lawrence, KS

Interviewed by Emily Stratton at the Velocity Church Office, Lawrence, KS

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Transcribed by Emily Stratton

Abstract: Velocity Church is a recent non-denominational church-plant in Lawrence, Kansas. This interview features Justin Jenkins, the founder and lead pastor of Velocity Church, and focuses upon Velocity's short history thus far. Questions discuss Justin's background prior to Velocity, why he started Velocity (including how and why he chose to begin Velocity in Lawrence, Kansas, specifically), how the church began logistically (financial resources, marketing, name-selecting and branding), and how the church generally operates (what services are like, how teachings are decided upon, what kinds of social media are utilized).

Note: The first minute of the interview includes an oral consent statement. The interview transcription starts when questions begin (1:30). Interview questions by Emily are written in **bold** type, Justin's responses are in regular font.

So, the first thing that I'll do is to go ahead and have you tell me a little bit about yourself as a person and your background...

Yeah! Well when I grew up, my father was a pastor. So, I grew up in the United Methodist Church and kind of had this, you know, very denominational church background. I also... when I was eleven years old, my dad left the Methodist church and we went overseas and we were missionaries. So in addition to being a pastor's kid, I was also a missionary kid. We were on the missionary field for three years, and I kind of got to see different aspects of the Christian faith, you know, how that has played out and manifested even in different cultures.

So, then from that time, I graduated from high school when I was seventeen and then moved out of the house and left the country and went to France for a year. And that was kind of my time when I was on my own and really had an opportunity to explore, you know, what my faith meant to me. And if I was going to, or if it was going to be meaningful, it was going to have to be pursued on my own. I didn't have anybody pushing me or encouraging me in that. And even just seeking out different churches from very traditional Catholic settings to missionary works over there and Baptists and things like that, and just seeing how the Christian faith played out. You had talked about Christianity as a global movement... so seeing what that looks like in other countries.

And so, really, it was in France where I was on my own, and you know, doing my own thing that I really felt--I would say, being a pastor--that I felt God's call to go into ministry. So, it was just an impression into me internally, kind of like a gut feeling. I felt like that was what I was supposed to do with my life. I think all of us want to do something significant, something of value, and I felt that's what my thing was... what I was supposed to do. So I began to pursue that path.

I went to Bible school and ministry training and things like that, and then I began to serve and help out other ministries. So I helped out this one ministry that would do lots of things overseas. They did evangelistic works in the Philippines and Africa and things like that, and started Bible schools. And, when I was helping them, we were starting children's homes. So I went to Thailand and started a children's home while I was there for kids who were involved with prostitution.

Then, I came back and started serving in a local church. And from there, it's a bit of a more detailed story, but from there after serving for a period of seven years is when we moved to Kansas to plant Velocity.

Great, so then what was the call that you felt to come out to Lawrence, of all places, for Velocity? ...and tell me a little bit more about that experience.

Sure. So, you know, serving in the local church I was in Minnesota and I didn't have any preconceived ideas when I went there to help, I just wanted to... I feel like anybody who's a believer, you know, should get plugged-in to the local church and find their place and begin, you know, to serve where they're able. So, I just started with small things. I've just always kind of had a niche for marketing and branding, and this church didn't have anything like that going on for them, so I began to help with some of that. Then I'd serve with kids and all of those areas. And then, you know, just kind of through a period of time I began to get more involved and lead high-schoolers. Then, I'd have the opportunity to speak. Eventually, I became the associate pastor there. It was a small church, so it's probably not impressive by any means... it has like a hundred people, but I would preach maybe once a month and do some things like that.

So while I was there, you know, way earlier on I had gotten married—my wife and I had moved there. While I was there, things were going well, there was nothing wrong on the surface. Being a small church, I wasn't paid. So I was working a job in addition to serving in the church. I was making great money by doing that. The church was healthy. I was happily married with a kid. And you know, life was great. But within all of that, there was something that, you know, Christians—to use Christianese—we call it the “holy discontent.” It's like where everything is great, there's nothing wrong on the surface, but inside, felt very dissatisfied.

So in that process, I just began to pray and seek God about what that means, and what the source of that is from, and what his next steps would be for me. So it was really over a period of two years from when I first started praying about it to when we finally made the decision to move, that we had served with that church and then finally made the transition here.

So, why Lawrence of all places in the state?

That's a great question. You know, people ask me that... and there are a few things that kind of go into it.

One, my wife and I were fairly newly married, and when you're newly married, always, you dream about the future and what that might hold for you. So for us, we had both kind of grown up in the Midwest. I'd grown up in a lot of small towns in Iowa and Oklahoma, and places like that. She was, my wife was from Iowa. So, we were definitely attached to the Midwest. Kansas seemed like a central place. And my idea of Kansas was really Kansas City. I had

never really spent any time here. But just as we'd talk and dream about the future, we'd think, "Kansas seems like it might be a nice place to live."

The why Lawrence question though, is a better question. The best way I can answer that is: why is your favorite color your favorite color? You can't always describe it, but it just is. And you can't shake it. And for me... we had talked and dreamed about Kansas, and we thought, "maybe that's where God's calling us." So, what I did was... I began to stare at a map and just pray and ask God, "okay Lord, I believe you put this desire of Kansas on my heart for a reason. I don't know why exactly, and I don't know where, but I'm willing to go anywhere." And again, just looking at a map and sensing it.

Now, this didn't happen physically, but spiritually, it's kind of like this: where, you know, you get an idea or something and it just kind of ignites. You know those 3-D pictures where you kind of stare at them and go cross-eyed and just an image pops out? Okay, it didn't happen physically, but it was just like in my spirit, internally, I saw it—Lawrence—just popped off the map and caught my attention. And I didn't know anything about Lawrence. I'm ashamed to say, I didn't even know the Jayhawks were from Lawrence.

(Emily interjects and laughs, "I didn't until I came here too, it's okay!")

Okay. So, it's kind of embarrassing in that regard.

Anyways, I didn't know anything about Lawrence and began to do some research. I had a friend that I did some school with that lived in Topeka and I called her up and asked her, "what can you tell me about this city? I don't know anything about it." But I told her that I believe God had called me to plant a church, and I had this city really striking me. So, I asked her, and she kind of gave me the lo-down on it, and it just seemed like it fit a lot of my personality like a glove.

So, you know, I'm kind of more of like a city—into culture, into the arts, and that stuff—and my wife is kind of, you know, Iowa small town girl. And so, of course we didn't really know this until we moved here, but Lawrence is really the best of both worlds. Right? Because, for one, you are close to Kansas City, but Lawrence is not small... I mean, it's got 100,000 people. So, it's got the conveniences of a larger city, but then there's just such a sense of community here that you can feel right at home.

Awesome. That's a really interesting answer. So then once you got here and got settled, how did your vision for what Velocity would look like take shape, or how did you begin Velocity?

So, yeah, going back to that time when we were serving at the church in Minnesota... As I began to seek God about it, as I began to pray about it, the thing that I'd begin to come away with was that I was always active in inviting my friends to church. I've always had more friends who aren't Christians than friends who are Christians. So, with that, I always invite my friends to church and talk to them about God and have these kinds of conversations, and because we were friends—had a real friendship—you know, they would come and check out the church. The problem was that they'd come to church and they'd enjoy it, and they'd have a good experience, and in some ways, it made me feel better about it, but they often wouldn't come back.

And the reason for that is... well, multiple reasons, but for one, you know, they felt like they didn't fit in. Everybody uses Christianese, you know. The church I was serving at... it was a good church. I mean, they were fulfilling what they thought they needed to fulfill, you know, and it was a non-denominational church, but they really weren't non-denominational. You know, so like everybody wore... everybody dressed up on Sunday. People wore ties. Maybe not dresses, but they dressed nice. So for the average person, we just don't dress up to go places. We don't even dress up for work, hardly. So, to come into an environment like that, you stick out.

This church was not evangelistic in its nature, and so anytime there was a new person, it was like, "well, they're not a part of our crowd." I mean, it was like, they weren't meaning to, it was just obvious that, "okay, who is this person? We don't know them yet." And you know, I think it was really an overwhelming experience.

So, it is out of that experience that—not putting that church down or anything like that—but it was out of that experience that I wanted to plant a church or start a church that I could invite my friends to. A place where people could belong, even before they believe; a place where people would leave feeling encouraged; and ultimately, a place that would introduce them to Jesus Christ.

So what does that look like, then? A place that people who are not familiar with the church would like to go to?

Yeah, you know, so our mission...our mission statement... because the church, in a lot of different ways, is an organization in many ways. So just like every other organization, it should have a mission of what you're setting out to do. Our mission is to bring those far from God near to life in Christ. And the reason we say far from God is because, you know, sometimes people hear that and they think, "that's somebody who's not a Christian, that's somebody who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus." But I believe it's much broader than that. I believe that there's many people who maybe grew up in a Christian home, maybe grew up even attending church, but maybe they have a certain belief about who God is, or about what the church is supposed to be. But if there... if there is a scale, you know, from one to ten, and, you know, ten was "close to God" and one was "far away from God," they would have to put themselves somewhere on the scale that's not "close to God." So that's really why we exist... to bring those far from God, near to life in Christ.

So what does that look like? Well, it's not about, you know, a bunch of religious traditions. Our church... we hope to hold the central doctrines of Christianity. You know, it's a conservative theological belief system... but, you know, within that, we believe that Christianity is not about the songs you sing or the way you "do church," it's really, at its core, about a relationship with Jesus Christ. So everything that we do is about bringing that person far from God to life in Christ.

So, we want friendly greeters at the door. We want... our church experience, we have people that come in—we have new people every Sunday. And we're a relatively new church, so the good thing is that we're all new! We're all in this together, and so the new people don't stick out. You can kind of come and have a feel, you can listen, and kind of experience this. And, you know, I really believe that, within that, accepting Christ... that's a big decision. It's not something you do just because you heard a good message and felt compelled in that moment. It's really from experiencing, "okay, this is how a believer lives. This is how a believer endures

pain. This is how a believer, you know, walks through a trial. This is how a believer deals with the loss of a loved one. This is how a believer goes through a divorce.” And you know, you can kind of get into this environment and see that and experience that and say, “you know what, I think that there’s something I’m missing. I think that I’ve seen how these other people live their life. There’s no disbelief. There’s something different about the way they live their life and the way I live my life, and I listen to this pastor, and what he’s saying is making sense, and it’s dealing with the things I’m going through. You know, I think that I need to make this decision.”

So, that’s kind of what we do.

Our church... I really value creativity. So, we put a lot of emphasis on a creative expression of the gospel. What I mean by that is that, you know, I believe God created heaven and earth. He’s the creator of all, so he’s the most creative being there is. I believe he loves creativity and that the greatest story ever told—the story of our redemption—deserves the greatest presentation that we can give it.

And so, we do a lot of things that are different at our church. And we, you know, it’s intentionally so. I think that church should be the most exciting hour of a person’s week, not something that people dread coming to. Or not something where people feel like they’re doing their religious duty by going to church. I feel like, probably, they should look forward to it.

And, so yeah, that’s kind of the bit of the “why” behind what we do.

So then if I were to come into a service, what could I expect? What would it look like?

Yeah, well, I think naturally because I’m young—I’m in my thirties... I’m thirty—we naturally draw people that are younger. But we have people of all ages.

So, when you walk in, you’re going to hear pumping music over the sound system. Sometimes it’s worship music, sometimes it’s music that you’ve probably never heard of, but like house music and dubstep and, you know, just something that’s setting a good atmosphere. You’re going to see signs clearly marked for where the auditorium’s at, where the restroom’s at, where to take your kids. And, there’s coffee and water—refreshments that you can get as you find your seat.

Inside the auditorium... We meet in an arts center, so there’s nothing about our venue that necessarily says ‘church’ on its own. But we want it that way. We want people to be attracted our church who wouldn’t normally darken the doorstep of a church building. There’s nothing wrong with church buildings... I like stained glass and cathedrals and all that stuff...organs, hymns, all that. But, we want to be intentional about what we believe God’s called us to do, and there’s other places that people can go and get that and experience that. But what we don’t believe there is enough of, is churches that are passionately and effectively reaching people who are far from God.

And so that’s what we’re about.

So we have, you know, I think somebody related it to a night club. I don’t necessarily... I wouldn’t, but we have, like, intelligent lights for a stage, and a pretty good sound system.

The important thing to remember with our church: we're not trying to be anything. I'm young. You're young. We're a reflection of God in the culture in which we live. We're not trying to be cool... we're young. So, we're going to be what we are. We're not trying to impress anybody, we're just doing the things that we like. We're doing things that are relevant within our context.

So, I think that because there's authenticity about recognizing the culture that we live in, and wanting God to be evident in that... and I think people are attracted to that.

Sure. So then talking about, kind of, keeping up with the modern times and our social culture right now, you have a lot of media involvement and social media as well. Tell me a little bit about that, and how many people are following if you're... I can't remember if you tweet, or if it's just facebook, or...

Yeah, yeah, so we are on twitter. And being relatively new... it's like starting anything. What's in our heart to do can only be done as we have the resources to pull it off. So, like on twitter, we're relatively active on twitter. Probably more active on twitter than facebook, because I'm more active on twitter personally. We're on facebook—I'm not on facebook, our church is on there. I didn't have anybody to manage it for a while, I just now got somebody to manage that. So all that stuff it's... when you have somebody who's good at what they do and manage it, they can have more influence in that area.

But as far as having media, again that just comes back to... that's something that interests me. I'm kind of a gadget...nerd... geek. Again, I like marketing and branding, so that's a natural inclination that I have. And then even in relationships. I'm attracted to people, and maybe even people are attracted to me, in terms of similar interests.... Who are into that sort of thing.

So with that said, what that means, yeah, we have videos that we use in every service. We call them bumper videos. They kind of set the tone of the series and kind of set the... I think of it kind of like the little intro for a TV show. You know, do you really need an intro for a TV show? No, but it kind of sets the expectation of what the show's about. So it kind of just sets the expectation of what the feel, of what the series is about.

We teach in series... again, nothing wrong with not doing that, but it's just helpful for me because it helps with my thought process to know what I'm going to be speaking about. It helps people kind of get an idea of "okay, what's this church focusing in upon? Where are we going as a church? What do I know is going to happen on a Sunday, so if I invite my friends, what can I tell them?" So, yeah, there's a lot of branding and media in that, and we have teams of people who help with that. There's a lot of that that I have done myself, just because I have some natural skills in that... and again, when you're first starting out, everything falls on you. Now that we're bigger, there's more people involved.

So in terms of having these series teachings, how do you pick what your series will be about?

Yeah, well interestingly enough, I put it away before you came out here, but I plan out my series a year in advance. So I... we have a team meeting, and we make... do you want me to show it to you?

(Emily interjects: “sure!”)

It will be easier to explain...

(Justin goes over to a closet and pulls out a large dry erase board that has been divided into a large grid—a kind of planning calendar with one square per Sunday of the year. Series topics have been written into the squares and color coded with dry erase marker ink).

So, like for this... we have a team meeting, and we make this. I call it the Wall of Sermons, alright? And we mark on our calendar and kind of think, “you know, what’s going to be going on on our calendar? We’ve got Mothers Day—that’s going to be big. We’ve got KU graduation, okay, is that anything we need to be thinking about? St. Patrick’s Day... is that a holiday? What about, you know, Halloween or... just different things and events that are going to be going on. So we try to mash our sermons with the rhythm of the calendar of our culture. And so, you know, like March Madness. That’s can be a big thing around here, right? So I put it up on my board. Okay, we’ve got February, and there’s Valentine’s Day, so people are going to be thinking about relationships, maybe we should do a relationships series.” So, we kind of plan that out and then... it is a white board, so I leave some room for, if I, you know, want to rethink something. Originally we had “Spoiler Alert” on there, which was going to be a series on Revelation, but then, I decided I didn’t want to do that. So, come right after Easter, we did something else.

So, I’m going to go and backtrack a little bit, I don’t think I actually asked in what year Velocity started.

Yeah, we started meeting regularly at night in 2010. So, it kind of depends on who you ask. That could be our start? I don’t really look at that as our start, as we were meeting at night and we never wanted to be a night church. When we started at night, we had a lot of college kids come—and we still have a lot of college kids come—but we were primarily a college kid church, and, you know, within that, it’s hard to start a church with just a bunch of college kids, if that’s all you ever have. You know, my wife and I are married, we have kids, and so we wanted to essentially target people--in terms of people who are far from God—essentially target and reach out to those people who are young families, and young families weren’t going to necessarily bring their kids to church at night, because they’ve got school in the morning and so and so forth. And so we met at night for almost a year, and then we got to the Arts Center in the mornings in August, and we kicked off, kind of had our grand opening in September of 2011.

Great. And then I also meant to ask earlier, too, why the name Velocity? Where does that come from?

Yeah, well, starting a church is a lot like... and naming a church, starting anything really, is a lot like having a kid and naming the baby. You know, you want the name... it’s pretty important. So, we put a lot of thought into it. There are a few things that went into it:

One, we wanted a name that people had never heard of before. Because, you know, there’s so many... we definitely would be church not as usual. I also wanted to get the domain—the web domain—velocitychurch.org. And when we got the name, the domain was available when we decided. Consequently, by the time I was ready to purchase it, it wasn’t available. So... so anyway, that was part of it.

But really, more than that, it comes to...

Well, also... I think there's not enough men in church. So, I wanted something that sounded kind of masculine. But, more than any of that, there's two things:

We wanted to ignite a move of God in this city, and I think it kind of goes with our mission of bringing those far from God near to life in Christ. So, having a destination that you're moving towards.

What do you mean by "igniting a move of God," what does that mean?

Yeah, you know, I think that there's, like, a lot of people who are complacent in their faith, and a lot of people who have simply given up on having and knowing a relationship with Jesus Christ. So, within our culture, that's what that means to ignite a move of God... A move of God, you know, if you google that, it's always used to describe kind of people where there is a passion moving towards Jesus Christ. And so people talk about, you know, you can look at anything through... I mean, apotheosis, anything through church history, Christian history... things like the Protestant Reformation, or healing revivals in the '50s, or even the Jesus Movement in the '70s... different things like that could be described as a move of God.

Basically what I mean is to see people passionately returning to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Alright, so in terms of your own role in getting Velocity going, what have your days looked like? It's a big project to get something going from scratch!

It is, yeah! And it's a good question.

One of the things that I left out of the story with moving here is that I was working a job while serving at that church. And things were going great. I mean, I was making great money, I was getting all sorts of promotions, and that was a really hard time for me because I was like, "man! I really feel like I'm supposed to start this church, but I'm getting all these offers to go other places." ...places in Iowa, close to where my wife grew up. I got offered to go to Billings, Montana, and my wife and I went out to look at it and loved it out there. Just the scenery and everything. And all these places offered more money than I'd ever made, and just none of them sat right with me and I was getting kind of frustrated. I was kind of like, "man, I feel like I'm supposed to start a church, but I don't know the first thing about starting a church."

And growing upon the mission field, my family was... we were really poor. So we would live itinerant and come back and seemed like such... not a good way to do things. I really didn't want to make my family suffer because I was doing what I felt God was leading me to do.

So, I was just, "how is this going to work?" And it was in that moment, my wife and I, we had this conversation. I was like, "I don't know... I don't really believe... is God real, or is he real? Is he calling us to do this or is he not calling us to do this?" And if he is... then, we believe that he is going to provide. So we said, "alright, I don't know how it's going to happen, I don't know when it's going to happen, but we are going to start positioning ourselves to make this move to Lawrence, Kansas to start this church."

And it was a week to the day after we made this decision that I got a call from the district manager from the company I was working for at the time--the district manager for Kansas. And I had not applied for a job or anything like that in Kansas with him... hadn't even told anyone that I was planning on coming down here. But I got a call from him, and he said "hey, Justin, I know who you are and I know what you're doing up there, and I want to offer you to come work for me in Kansas." So I thought, "okay, this sounds like kind of a crazy coincidence." But I was like, "where are you thinking?" Because, you know, he could send me out to Liberal, Kansas, or Colby, Kansas, or... we had already settled on Lawrence. He said, "well, I was thinking somewhere between Topeka and Kansas City."

"Okay, well, I'll check it out."

So we came down and checked it out, and of course, we're here now, so the story is they paid to move us down here. And so the first year I lived in Topeka and just was faithful working for that organization. And the next year, we moved to Lawrence, and we spent a year just getting to know this community—putting down some roots in this community. We didn't want to start this church coming from the outside in. We wanted it to be an organic thing, where it comes out of the community.

Then, from there, you asked about my schedule and what it looks like... to get it started, I had been bivocational. And, you know, God really used that to provide, because it was an increase in what I was making and my schedule was pretty flexible. But anyways, that's... what my schedule looks like is I was a sales manager, so I was working basically from eight to noon, then I'd have a block of time, like eight hours free, from noon to eight in the evening or seven, and then I'd go back to work, and work from like eight to midnight. And that's, so that's kind of how we did things. And of course, it was varied, so sometimes it was longer days than that, but...

So within that, how did we get started? We were here for a year. Am I doing too much talking, by the way?

(Emily responds, "No, you're good!")

I'm just trying to fill, answer everything I can think that you're going to be asking.

So, we were living here for a year and began putting roots down in the community. And as we'd meet people and make relationships, they'd kind of ask our story. So we'd tell our story and we'd get to know them and I'd always ask people this question. As we got to know them, we'd tell them our story about how we moved here and what God had put on our heart—basically, all the stuff that I've told you, maybe a little bit more condensed, maybe—and I would say, you know, "if you could do anything for the Kingdom of God and money wasn't a problem and you knew you couldn't fail, what would you do?" And they'd tell me, you know, what they would do. What their life's dream was, maybe. And what their life's dream was, in terms of doing something significant for God.

And I said, "well this is what we'd do. We would start this church. And it would be for people, you know, who maybe they've been burnt-out on church before, maybe they've had a bad church experience before and they could come and really experience a fresh encounter with Jesus Christ. So it would be a place where people could belong before being a believer, a place that you can invite your friends to. You know, it would be a place that would bring those far from God in your life near to life in Christ. This is what that would look like.

And, very often, people, you know, what they would say would be something similar. And I'd say, you know, "it sounds like what you would do is pretty similar to what we would do. Maybe, you know, just maybe God is calling us to do it together. And, you know, when you look in the Bible God always called people in teams to do things. Would you consider helping us out? It takes nine months to grow a baby. Would you give us nine months to see where things thing goes?"

And so we did that. And with about twenty five people, had a team of about twenty five people that were willing to... Some of them knew us better than others, some we didn't know so well, but said "this sounds like something exciting. We're going to give this a try. It's a nine month commitment and let's see what happens."

And so I did this in my spare time, you know, while working another job. And then in the meantime, kind of connecting with other people and just starting a church.

So then, for all of you that were kind of coming together and deciding what the plan meant, in terms of getting things started and getting people to come, was it primarily word of mouth? Or, as you enjoyed when I first arrived, I remember seeing the yard signs with the "find velocity." How did you get people to start coming?

Yeah, so we started, you know, it was largely word of mouth. I had this idea, like, "what if we"—we didn't have much money, so anything that you spend money on, we were trying to stretch it every penny—so I was like, alright, "what if we found online, you can get these little like, political yard signs (for like, I think it was two bucks for a sign and like a dollar for the stand, so we got a hundred of them for 300 bucks). So, what if we get these, and let's just put them all over the city." And took 'em, right before our kick-off to let them know that we're starting. Everybody was really excited about that. And it obviously worked really well... except we got in trouble and had to take them down. But even to this day... so we've been, I mean, that was three years ago—two and a half years ago—that we did that and we're still getting people on our little connection card that people will fill out when they come: "how'd you hear about us?" and they say "yard signs." So... I mean, it worked.

So we did that, we did some facebook ads early on. We haven't done those for a long time because facebook has changed so much. But we did some facebook ads and those worked relatively okay. You know twitter, social media. We asked everybody to leverage their own personal networks. So our first kick off at night, we had eighty five people.

Emily interjects: That's huge.

Justin: So that's awesome. From twenty five people.

Emily: Yeah, that's a great first kick off.

Justin: Yeah! Yeah.

Well, I don't want to take too much more of your time, I see the clock's kind of approaching 6:00pm...

Justin interjects (he had a 6:00pm appointment): I think we're good until then... they'll call me.

No worries, but yeah, I just wanted to see... do you have any other great stories or memories from your time... anything that should go on the books or records?

Yeah, yeah, I got all sorts of stories and memories. But let me see what's it going to be. So when we... one of the good ones is for our grand opening, when we switched over to our morning services, grand opening, we saved up some money. We were going to do a big mailer to let everyone know about our grand opening. We spent I think it was almost like eight grand on this, and, there was a problem with the post office. And the mailers didn't go out until... some of them went out the Saturday before. Others didn't go out until Monday, and some of them never even went out. So... that was kind of a downer. But, you know, we've kept going. And, you know, God's blessed us in spite of everything.

The story of our church, that I think is kind of cool, is we started this church with \$16,000. So, \$6,000 of that was money that Marissa—my wife—and I had saved up. The other \$10,000, well \$5,000 came from one church that sponsored us at five hundred bucks a month for the first year, and the rest was money that we raised. And \$16,000 is nothing when, well one, when you're starting anything, but starting a church.... A lot of churches that start, they start being planted out of another church. So, the pastor's salary is paid plus they have \$100,000 worth of equipment and all these things like that. But that's not our story.

And for a long time that really frustrated me, that that wasn't our story. Because I felt like we had a lot of good things going on if we could just find someone who would support us, and we could really just explode and make a difference.

But anyways, God had to do a work in me... that wasn't supposed to be our story. And our story was just supposed to be: "you know what? We've just been faithful with what God's given us and as we've been faithful with what he's given us, just look at what he's done." It's been really amazing. We've had over a hundred decisions for people making a first time decision, or people making a fresh commitment of committing their life to Christ since we've started, which is pretty amazing.

We've seen... you know, personally as a pastor and meeting couples... it's not really so much... it's easy for me to get focused on the numbers. How many people are showing up and all that stuff. But more than that it's really how many stories, you know, how many stories of couples who were on the brink of divorce and through getting plugged into the church, they've found healing. Now their life has changed. They're not just on the brink of divorce, now they're able to minister and mentor other couples that are going through a rough patch. You know, people that were feeling lonely and depressed, were feeling like they had absolutely no value, you know, finding out that they had absolute value, one, in Jesus Christ, but then even just in the place of the Church and they're making a difference and they're gifted and, you know, we couldn't do what we do without them. So really, those stories are the ones that matter at the end of the day... and seeing people's lives change.

Well I'll call it good with that, but thank you so much for your time!

Yeah, I look forward to having you join us sometime!