

The Project SOIL Report

Episode 2: February 2020

Partnership in the Gospel

Hello again, friends!

It's hard to believe that it's been over six weeks since we sent out the first SOIL report. It's time for an update. BTW, if you missed episode 1, you can access all SOIL reports here: report.projectsoil.net.

God is at work doing some *really* exciting things already and the adventure is just getting started. First, we have believed from the beginning that God is planning to send three families along with the Block's to Southern Illinois to plant this church. We would like to take some time over the next few editions to introduce them.

Meet the Nenns



Since getting married twenty years ago, Chris and Kerry Nenn have spent the last two decades as rock star cat parents, small group leaders, board game enthusiasts and coast-to-coast travelers. Both Nenns graduated high school in Collinsville, Illinois, in the Metro East area. After college and newly married, the two pursued careers in the Chicagoland area. Chris is a public school teacher turned corporate trainer, while Kerry, writer by trade, runs NennPen Ink., specializing in content development. Kerry has also pursued her passion for writing with her own published content, including the 24 Ways book series.

The Lord has given the Nenns the gift of hospitality, and they and their cats love entertaining people at their home—especially playing board games. For years, the Nenns have been praying and seeking a way to use this gift for evangelism and for the sake of the Kingdom. However, when God first called the Nenns to return to the land where they grew up to help found a new church, they were not convinced to leave a comfortable life in the prosperous Western suburbs.

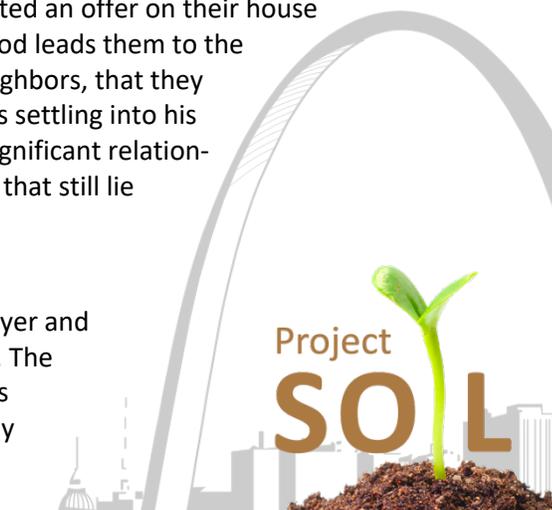
Chris started praying for a training position similar to where he worked in Chicagoland to open up in the Metro East region. They asked God to use the job situation to make it clear whether they should stay or go. While Chris was doubtful that they would find anything similar, he continued to apply for positions in the St. Louis area. In December of 2019, Chris interviewed and was offered a Training and Development position with Scott Credit Union in Belleville, Illinois. In response to a clear answer to prayer, the Nenns made the commitment to follow the Lord's leading on this exciting journey to plant a new church with the Blocks and the Andersens.

Nice to meet you! How can we pray?

Chris is already working in the Metro East area. Just this week, they accepted an offer on their house and are now shopping for their new place down south. Please pray that God leads them to the new home He has already picked out for them. And pray for their new neighbors, that they would be open to new relationships and to the gospel. Meanwhile, Chris is settling into his job, adjusting well and really likes it so far. Please pray that he develops significant relationships there as well. Lastly, please pray for the many, many logistical items that still lie ahead of them as they make the transition to the Metro East area.

Destination Location = Secured!

In other news, we are incredibly excited to announce that, after much prayer and reconnaissance, God has led us to live and plant our church in O'Fallon, IL. The subdivision he's led us to is only minutes away from both Jeff's and Kerry's families and Chris' workplace. We are all so looking forward to being finally settled in our new neighborhood. Please pray for all those we'll meet and for hearts cultivated and ready for the gospel.



Got any more details about the work?

Absolutely we do. One of the things we're eager to share in these letters is the theology / philosophy behind our efforts. That's why we started the [Project SOIL blog](#) as well. We think it's important to have reasons for why and how we do the work of ministry, and we want to include you in the things God has been teaching us. Don't worry, we won't let Jeff write theological tomes here. Instead, we're limiting him to writing one or two tidbits in each edition. If you want more, subscribe to the blog, or even better tell him you want to get some tacos and talk about it! He'd love that! 🌮🌮🌮

Entrusted with the Gospel

"Gospel" is the Old English word for "good news." But not just any old news that's somewhat above average. It was (and is) used for the most important news, particularly the heralding of a new king. Here's the thing... The God who created everything has declared His Son, Jesus, to be the King over the entire universe. This is really big, really good, really important news! But even more than that, Jesus' incarnation, life, death and resurrection means that...

It is now possible for ordinary men and women to live in the presence and under the authority of the God of the universe.

So, it's not *just* that Jesus is King. It's that He paid for our sins, set us free from slavery and death, and made it possible to literally dwell with God ... both in this life and in the life to come. This is what we were created for! And where once our rebellion against God made this abundant, true, vibrant, eternal kind of life totally impossible, Jesus has made a way. And that demands a response from every person... to decide who will be the king of his or her life. The Bible is clear. If I'm the king of my life, then I will die in my sins, separated from God forever. But if Jesus reigns as King over our hearts, then He will give us a life that will last forever ... with Him. And nothing will take away our joy! This truth has tangible implications for every aspect of human existence, including the corporate life of God's people, the Church. Specifically, as His followers, Jesus sends us into this world entrusted with a mission: to proclaim this message of hope and abundant life – a life that makes real peace, real joy and real love possible.

In praying and preparing to plant a church, we have been drawn to four specific texts in Scripture which we believe are keys to understanding how to live out the mission on which God is sending us. The first gets right at the heart of what we've been talking about here.

1 Thessalonians 2:2-13

The good news is that God has created a place for everyone to belong.

As followers of Jesus, we have been entrusted by God to proclaim the good news that God Himself has made a place at His banquet table for everyone who makes a place for His Son Jesus in their hearts – not alongside other loves, but truly as Savior and King. We know this because the Scriptures, which are God's very words, tell us it's true. So, when we interact with our neighbors, we want to tell them about who God really is and could be to them, and we want to have Paul's heart as we do: "We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us" (v8). We want our neighbors to find a place to belong, both with Jesus and with us.

So, as we plant this new church, we are committing both to tell the truth and to invite others into our lives.

Stay tuned!

Having said all that, it should be obvious that we need your prayers! Also, we'd love to hear from you. And don't forget, if you haven't already, sign up to receive this newsletter periodically at report.projectsoil.net/signup. Stay tuned, and feel free to read more about our journey (or even join the conversation) at projectsoil.net.

*Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day.
Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples. (Ps 96:1-3)*