Midwest Mission: Developing a Church Planting Prospectus for the City of Indianapolis

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

by

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I am indebted to wife Rebekah who is my hero in ministry and the love of my life. To my two daughters and my favorite North American Missionaries, Hannah and Julia, thank you for encouraging me throughout this process. I also want to thank my parents, Jim and Connie Lightner for believing in me and sacrificing for me. I dedicate this project to the glory of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
ABSTRACT

Midwest Mission: Developing a Church Planting Prospectus for the City of Indianapolis

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The Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of Indianapolis, Indiana has a total population of 1,823,479 residents.\(^1\) The North American Mission Board reports that “only one out of every five ‘Indy’ residents” attends a church.\(^2\) In order to reverse this trend, new churches need to be started. This thesis will provide a biblical church-planting prospectus that takes into account the culture of the Indianapolis MSA area, specifically Hamilton County. This thesis will introduce the reader to the research and development required in order to write a church-planting prospectus.

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CHAPTER 1: THESIS INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the thesis of this project. The introduction will identify the problem that the thesis is seeking to solve. The chapter will also provide context for the research methods and literature used to develop the thesis. In addition, the chapter will outline the limits of the research and the theoretical basis that guided the spirit of the project.

The Author’s Journey

The author’s ministry background ranges from pastoring churches to serving in executive roles for mainline denomination and parachurch ministries. Through each of those experiences, God would remind the author that someday he would plant a church. In the spring of 2012, the author experienced a vocal injury that threatened his preaching ministry. Following the injury, he went through a season of silence in order for his vocal cords to heal properly. The season of silence was followed by speech therapy that led to the author’s full recovery. God used this silence and recovery to speak into the author’s future, again reminding him of this call to plant a church. Following the recovery, the author pursued the Lord in prayer for months concerning this calling. Ultimately, the Lord released the author to this dream of planting a church.

The author began to pursue the Lord concerning the target metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) for this plant. Cities from coast to coast within North America were evaluated and weighed up against the dream that God had spoken into the author’s heart. God confirmed that the MSA of Indianapolis, Indiana was the MSA that He had
been preparing the author for all of his life.

A church plant within the Indianapolis, Indiana MSA would require the author to relocate from Fort Worth, Texas. In fact, the author’s entire vocational ministry has been based within the Southwest region of the United States. Indianapolis would require a cultural leap from the Southwest to the Midwest. This cultural leap has forced the author to think like a missionary. This thesis project will aid the author in this regard, serving as a prospectus for this church plant.

**Statement of the Problem**

Missionaries are called to immerse themselves within the people group that they have been sent to reach. This immersion requires missionaries not only to learn their people group’s native language, but also their culture. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the missionary must carefully thread the Gospel through the people group’s culture, which will gradually change their worldview. The intent is not to replace their culture but rather to redeem it. The missionary preserves this cultural redemption by planting new churches that possess the same missionary calling.

North American evangelical churches must fight against the unholy inclination to abandon this missionary calling. The missionary calling of the church bridges the gap between the church and culture. When this bridge is missing the church will miss opportunities for Gospel penetration. As society continues to move toward a Post-Christian mindset, this gap between the church and the culture will become even vaster.
Luke 14:28 states, “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?”¹ A church-planting prospectus is the practice of sitting down and counting the cost of following Jesus to plant a new church. Counting the cost beforehand will open the planter’s eyes to the cultural context of his or her target area.

The thesis of this project will provide a biblical church-planting prospectus that takes into account the culture of the proposed church plant’s area within the Indianapolis MSA area, specifically Hamilton County. The thesis will introduce the reader to the research and development required in order to write a church-planting prospectus.

**Terminology Defined**

Several key terms that are unique to this thesis project are defined here for the purpose of clarity.

**Church:** Malphurs defines the term *church* as an “indispensable gathering of professing believers in Christ, who, under leadership, are organized to obey Jesus’s Great Commission by accomplishing certain functions to glory of God.”² The definition represents a traditional definition of the church, which seeks to define the church based on its identity and function. Missional church leader, Alan Hirsch states that the church “defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose as an agent of God’s mission to the world.”³ Both authors agree that the purpose of the church is to facilitate

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¹ Luk. 14:28 (NIV).
the Great Commission.

Church Planting: Church planting according to Aubrey Malphurs is an “exhausting but exciting venture of faith, the planned process of starting and growing local churches based on Jesus promise to build his church and in obedience to His Great Commission.”

Malthus’ definition is weakened by the inclusion of the phrase, ‘growing local churches.’ In the author’s opinion, the focus on church planting is simply the process of starting new churches but not a process for church growth. Church growth requires another definition with an altogether different strategy.

Church Planter: The author is a church planter and would define the calling of a planter as one who intentionally starts new a new church. As it relates to this thesis project, the church planter is the founding pastor of the new church.

Culture: Keller states “Culture is popularly conceived narrowly—as language, music and art, food and folk customs, but properly understood, it touches every aspect that we touch in the world.” Keller is proposing that culture relates to five senses of a people group. This author would simplify this definition by stating that culture is simply how a people group views and engages the world.

Contextualization: Tim Keller states that contextualization is “translating and adapting the communication and ministry of the Gospel to the culture without compromising the essence and particulars of the Gospel itself.” The author agrees with Keller’s definition and appreciates his caution to preserve Gospel integrity. Hirsch states that there is a

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4 Malphurs, 17-18.

5 Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel Centered Ministry In Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012) 90.

6 Ibid., 90.
“Cultural Distance” that the church must travel in order to share the Gospel.⁷ One can determine this distance by outlining a people group’s barriers to the Gospel that may be anything from language to a certain predisposition to life.⁸ Churches that refuse to travel this cultural distance and overcome these barriers will become or remain irrelevant to the people group they are called to reach.

Disciple: Dempsey states that a “disciple is a person who has trusted Christ for salvation and has surrendered completely to Him. He or she is committed to practicing the spiritual disciplines in community and developing to his or her full potential for Christ and His mission.”⁹ The definition does not seem to carry the burden of clarifying what is meant by ‘full potential’ and ‘mission’ which could be clarified by the action of simply ‘making disciples.’

If a church chooses not to include ‘making disciples’ into its definition of a disciple, then it would be essential for it to define the mission of God as making disciples. Francis Chan and Mark Beuving define a disciple as a “follower of Jesus.”¹⁰ If one follows Jesus, he or she will make disciples with Jesus. Comparing the two definitions, this author prefers Dempsey definition because he seeks to define what it means to follow Jesus.

Discipleship: Dempsey states “discipleship is the process of guiding individual disciples to grow in spiritual maturity and to discover and use their gifts, talents, and abilities in

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⁷ Hirsh, 278.

⁸ Ibid.


fulfillment of Christ's mission.” Again, Dempsey chooses to use the term ‘mission’ to describe the action of ‘making disciples.’ This definition assumes that the practitioner understands that the mission of God is to make disciples. Chan and Beuving supply a much simpler definition stating that discipleship is a “lifelong process where we are continuously made more and more like Jesus.” If one is like Jesus, he or she will make disciples like Jesus.

Incarnational Ministry: Hirsch defines incarnational ministry as “embodying the culture and life of a target group in order to meaningfully reach that group of people from within their culture.” Jesus put on humanity in order to reach humanity. Incarnational ministry views Jesus’ incarnation as the model or strategy to reach humanity.

Target Area: A target area is the geographical location of a church plant.

Target Resident Profile (TRP): Rick Warren defines a target resident profile as a “composite profile of the typical unchurched person” the church planter is seeking to reach with his or her target area.” Developing target profiles is a basic discipline for business sales strategies. Warren popularized the discipline within the evangelical world.

Missional Church: A missional church is one whose primary commitment is to the missionary calling of the people of God. The author does not think the distinction missional is necessary because the church by definition is on mission. Regardless, there

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11 Falwell, 112.

12 Chan and Beuving, 272.

13 Hirsh, 281.


15 Hirsh, 284.
is a missional church movement that is seeking to call the church back to the mission of God.

**Statement of Methodology**

The thesis of this project will result in a biblical church-planting prospectus that takes into account the culture of the proposed church plant’s area within the Indianapolis MSA area, specifically Hamilton County. The development of this prospectus was influenced by six research categories: books, theses and dissertations, statistical compilations, surveys, personal experiences, and colleagues. These six categories represent the balance required to develop a church-planting prospectus.

Research was conducted from books that address the topic of evangelism and church planting. Many of the books selected are written by church planting practitioners, which brought great validity to the project. The books are written from various church planting models and perspectives that brought depth to the prospectus.

In addition, several church planting theses and dissertations were utilized to examine conclusions from other researchers. Several of the dissertations are from researchers who were also developing a church planting prospectus or strategy. The examination of their research brought thoroughness to this project.

Statistical compilations from data pools such as the US Census and The Association of Religious Data Archives were utilized. The compilations will compare and contrast various statistical areas within the MSA. The statistical research included in this project will aid in the development of a TRP.
Surveys were conducted with residents and church planters within the target area of the proposed church plant. Collectively, these surveys examined the spiritual appetite and culture within the target area of the proposed church plant. The surveys also aided the development of the TRP.

The author drew from his personal experiences pastoring churches and serving in executive roles for a mainline denomination and parachurch ministries. In addition, the author’s fellow colleagues supported the development and experimentation of the proposed prospectus. The author’s colleagues include friends, peers, mentors and also the leadership team of the proposed church, which consists of Rebekah Lightner, Mark Caswell and Terra Caswell.

These research categories were leveraged to develop a church-planting prospectus, which is outlined within the following six chapters.

Chapter 1: The Introduction
Chapter 2: The Target Area and Profile
Chapter 3: Church Models
Chapter 4: Strategic Identity
Chapter 5: First Year Launch Strategy
Chapter 6: The Conclusion And Final Recommendations

Chapter 1 is titled “The Introduction,” which will formally introduce the thesis and the problem that the thesis seeks to solve. It will also outline the limitations of the
research and the theoretical basis for it. In addition, Chapter 1 will outline the research methodology and the literature used for its compilation.

Chapter 2 is titled “The Target Area and Profile.” which will provide a survey of Indianapolis. The survey will provide an overview of Indianapolis history, sports industry, cultural districts, politics and government, and climate. The chapter will introduce the reader to the city of Indianapolis.

In addition, this chapter will provide a demographic study comparing data from the following statistical areas: Hamilton County, Marion County, and the Indianapolis MSA. The demographic study will compare race and diversity, age and household types, education, economy and religion. The chapter will also be aided by the results of fifty surveys with residents and ten surveys church planters within the target area of the proposed church plant. The culmination of this research will be the development of a TRP for the target area.

Chapter 3 is titled “Church Models” which will survey the prevalent church models. The selection of a church model is an exercise of contextualization. The research will aid the recommendation of a church model for the prospective church plant.

Chapter 4 is titled “Strategic Identity,” which will demonstrate the development of the proposed church’s vision. The development will balance with the research conducted in chapter 2 titled “The Target Area and Profile” and chapter 3 titled “Church Models.” The balance will give the churches vision and mission necessary cultural

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context.

Chapter 5 is titled “First Year Launch Strategy” which will survey the strategic steps required within the proposed church plants first year. Many times a church planter’s initial strategic identity is lost with the activity of launching a new church. The steps outlined in this chapter will demonstrate how to preserve a church plants strategic identity from the outset.

Chapter 6 is titled “Conclusion and Final Recommendations,” which will review the thesis project by providing a complete overview of recommendations for the proposed church. The recommendations will balance with the research conducted in chapter 2 titled “The Target Area and Profile.” The balance will give the proposed church necessary cultural context.

Statement of Limitations

The ultimate goal of this thesis project is to develop a church-planting prospectus for a targeted area within the Indianapolis MSA, which is Hamilton County. The thesis project does not attempt to comprehensively research all aspects of church planting. The focus of the thesis project is limited to development of a strategic identity and the first year steps required to effectively launch into the targeted area.

The thesis project is limited to a church planter’s first year within his target area. The author’s experience dictates that the variables of the first year for a church planter are unique and require a stand-alone research treatment. Once the first year is completed, it is recommended that the church planter write another prospectus for the next thirty-six
months. The second prospectus will be guided by new cultural insight that the church planter has gained from his first year within his target area.

Some church planters are sent from a mother church with a team of people to help start the church. Other church plants start from a church splitting into two separate churches. The thesis project is limited to the church planter with his family and one additional family moving into a new target area to start a new church.

**Theoretical Basis**

The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the theoretical spirit of this thesis project. The mission of church planting is found within the miracle of the incarnation. John 1:1 defines the incarnation by stating, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”

17 Wayne Grudem states, “Although the word does not explicitly occur in Scripture, the church has used the term incarnation to refer to the fact that Jesus was God in human flesh.”

The mission of the incarnation was that Jesus put on humanity in order to save humanity.

Jesus’s incarnation is the apex of missionary achievement. It is through the miracle of the incarnation that God put on human flesh and stepped into the human race. He lived the majority of His life as an ordinary first century Jew. He spoke the language of the people. He took on a common profession and participated in the customs and traditions of His day. At His baptism, He transitioned from a private citizen to a public figure. His public ministry ushered in a supernatural phenomenon that the world had

17 John 1:1 (NIV).

never witnessed before or since. His ministry was threaded through the culture of His
day. Yet, Jesus’s ministry was clearly countercultural. Jesus understood that culture
shaped the worldview of those He was sent to reach. Instead of ignoring or even
replacing their culture, He fulfilled it or rather redeemed it through the proclamation of
His Gospel.\(^{19}\)

Jesus preserved this redemption by starting a church planting movement.

Ed Stetzer and Elmer Towns say it this way: “[Jesus] became incarnate—He became one
flesh in the world with its customs, values, music, culture, etc. Then He sent [the
church]—to incarnate the unchanging message into new customs, values, music, [and]
culture.”\(^{20}\) Jesus’ church is a church planting movement sent to incarnate the very body,
life and glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Incarnational ministry does not happen by accident but requires intentionality by
the church planter. Developing a church-planting prospectus forces the church planter to
mimic the mission and intentionality of the incarnation. A prospectus will release the
church planter to go out and fulfill God’s vision through the exercise of writing a
church-planting prospectus. Through research, the prospectus will help the church
planter put on the culture of the target community and recommend strategies to redeem
it. Ignoring the discipline of developing a church-planting prospectus tempts the church
planter to predispose his or her own preferences or misguided assumptions upon the
culture.

\(^{19}\) Elmer Towns and Ed Stetzer, \textit{Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging

\(^{20}\) Stetzer, \textit{Planting Missional Churches}, 162.
Review of Literature

Many valuable literary resources aided this research project.Outlined below is a brief review of some of these resources.

Books

Joel Comiskey’s *Biblical Foundations for the Cell-Based Church*\(^2\) provides a survey of the discipleship making practices of Jesus and the first century church. The knowledge that he shares on the dynamics of the first century house church is extremely beneficial. He demonstrates how these dynamics were actually trends initiated by Jesus and his disciples.

Mike Breen and Steve Cochran’s book *Building a Discipleship Culture*\(^2\) outlines the discipleship culture that Jesus created and maintained with his disciples. The authors describe Jesus’ discipleship culture as “high invitation and challenge.”\(^3\) They purport that following Jesus meant accepting the high expectation of discipleship.\(^4\)

Neil Cole’s book, *Search & Rescue*\(^5\) develops what he calls “Life Transformation Groups (LTG’s).”\(^6\) LTG’s are same-gender accountability groups that meet weekly for the purpose of accountability and prayer.\(^7\) Cole develops the structure

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\(^3\) Ibid., chapter 1, under “Invitation and Challenge”

\(^4\) Ibid.


\(^6\) Ibid., 166.

\(^7\) Ibid., 175.
for these groups, which provide church planters an intimate discipleship and leadership-training tool.

Erwin McManus’s book *An Unstoppable Force*\(^{28}\) seeks to describe culture’s turn toward postmodernity and its subsequent impact on the church. His description outlines the value system and worldview of postmodernity. He challenges the church to see postmodernity as a new opportunity for church growth.

Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey’s book *Discipleship Is*\(^{29}\) provides a comprehensive survey of discipleship. The authors effectively demonstrate that a church model and a discipleship process are one in the same. A church model is a discipleship strategy. Earley and Dempsey, outline “four prevalent church models [which] are: traditional, attractional, organic, and hybrid.”\(^{30}\) These four church models will be explored in great detail in this project.

Mike Breen and Bob Hopkins’s book *Clusters*\(^{31}\) introduces “midsized communities on mission [called Clusters]. [Clusters] are not small cells and they are not large celebrations. The size of a cluster is “typically around 25-65 people, though this is not hard and fast.”\(^{32}\) To simplify, these are large discipleship groups that complement a small group discipleship strategy. In fact, several small groups form a ‘Cluster’ for the


\(^{30}\) Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, Disciple Making Is, chapter 24 under “Models and Methods.”

\(^{31}\) Mike Breen and Bob Hopkins, *Clusters* (Great Britain: 3D Ministries International, LLC, 2011).

\(^{32}\) Ibid., chap.1under “Introduction.”
purpose of mission and fellowship.  

The authors have found that “Clusters are small enough to share a common vision and large enough to do something about it.” The concept of mid-sized communities gives church planters another tool to use within their discipleship strategy.

Dave Earley’s book *Eight Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders* is a helpful resource for leadership and group growth. Earley has identified eight habits that every small group leader needs. These eight habits are listed below.

1) Dream of leading a healthy, growing, multiplying group.
2) Pray for group members daily.
3) Invite new people to visit the group weekly.
4) Contact group members regularly.
5) Prepare for the group meeting.
6) Mentor an apprentice leader.
7) Plan group fellowship activities.
8) Be committed to personal growth.

These eight habits give a church planter an immediate strategy for developing leaders.

Ed Stetzer and David Putman’s book *Breaking the Missional Code* challenges the church to understand the culture of the community that they are attempting to reach.

The authors surmise that each community has a cultural code that must be rightly

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33 Ibid., chap.1, under “Clusters are Defined by Mission.”

34 Ibid.


36 Ibid., 15.

interacted before it can be reached by the church. A church planter’s success in part depends on his ability to break this code within their community.

Ed Stetzer and Elmer Towns’ book Perimeter of Light\textsuperscript{38} seeks to identify the perimeters of cultural relevance for the church. There is much debate within the evangelical world about the contextualization of the church. The authors provide biblical, well-balanced commentary on the debate

Oscar Thompson’s book Concentric Circles of Concern\textsuperscript{39} provides a framework for personal evangelism. He posits that personal evangelism flows through the following relationships:

1. Self
2. Immediate Family
3. Relatives
4. Close Friends
5. Neighbors-Business Associates
6. Acquaintances
7. Person X \textsuperscript{40}

Church planters need to incorporate methods that will equip their churches to reach the mission field found within these relationships.

Ed Stetzer’s book Planting Missional Churches\textsuperscript{41} is a thorough overview of modern-day church planting. His thesis is to remain missional regardless of any

\textsuperscript{38} Towns and Stetzer, Perimeters of Light.

\textsuperscript{39} Oscar Thompson, Concentric Circles of Concern (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1985).

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{41} Stetzer, Planting Missional Churches.
particular strategy, practice, or process. Stetzer provides a church planter a working knowledge of the state of modern day state church planting.

Alan Hirsh’s book *The Forgotten Ways*\(^{42}\) is a comprehensive and valuable deposit of the missional movement. He challenges the reader with the language, science, and concepts of the movement itself. In addition, he clearly differentiates the missional church from the traditional and or attractional church models.

Rick Warren’s book *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Mission and Message*\(^{43}\) shares his journey of planting a church in Orange County California. He demonstrates how his church grew through purposes of the church, which he believes to be “fellowship, discipleship, worship, ministry and evangelism.”\(^{44}\)

Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas’s book *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch*\(^{45}\) share their approach to launching a new church. Their focus is to “to reach as many people as possible within the first six to eight months of existence.”\(^{46}\)

The authors draw from their experience of launching a church in New York City, which gives the book practical value. The author’s insight into starting the church with a “Launch Team” was extremely helpful to this project.\(^{47}\) A Launch Team is an initial group that a church planter enlists for the sole purpose of helping with the start up

\(^{42}\) Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*.


\(^{44}\) Ibid., 49.


\(^{46}\) Ibid., 28.
activities of the launching a new church.\(^{48}\)

Charles Chaney’s book *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century*\(^{49}\) provides an overview of prevailing church planting strategies and practices as of 1991. At the time of the book’s release, Chaney served the Southern Baptist Convention’s Home Mission Board, which is now called the North American Mission Board. The board among other things is a Southern Baptist church planting organization for North America. As a result, Chaney describes church planting from the unique perspective of a church planting organization.

Aubrey Malphurs’ book *Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*,\(^{50}\) as the title suggests, provides the basics of church planting. His book serves as an introduction to church planting and lays a healthy foundation of knowledge for church planters. Malphurs covers the Preparation, Personnel, Principles, and Process of church planting.

Will Mancini’s book *Church Unique*\(^{51}\) provides church planters the framework to develop their unique vision. Mancini’s supplies the reader with his Vision Frame, that is a tool for mission development. The Vision Frame will be explored in great detail in chapter 3 of this thesis project entitled ‘Strategic Identity.’

**Theses/Dissertations**

Dr. Daniel Basile, a graduate from Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, submitted a dissertation entitled *A Strategy To Plant A Missional, Multiplying*

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 141.

\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Charles Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wheaton, Il: Tyndale House Publishers, 1982) back cover.

\(^{50}\) Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*.

\(^{51}\) Mancini, xxvii.
Church in Pulaski County, Kentucky. Basile provides a full demographic study of his target area and then matches it with strategy. His struggle over the demographic of his target area and strategy was helpful by demonstrating how his target area would benefit from a church that blended attactional and organic strategy.

Aaron Coe, a graduate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, submitted a thesis entitled, Church Planting In New York City: A case for a Global Cities Church Planting Strategy. Coe documents the North American Mission Board’s three-year campaign called New Hope New York that started 37 churches. Coe’s evaluation of this campaign is helpful to church planters who desire to plant many churches.

Dr. Ryan Johnston, a graduate from Union University School of Theology and Missions, submitted a dissertation entitled Developing Missional Communities at The Chapel In North Canton. Johnston provides a survey of the organic church movement and missional communities. He also demonstrates how to blend the organic and attractional church models.

Dr. Tommy Jessee, a graduate from Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, submitted a dissertation entitled Planting Churches in the Changing Culture of Southwest Virginia. Jessee makes a case for the attractional church model in an area of Virginia that is slow to accept the inevitability of the changing world. In addition to

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52 Daniel Basile, A Strategy To Plant A Missional, Multiplying Church In Pulaski County, Kentucky. (DMIN diss., Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary) 2014.


54 Ryan David Johnston, Developing Missional Communities at The Chapel In North Canton. (DMIN diss., Union University School of Theology and Missions) 2014.

making the case for an attractional model, he documents transitioning his church to the attractional model.

Dr. Louis Williams, a graduate from Fuller Theological Seminary submitted a dissertation entitled *A Strategy for planting a Multiplying Church in Midlothian, Virginia.* William’s target area is a similar demographic to the target area of this thesis project. As a result of this similarity, his reasoning through the development of a strategy served as a beneficial benchmark for this thesis project.

**Biblical Passages**

In Matthew 4:17-19 Jesus proclaims His message, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” Jesus’s mission was to lead people into His Kingdom and then make or develop them into Kingdom disciples. The message needs to be the mission of every church planter.

In Matthew 22:36-40 Jesus pronounces the greatest commandments, which are to love God, and others stating that “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” In other words, obedience for disciples of Jesus Christ is a consuming love for God and others. Love must be the bedrock for a new church.

Matthew 28:18-20 commissions His followers to make disciples. Jesus has taught and trained them to be Kingdom disciples; He then turns them loose to make disciples. Making disciples needs be the focus of a new church.

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57 Matt. 4:17-19 (NIV).

Acts 1:8 assigns the church’s geographical areas of responsibility which are “Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” These geographical areas of responsibility begin where the church is planted and then move to the ends of the earth. Church planters must not become so immersed with their target area that they lose sight of the ends of the earth.

Acts 2:42-47 testifies that the first church obeyed the Great Commission and Commandments and the New Commandment. As a result of this obedience, the first church experienced tangible blessing. This prospectus assumes that when the Great Commission and Commandments and the New Commandment are obeyed that blessing will follow.

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 Paul states, “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.” This is a statement of incarnational ministry. He also testifies that, “To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.”

His message was not life under the law but rather life liberated from it. Yet, in order to share his message of liberation, he put on the life of the law. It is in this way, he was able to demonstrate how his Gospel actually fulfilled the law. If he had not put on the life of the law, he would never have been able to demonstrate this fulfillment. The church planter must possess Paul’s zeal for incarnational ministry. A church planter

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59 Acts 1:8 (NIV)

60 1 Cor. 9:19-23 (NIV).

61 Ibid.
needs to put on the culture without compromising the gospel in order to sow the gospel into the culture.

Ephesians 2:19-20 positions Jesus as the cornerstone. It is essential that the church and consequently the disciples are built on this chief cornerstone. The church planter must put forth a discipleship strategy that builds lives on Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 4:11-16 Paul outlines how Jesus has designed the church to experience growth in both unity and maturity. Leaders were given to the church by Jesus to “equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”

Narrowly, church leaders must equip members to fulfill their function within the church. Ultimately, church leaders alone cannot build up the church. The church “grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” Here Paul is comparing the church to a human body. A human body is connected to the head and the church is connected to Jesus Christ. A human body is made up of many parts that have a specific purpose or function.

In a similar way, the church is made up of many members that have a specific purpose or function. When a body part within a human body is not functioning properly, the whole body suffers. This comparison places every member in submission to Jesus Christ. At the same time, it elevates the importance that each member has within the church. It is essential that a new church operate as a body from the beginning. It will be difficult for new church that starts as an organization to ever be an organism. Colossians 1:28 identifies the goal that every discipleship strategy should have which is to “present

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62 Eph. 4:11-16 (NIV).
63 Ibid.
everyone fully mature in Christ.” A discipleship strategy must seek to equip all members in hopes of seeing them experience maturity. Practically, a new church needs mature members in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

1 Peter 2:4-6 compares the church to the building of a spiritual house. A spiritual house or rather a new temple that is being built up with living stones. Living stones represent the church and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the chief cornerstone. This passage demonstrates the significance of each disciple within the Kingdom.

John 1:14 states, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” Jesus stepped into humanity to reach humanity. Church planters must model the mission in Jesus’ incarnation by leading their churches to reach their neighbors by stepping into their lives.

Hebrews 4:15 provide an important principle of incarnational ministry. Through the miracle of the incarnation, Jesus stepped into humanity while maintaining His deity and subsequently His holiness. Having put on flesh, he was “tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.” Following Jesus’ example, church planters are to step into the lives of others without weakening the Gospel in any way.

Luke 14:28 is Jesus’ call to sit down and count the cost of following Him. Church planters must sit down and count the cost of God’s vision. The discipline of writing a church-planting prospectus forces the church planter to discern the strategy and resources that God’s vision for the new church requires.

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64 Col. 1:28 (NIV)

65 Heb. 4:15 (NIV).
Summary

The chapter formally introduced the thesis of this project, which is to provide a biblical church-planting prospectus that takes into account the culture of the proposed church plant’s target area within the Indianapolis MSA area, specifically Hamilton County. The project will demonstrate how developing a church-planting prospectus forces a church planter to consider the culture of his target area. In addition, the project will show how a church plant’s strategy can be shaped by a careful study of the culture.
CHAPTER 2-THE TARGET AREA AND PROFILE

Introduction

The chapter will formally introduce the target area, which is the Indianapolis MSA, specifically Hamilton County. This introduction will include a full demographic study of the target area, which includes field surveys from local residents and church planters. The research of this chapter will be compiled into a Target Resident Profile (TRP).

Target Area

The author of this project spent approximately a year identifying major metropolitan areas with high population growth and low-church density. Once identified, the author developed a composite profile of each metropolitan area that included objective research data such as demographic info, population statistics, and church density ratios. Ultimately, the Indianapolis MSA’s profile resonated with the vision that God has placed in the author’s heart. Through continued research, God identified the Indianapolis MSA as the MSA of choice for the author.

Now that Indianapolis was identified, the author needed to identify a church planting target area. The MSA consists of the following ten counties: Boone, Brown, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion, Morgan, Putnam, and Shelby. Almost two million people live within this statistical area, which is roughly thirty-two percent of the states total population.

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2 Ibid.
Overall, the total MSA population is practically split between urban and suburban sprawl. The USS Indianapolis Memorial Highway (I-465) loops around Indianapolis. Marion County is geographically positioned within the loop and is the home of the city of Indianapolis. The city itself boasts of a growing population of 844,220 residents. Interstate highways from the other nine counties within the MSA connect them to 465 loop, consequently connecting them to Indianapolis. The population growth of the MSA is due in part to its proximity to Marion County or rather Indianapolis.

The author spent nine months researching the MSA of Indianapolis. The research sought to identify areas of the MSA with low-church density and high population growth. This research narrowed down the MSA to a primary and secondary target area.

The author made several trips to interview the city leaders and influencers of those two target areas. The results of the interviews from the primary area revealed that the influencers of the area were born, raised, and educated in Indiana. The results of the interviews from the secondary area revealed that many influencers of the area had moved there from other places in the country. Although they were not born, raised, or educated in Indiana, they were still able to lead and influence their community. The author identified with the migration of the secondary area and became convinced that he could move to this secondary area and have a more immediate influence.

The secondary area, which is the target area of this project, is Hamilton County Indiana, lies north of Marion County. Hamilton County has a growing population of

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3 Ibid.
274,569 residents; up 50.30% in the year 2,000. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization is projecting a “2035 population of 497,043 in 184,530 households” which would double Hamilton County. In 2008, Forbes.com listed Hamilton County as the Best Place to Raise Families, which they attribute to low cost of living, reasonably priced homes and short commute times. Leading “municipalities in the county include Arcadia, Atlanta, Carmel, Cicero, Fishers, Noblesville, Sheridan, and Westfield.” All of these municipalities will be impacted by the county’s growth.

**History**

Indianapolis was named the state capital of Indiana in 1821. Compared with the other major cities in surrounding states, Indianapolis lacked a natural waterway that would support trade. This deficiency rendered the city inaccessible, which initially impaired its economy and subsequent population growth. Robert Barrows, David Bodenhamer and David Vanderstel report that the inaccessibility was corrected with the “completion of the National Road to Indianapolis (1838), and the arrival of the first railroad (1847).” Due to the capital’s dependency on the railroads for trade, rapid railroad expansion became a necessity. As a result of this necessary expansion, “Businessmen and boosters proclaimed Indianapolis as the "railroad city" and well into the 20th century advertised its superior rail connections that earned for the city the title

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7 Ibid.

‘Crossroads of America.’” The railroad illuminated the city’s richest commodity, which is its central geographic location within the Midwestern Region of the United States.

Major cities such as Chicago, St Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati and Columbus are within a 250-mile radius of Indianapolis. Beyond the region, “More than 2 out of 3 Americans live within a day’s drive of the city.” Indianapolis’s geographic location positions the city as a regional hub for the nation. Today, accessibility to this hub has expanded beyond rail, to air, road, and sea. In addition to the city’s five rail lines, it has the most interstate coverage in the nation, three maritime ports, and a new international airport terminal constructed in 2008. The one billion dollar terminal has fast become the “twenty-first busiest cargo terminal in the world.” Ironically, the city that was once deemed inaccessible has now become one of the most accessible cities in the nation.

**Sports Industries**

Indianapolis is known by several important nicknames such as the “Racing Capital of the World.” The Indianapolis Motor Speedway enables Indy to live up to its nickname, “Racing Capital of the World.” The speedway is a “sprawling 2.5-mile oval flat track with nine-degree banked turns that supports motorsports of all kinds – Indy Car, NASCAR and MotoGP – and hosts world-renown events, including the Indianapolis 500, the Crown Royal Brickyard 400, and the Indianapolis GP.”

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9 Ibid., 63.
12 Ibid.
Another nickname for Indianapolis is the “Amateur Sports Capital of the World,” an industry that has “generated over $1 billion to the local economy between 1977-1991 thanks to 330 amateur sporting events and 4.5 million spectators.”\footnote{American Outlook, Q & A: Indianapolis Sports Strategy, accessed January 1, 2015, http://www.americanoutlook.org/q--a-indianapolis-sports-strategy.html.} In addition to amateur sports, Indianapolis is home to several pro sports teams such as the NFL’s Indianapolis Colts, NBA’s Indiana Pacers, WNBA Indiana Fever, and the MLB farm team Indianapolis Indians. The presence of sporting organizations and events has had a profound impact on the social economy of the city, which has consequently impacted the culture.\footnote{Al Lesar, “No More India-No-Place,” Southbend Tribune (February 7, 2015): Accessed January 1, 2015, http://goo.gl/Ij4RA3.} An impact that has debunked the nickname "India-no-place" or “Nap Town”\footnote{Mark D. Miles and James Taylor, “A Lasting Legacy-Indianapolis Style,” American Outlook, accessed January 1, 2015, http://www.americanoutlook.org/a-lasting-legacy-indianapolis-style.html.}

**Cultural Districts**

Those who have called Indianapolis “Nap Town” have not explored the city’s six “Cultural Districts: Broad Ripple Village, The Canal and White River State Park, Fountain Square, Indiana Avenue, Mass Ave and Wholesale District.”\footnote{Downtown Indy, “Cultural Districts,” accessed January 1, 2015, http://goo.gl/k9n8hm.} These six districts propagate the cultural influence of the city. Each district represents a unique layer of the city’s cultural appetite—past, present, and future. They are home to many of the city’s world-class attractions such as sports arenas, museums, theatres, a zoo and an aquarium. In addition, they are popular shopping, restaurant, and hotel destinations for the entire MSA.
Politics and Government

Indianapolis being the state capital is a culture unto itself. In addition to the state government, there is also the government of the city. These coupled together within one city uniquely impacts the culture of the MSA. The state government is “closely modeled on the federal government with three branches,” the Federal, Legislative, and Judicial branches.\footnote{In.Gov, “Government,” accessed January 1, 2015, http://goo.gl/2ZPpQu.} These branches require 50 State Senators and 100 State Representatives. The city government model is an elected mayor who leads a 29-member city council that provides leadership not just for the city but also for Marion County.\footnote{Indy. Gov. “Councilors,” accessed January 1, 2015, http://goo.gl/Vwxoqr.}

The city government has a number of departments that bring services to the city. Politically the city and state have historically been conservatively Republican.\footnote{270 To Win, accessed January 1, 2015, http://goo.gl/gSLKMr.} At Presidential elections, the only time the state voted Democratic was in 1964 and 2008.\footnote{Ibid.} “In both 1992 and 1996, Indiana was an island of red, its borders not touching a single Republican-voting state in any direction.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Climate

The climate across the MSA has an incredible impact on the culture. Barrows, Bodenhamer, David Vanderstel state that the MSA’s “continental mid-latitude location, [produces a] temperate climate with very warm, humid summers and cool winters.”\footnote{Barrows, Bodenhamer and Vanderstel, 462.}
This mid-latitude geographic location is victim to “surges of cold continental polar air [that] move southward, or warm tropical air [that] moves northward. “ 24 The average temperatures and precipitation are outlined in the chart below.

![Indianapolis Average Precipitation and Temperatures](chart.png)

Figure 1: Indianapolis Average Precipitation and Temperatures 25

There is 42.44 inches of precipitation a year; 25.9 inches of the precipitation is snowfall.26 The chart also identifies “four distinct seasons” with distinct temperatures

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24 Ibid.


and precipitation levels. An example is the transition from winter to spring, where the average temperature is 31 (°F) in February and jumps to 52 (°F) in April. These sharp transitions from season to season bring cultural distinctiveness across the MSA. There are separate rhythms, mindsets, and activities for each of the four seasons.

**Racial Diversity, Age, and Households**

**Racial Diversity Compared**

The MSA lacks the overall racial diversity that one might expect in a major metropolitan area. This lack of diversity across all target statistical areas is reflected in the following graph.

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**Figure 2: Race and Hispanic Origin Distribution**

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The percentages for each race category are strikingly similar across the MSA. To illustrate the noted lack of diversification, 95% of the MSA is either White or Black leaving only 5% of other race categories.

Although the MSA lacks apparent diversity numerically, culturally it is becoming more racially integrated. A recent study by the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee ranked Indianapolis 24th amongst the fifty largest cities in the US for racial integration between blacks and whites living on the same neighborhood block.29

The growing economy will likely diversify the MSA. “Seven hundred companies from 36 countries have operations in Indiana” which will enables Indianapolis to “attract more new jobs through foreign direct investments” than any other city in the nation.30 The international connectivity will transition Indianapolis into more of a cosmopolitan hub.

Hamilton County’s race distribution is very similar to the MSA’s. The only two noteworthy differences are the higher percentage of Asians and lower percentage of Blacks. It is assumed that both of these races will statistically increase with the continued growth of the county.


Age Compared

The notable statistical difference is Hamilton County’s larger percentage of school age children ranges from ages five to seventeen. The median age in Hamilton County is 38.6, which may mean that they are having children later in life give given the large percentage of school age children. The distribution of ages by percentage across the MSA is reflected in the chart below.

Figure 3: Age Distribution

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31 Ibid.

It is also a surprise that the percentage of young adults is relatively the same across the statistical areas. Therefore, young adults in Hamilton County are simply having more children as evidenced in the graph below.

Households Compared

![Households By Distribution, Year 2013](image)

Figure 4: Household Distribution

There are 3.19 members in the average Hamilton County family that is higher than the national average of 3.14. The percentage point difference between Hamilton County’s families who are married with children and the other statistical areas is surprisingly vast.

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These high percentages in the collective family household measurements represent a high value on family that makes Hamilton County distinctive.

**Education, Economy, and Religion**

*Education Compared*

The MSA provides easy access to colleges and universities such as the following:

- Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)
- University of Indianapolis
- Purdue University
- Indiana Wesleyan University
- Butler University
- Marian University
- Martin University
- Franklin University of Ohio
- Oakland City University (Indianapolis)
- Ivy Tech Community College
- Brown Mackie College
- The Art Institute of Indianapolis

The presence of these colleges and universities influence the importance of educational attainment across the MSA. There are other notable colleges in the state of Indiana such as Notre Dame University and Ball State University. Education is a major value of the culture of Indiana and especially Hamilton County.

The chart below demonstrates the value of education across the MSA and in

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Hamilton County. The chart provides education distribution percentages for all aspects of educational attainment.

Figure 5: Educational Distribution

Hamilton County clearly has the greatest percentage of bachelors and graduate degrees.

Hamilton County more than doubles the national average of those holding bachelors

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degree, which is 17.9% and the state of Indiana’s average of 14.7%.\textsuperscript{37}

**Economy Compared**

![Industry Distribution Of Jobs By Percentage, Year 2013](image)

**Figure 6: Industry Distribution\textsuperscript{38}**

Viewing the economy of each statistical area by job distribution will clearly demonstrate the major and minor sectors. The major sectors are very similar across the three statistical areas. The minor sectors distinguish Hamilton County from the other two statistical areas. Hamilton County leads the other two statistical areas in


the Management, Real Estate, Information, Finance, and Professional industries.

Hamilton County possesses the greatest share of ‘white collar’ or professional industry opportunity within the MSA, which positions Hamilton County to exceed the other statistical areas in per capita personal income.

Figure 7: Per Capita Personal Income

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Hamilton County’s per capita personal income is $56,051 with a median household income of $84,821. The high levels of personal income seem to correlate with homeownership, which is illustrated in the chart below.

Hamilton County has a much larger homeownership percentage than the other two statistical areas. The average value for a house in Hamilton County is $214,400,

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which means that at least 80% of their population can afford a house of that value.\textsuperscript{43} The high percentage of homeownership demonstrates Hamilton County affluence. Ultimately, home ownership is higher across the MSA compared to the national percentage of 57.69\%.\textsuperscript{44}

Religion Compared

Figure 9: Religious Adherent Distribution

As it pertains to denominational adherents, Indianapolis has a little bit of every


\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{45} The Association of Religious Data Archives, \textquoteleft\textquoteleftU.S. Congregational Membership: County Reports,	extquoteright\textquoteright accessed January 1, 2015, http://goo.gl/BY8tuv.
denomination represented but very few adherents of any denomination: “Unlike the Catholic Northeast, the Lutheran Upper Midwest, or the Mormon Mountain West, Indiana has no dominant religious tradition, at least in denominational terms.”  

The Association of Religious Archives defines the Evangelical Protestants as “denominations [that] emphasize a personal relationship with Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, and the importance of sharing faith with non-believers.”

It is striking that Hamilton and Marion Counties report high percentages of ‘Unclaimed’—nearly “60 percent … do not belong to any organized denominational group—a higher percentage than for any state outside the Pacific Northwest.” Each denominational group listed on the chart can be broken down into sub-denominations and groups with the exception of Catholics. Therefore, in Hamilton County, Catholics lead the other denominations in the number of adherents.

Resident and Church Planter Surveys

Resident Surveys

Fifty resident surveys were conducted within Hamilton County. The optimum target profile for the surveys were male and female adults between the ages of 33-45 years of age who are married with children. The surveys were designed to measure how residents within Hamilton County view the church.

The survey responses demonstrate how residents view the church. The first question of the survey asked the residents if they grew up in the Midwest. It is

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46 Ibid., 9.

47 Ibid., http://goo.gl/cSTv8F.

important to note that 74% of the residents indicated that they grew up in the Midwest. This high percentage of Midwestern natives is an important distinctive of these results ensuring a true Midwestern viewpoint. The second question on the survey indicated that a high percentage of residents grew up going to church.

Figure 10: Resident Survey Question 2

It is clear that the majority of residents connected with some church as a child, which indicates that church is a significant aspect of Midwestern culture. As a result, Midwesterners have some familiarity with church programming. There is a vast difference between identifying with a church and actively participating in a church,
which this survey did not quantify. At the very least, the majority of the residents surveyed identified with a church as a child.

When the residents were asked if they actively attend church, the results were surprising.

Figure 11: Resident Survey Question 3

These percentages demonstrate that 28% of the residents who grew up attending church no longer attend. The percentage indicates a significant abandonment of the church. This percentage may mean that the residents merely identified with a church as a child but did not actively participate in a church.
The next four questions were purposefully open ended. The author organized the responses into measurable categories. The first of these four open-ended questions asked the resident to identify the community’s greatest need. The residents provided a wide range of responses.

<table>
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<th>4</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Resident Survey Question 4

The responses indicated a high value placed on community. The devaluation of the church increases the value of the community. If resident’s needs are not being met at
the church, then more needs will have to be met by the community.

Figure 13: Resident Survey Question 5

When asked how a new church could be helpful to the community, residents responded with “Open Mindedness”, “Welcoming Atmosphere”, and “Community Engagement.” It is the author’s opinion that these three responses were the result of a high value placed on community. They were describing a church that is welcoming and open to anyone in the community, demonstrating open mindedness through community involvement. The responses were similar when asked, ‘If you were to look for a church, what kind of
things they look for in a church?’

Figure 14: Resident Survey Question 6

The residents responded in majority with ‘Open Mindedness’ and a ‘Welcoming Atmosphere.’ A resident who values community has no interest for a church that is not open and welcoming to the community. It is interesting how this value of community trumps responses to children, groups, and the pastor himself.

The last question surveyed residents on the reason that the majority of the people don’t attend church. Based on the previous questions, this author assumed that the residents would state that the blame the church citing that the church was not welcoming or open minded enough. Surprisingly, only eleven gave the church as a reason. The
residents indicated that the lack of time is why most people don’t attend church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you think most people don’t attend church?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable With Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self Reliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Belief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judgemental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypocrisy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15: Resident Survey Question 7

Time is a commodity that a large number of the residents do not want to invest into the church. Time is a way to measure value. It is clear that church was not a great value for many of the residents surveyed.

Church Planter Surveys

In order to gain insight into the culture of the target area, ten male church planters were surveyed who are planting churches within Hamilton and Marion counties.
The Hamilton county resident views Marion County as an opportunity for employment and entertainment. Therefore, surveying church planting planters who are planting in Marion County brings value to this research. Generally, the age of the church planters surveyed range from early thirties to mid forties.

Six out of ten of the church planters surveyed were not raised in the Midwest. This is important because those foreign to the Midwest can compare it against other places that they have lived. When asked to describe Midwestern culture and values, respondents described the culture categorically in the following terms and/or descriptions, which are listed below.

1. Skeptical
2. Pragmatism
3. Apathy
4. Family
5. Duty
6. Hospitable

When asked to describe the spiritual culture, church planters responded with performance-based religion. Performance based religion places deity upon an object or a system. It is no surprise that Hamilton County has such a high percentage of Catholics who historically favor a performance-based system.

The church planters surveyed were asked, What about the Gospel is attractive to Midwesterner? The majority of the church planters responded with grace. Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul states, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”\(^{49}\) The

\(^{49}\) Eph. 2:8-9 (NIV).
grace of God is an attractive contrast to performance-based religion.

**Summary**

The thesis of this project is to provide a biblical church-planting prospectus that takes into account the culture of the proposed church plant’s area within the Indianapolis MSA area, specifically Hamilton County. The research completed demonstrates how a church planter can take into account the culture of his target area. The level of research needs to be completed before a church planter considers a church model, a strategic identity or a first year launch strategy.
CHAPTER 3-CHURCH MODELS

Introduction

The chapter will provide an overview of the prevalent church models. In addition, the chapter will profile several church practitioners who recently selected a new church model for their respective churches. The chapter will conclude with a church model recommendation for the proposed church plant.

Prevalent Church Models

Chapter 3 is titled “Church Models” which will survey the prevalent church models. The selection of a church model is an exercise of contextualization. The research will aid the recommendation of a church model for the prospective church plant.

When a church planter declares his intentions to start a new church, he will field the following question in response, “What type or kind of church are you starting?” The church planter will respond with an answer describing the church model to which he has recently subscribed. According to Earley and Dempsey, a church planter will typically prescribe to “four prevalent church models [which] are: traditional, attractional, organic, and hybrid.”¹ These four models have many different forms but typically can be described in the following way. The traditional model is a church whose needs both ministry and growth related are met primarily through the pastor and the Sunday morning worship service. The ministry and growth of the traditional model is aided by a Sunday School strategy which are discipleship classes that typically meet before the worship service. According to David Payne, the traditional model is the predominant

¹ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, Disciple Making Is, chapter 24 under “Models and Methods.”
expression in the United States and Canada.²

The attractional model is a church whose needs both ministry and growth related are met primarily through well-designed programs and systems. The attractional model is designed to attract seekers. There are varying attractional models to choose from depending on how or who the church is attempting to attract. Two dominant attractional models are the Purpose Driven and Willow Creek Models. The Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA, pastored by Rick Warren, developed the Purpose Driven Model. The Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, IL, pastored by Bill Hybels, developed the Willow Creek Model. These two models are designed to primarily attract seekers and both position their Sunday morning worship service and programming as tools to attract them.³ Regardless of the “whom” they are targeting or the methods they employ, attractional models are designed to attract people to their services and programming.

The organic model is a church that funnels needs primarily through lay leaders who facilitate the church’s discipleship process. There are two dominant models within the organic movement, which are the “Cell Church” and “House Church” models. Neighbor’s book Where Do We Go from Here?, describes the cell church strategy as a network of interdependent cell groups that carry out the function and essence of the church.⁴ Yet, the network of cell groups serve under the authority of a cell group pastor.

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³ Aubrey Malphurs, New Kind of Church, A Understanding Models of Ministry for the 21st Century, 2007 (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group) 143-159.

⁴ Payne, chapter 20 under Cell.
and gather with other cells for Sunday morning worship services.\textsuperscript{5} Indifferent to the cell, the house church is independent and autonomous and may not gather for Sunday morning worship with other house churches.\textsuperscript{6}

The hybrid model is a church that blends at least two and perhaps all three of the models together.\textsuperscript{7} The church planter may choose aspects from each model that would effectively reach his or her target area. Depending on the blend, a hybrid model may even be a new model.

There is much debate amongst the evangelical world concerning which of these four church models the church planter should use. One school of thought argues that a church planter may freely choose the model that will be the most effective within his demographic. The other school of thought argues for the use of one model over the others regardless of the demographic believing that the model more accurately portrays the New Testament Church.

It is this author’s opinion that the church planter must determine which model will effectively reach his geographical and cultural context. In order to make this determination, it is important to review the unique aspects of each model.

**Leadership**

The topic of biblical leadership effectively distinguishes the models from each

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., chapter 20 under House

\textsuperscript{7} Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, Disciple Making Is, chapter 24 under “Both . . . And: The Hybrid Church.”
other. The four models require strong leadership but they need leadership for different reasons. A church model is a leadership belief and philosophy.

The traditional model is a “simple” model that relies heavily on a pastor’s ministry and influence to meet the church’s needs. The attractional model is a complex model that that relies heavily on programming that requires a “CEO” like pastor who can recruit and organize volunteers into the plethora of programs required to attract people. The organic model is a simple model that relies on the discipleship strategy to meet needs requiring “multiple elders” to equip disciples and make disciple.

Discipleship

The topic of discipleship effectively distinguishes the models from each other. The four models require varying discipleship strategies. When a church planter chooses a church model he is choosing a discipleship strategy. Generally, discipleship in the traditional model takes place at the church on Sunday morning through the pastor’s ministry and preaching, and Sunday School. The attractional mode relies on programs for discipleship while the organic model depends on life on life experience through small groups.

Evangelism

The topic of evangelism effectively distinguishes the models from each other. The four models approach evangelism differently. When a church planter chooses a church model he is choosing an evangelism strategy.

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8 Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, Disciple Making Is, chapter 24 under “Critical Questions.”

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.
The traditional model lacks the attractional programming that is conducive to event evangelism. As a result, the model advocates more confrontational approaches.\textsuperscript{13} The attractional model depends on programming positioned toward seekers while the organic model depends on relational evangelism resulting from the discipleship strategy.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Practitioner Research}

Dr. Daniel Basile’s dissertation entitled “A Strategy to Plant a Missional, Multiplying Church in Pulaski County, Kentucky” presents a strategy to start a hybrid model church plant, blending the best of the attractional and organic models. His target area is a blue collar demographic that is influenced by the Midwestern culture. The demographic is accustomed to some level of attractional Sunday morning programming.

Therefore, Basile submits a hybrid that has attractional programming on Sunday morning and organic small groups or missional communities through the week. The challenges for Basile will blending the unique philosophies attached to the attractional and organic model into a new coherent hybrid.

Dr. Tommy Jessee’s dissertation entitled “Planting Churches in the Changing Culture of Southwest Virginia” describes a demographic that is struggling to transition to the modern world.\textsuperscript{15} Jessee proposes an attractional model to reach his target area. He is convinced that an attractional model will be refreshing to an area that is accustomed to the tradition.

Dr. Louis Williams’ dissertation entitled “A Strategy for Planting a Multiplying

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Jessee, \textit{Planting Churches In The Changing Culture Of Southwest Virginia}. 11.
Church in Midlothian, Virginia” proposes an attractional and organic hybrid model church plant to reach a white-collar demographic. Essentially, the model is an attractional Sunday morning worship gathering with an organic group strategy. The challenge for Williams will be managing the white-collar demand for a greater programming base than just groups and gatherings.

Dr. Ryan David Johnston’s dissertation “Developing Missional Communities at The Chapel in North Canton” documents the transition of an attractional church to an attractonal and organic hybrid model church. He examines the term “Missional Communities,” which is a discipleship group that surfaced from the cell church model within the organic model movement.

He benchmarks missional communities at Soma Church in Tacoma, Washington, and Austin Stone Church in Austin, Texas. Johnston derives from these two churches and other missional leaders the following definition for a missional community, a group of “8-20 [members] who center their life on the Gospel, submit themselves to live life as family while they live out the mission of God.”16 To simplify this definition, the missional community is committed to loving each other and tangibly loving people that the group feels called to reach.

Ultimately, Johnston’s vision is an attractional Sunday morning worship service and missional communities. Johnston will have to eliminate many programs and ministries from his attractional church in order to transition to this vision. Taking programming away from a church that has an appetite for it is risky. In addition to eliminating attractional programming, Johnston will be merging attractional and

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16 Johnston, Developing Missional Communities at The Chapel In North Canton, 155.
philosophy with organic philosophy to create a new hybrid. Johnston must overcome these two challenges in order to make the transition.

Summary

Church planters typically have a presupposed system of leadership, discipleship, and evangelism and mission’s philosophies and practices. Church planters must discern the culture of their target area and determine how to deliver their system to them. The church model is the mode of delivery for leadership, discipleship, and evangelism and missions. No church model makes this deliver the same way. A church model that is chosen solely on the church planter’s personal philosophies and practices may ultimately be irrelevant to the culture they are attempting to redeem. A church model that is chosen solely on the culture may not be a model that the church planter can truly embrace.

The practitioners deeply considered their target area before choosing a church model. It is surprised the author that three out of four of the practioners chose a hybrid model. Ultimately, they developed a hybrid model that would be relevant to both the culture and the practioners themselves. The hybrid model balanced the tension between the culture and the practitioner. It is for this reason that this author also chose and developed a hybrid model for his proposed church plant.
CHAPTER 4: STRATEGIC IDENTITY

Introduction

The chapter will demonstrate the development of the strategic identity for the proposed church plant. The strategic identity will include a clear vision and mission with corresponding strategy, values and measurements. The chapter will also demonstrate how to develop a strategic identity that is balanced with the culture of the target area.

Vision

It is imperative that the proposed church plant’s vision is clear. To help churches develop their vision, Mancini recommends the use of the “Vision Frame”¹ Mancini’s Vision Frame has five frame components, which are outlined below.

1. Mission
2. Values
3. Strategy
4. Measures
5. Strategy

Mancini’s Vision Frame provides the necessary framework to complete the development of a church’s vision.

Malphurs offers a similar construct with his “Three Critical Questions” which

are outlined below.

1. Where are we? (Who are we?)

Core Values

2. Where do we want to go?

Mission

Vision

3. How will we get there?

Strategy²

Contrasting the two constructs, this author appreciates the progression of Mancini’s Vision Frame. Mancini places mission or vision before values, which seems more logical. Due to the appreciation this author has for Mancini’s progression, the Vision Frame will aid in the development of the vision for this project’s proposed church plant. The development will define each of the five frame components for the proposed church plant.

**Mission**

Mancini describes mission as “a clear and concise statement that describes what the church is ultimately supposed to be doing.”³ The church planter must be able communicate the mission and function of his new church. George Barna also recommends a mission statement and defines it as a “general statement about who you wish to reach and what the church hopes to accomplish.”⁴ In addition, he recommends

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² Malphurs, 64.

³ Ibid., 113.

an additional vision statement that “details how the church expects to influence the world in which it will minister.” The two statements are needed to qualify the other. Mancini dismisses the need for both statements and simply recommends a strong mission statement. Experientially, this author has found that two statements tend to be forgotten by the target audience.

The mission statement for the proposed church plant will be “Building lives on Someone Greater, Jesus Christ.” Generally, residents of Hamilton County view Christianity as an object, a church building rather than a person, Jesus Christ. In addition, the wealth of Hamilton County breeds self-reliance. The mission statement challenges residents of Hamilton County’s spiritual condition on both fronts by stating that their lives must be built on a person not an object—a person who is greater than them.

Values

Mancini defines values as “shared convictions that guide the actions and reveal the strengths of the church.” Values answer the question “Why are we doing it?” or “Why are we doing it this way?” Values motivate the mission and the way mission is carried out. Mim Carlson and Margaret Donohoe supply a similar definition stating “values are the guiding principles that inspire and inform vision, mission, goals and overall culture of any nonprofit.” Carlson and Donohoe expect the values to guide, inspire and inform while Mancini expects them to guide and reveal.

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 125.
7 Ibid.
8 Mim Carlson and Margaret Donohoe The Executive Director's Guide to Thriving As a Nonprofit Leader (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010) chapter 5.
The values for the proposed church plant are Story, Training, Oneness, New Life, Excellence, and Sacrifice. These values will be communicated using the word ‘Stones’ as an acronym. They will be advertised as the 6 Stones. Each value has a corresponding qualifying statement.

6 Stones

1. We value Story.
   Jesus wants us to tell His Story.

2. We value Truth.
   Jesus wants us to be guided by the truth of His Word the Bible.

3. We value Oneness.
   Jesus wants us to love one another and grow together.

4. We value New Life.
   Jesus wants His New-Life to transform our attitudes and actions.

5. We value Excellence.
   Jesus wants us to bring Him our best.

6. We value Sacrifice.
   Jesus wants us to make the necessary sacrifices for His Gospel.

These values are not foreign to the value system of Hamilton County. The values of “Story” and “Truth,” should have common appeal to all people. The value of “Oneness” is evidenced in the county’s value of family and community. Judeo-Christian virtues are woven within the county’s culture, so there should be general agreement with the value of “New Life”. Excellence is appreciated within the county, which makes the
value of “Excellence” at church essential. County residents feel as though they have made the necessary sacrifices along the way to live in the affluent Hamilton County, so the value of “Sacrifice” should be understood on a secular level. These values will uniquely resonate with Hamilton County residents. In order for these values to motivate, church planters must help the county’s residents view these values biblical.

**Strategy**

Mancini describes ‘Strategy’ as the “process or picture that demonstrates how the church will accomplish its mandate on the broadest level.”\(^9\) The mission of the proposed church is “Building lives on Someone Greater, Jesus Christ.” The mission is simply a restatement of the Great Commission, which is to make disciples.

The strategy will determine how the proposed church will build lives or rather make disciples. To determine strategy, it is important for the proposed church to provide a definition for a disciple.\(^10\) Once a definition is supplied, a strategy can be derived.

In terms of this project, a disciple is devoted to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and is connected to His church for life and mission. The definition supplies the proposed building blocks required to be a disciple: devotion, connection, life and mission. The definition is simple so that it can be remembered while still communicating the building blocks required to be a disciple. The definition is illustrated

\(^9\) Ibid., 113.

\(^10\) Jonathan Falwell, 96.
Therefore, the derived discipleship strategy is to build ministry environments that encourage devotion, connection, life and mission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Building lives on Someone Greater, Jesus Christ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition of Disciple</strong></td>
<td>A disciple is devoted to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and is connected with His church for life and mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy Building Blocks</strong></td>
<td>Devotion, Connection, Life and Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td>To build ministry environments that encourages devotion, connection, life and mission.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Proposed Church’s Developed Vision Frame 1

The church planter surveys indicated that Midwesterners place a great value on
family. It is recommended that the church planter when applicable use common language to communicate strategy. In order to demonstrate this practice, this thesis project will use common family structure language to communicate the strategy of the proposed church. The proposed church’s mode for encouraging devotion, connection, life and mission will be called Concentric Family Groups (CFG’s) because lives are built best in families.11

Families are concentric by nature; one family group is part of a larger family group. A church should be structured concentrically like a family.12 A member joins the church and by default they should be members of other concentric groups that are designed to make disciples. When a member joins the church, by default they should be members of concentric family structures that form one cohesive discipleship strategy. Definitions vary on family structures but for the purpose of this thesis project, the following terms are generally defined. An extended family generally refers to grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grown siblings.13 The nuclear family generally refers to the immediate family, spouses, parents and children.14 Weighing the common understanding of family structures and language, it is recommended that CFG’s should

11 Mike Breen and Bob Hopkins, chapter 5 under “Cell”
12 Ibid., “What’s Their Pattern of Meeting?”
14 Ibid.
have the following structure and language.\textsuperscript{15}

- Family Groups: Modeled after the extended family, Family Groups are 25-55 adults who covenant together for connection and mission.\textsuperscript{16}

- Family Circle: Modeled after the nuclear family, Family Circles are 8-12 same gender adults within a Family Group who meet together for devotion and life.

- Sibling Groups: Modeled after the sibling relationship in a nuclear family, Sibling Groups are 2-3 same gender adults within a Family Circle who meet for together for devotion.\textsuperscript{17}

The CFG’s are designed to form a disciple making process. To be a disciple, one simply needs to be an active participant of a Family Group, which provides the structure and rhythms needed to make disciple-making disciples.\textsuperscript{18} The process is not linear but organic in nature. One may become active in a Sibling Group months before they ever attend a Family Circle. Yet, technically they have stepped into the discipleship process and or strategy. As a result of being connected to a Sibling Group, they become familiar with the Sibling Group’s Family Group and Circle. Their participation in a Sibling Groups enables them to be part of a larger system of support and ministry opportunity. T

A family is concentric in nature and so are CFG’s. Similar to a family structure, if one is a member of one CFG, they are by default, a member of all three related CFG’s.

\textsuperscript{15} Breen and Hopkins, chap. 5, under “Church Growth Insights.” The principles and spirit of these structures were in part, drawn from Breen and Hopkins book entitled Clusters.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., chap. 1, under “Clusters of Small Groups or just Mid-Sized Communities.”

\textsuperscript{17} Cole, 156.

\textsuperscript{18} Breen and Hopkins, under chap. 1, “Clusters of Small Groups or just Mid-Sized Communities”
If they join a Sibling Group, they are by default a member of a Family Circle and a greater Family Group. To demonstrate the concentricity of the CFG structure the CFG’s are illustrated below.

![Concentric Structure of CFG’s](image)

**Figure 17: Concentric Structure of CFG’s**

**Family Group Rhythms**

Families have their own unique ways or rhythms of doing things. A family may go on a annual family trip at Spring Break and another family may go during the summer. A family may do chores everyday and another family may save them for a weekly family workday on Saturday. Every family has certain rhythms that are unique to them.
Family groups are designed with concentric family rhythms that will encourage the practice of devotion, connection, life and mission. Family Groups and their subsequent rhythms are outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CFG Name</th>
<th>Weekly Rhythms</th>
<th>Monthly Rhythms</th>
<th>Annual Rhythms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Group (25-55 adults)</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Family Worship Gatherings</em> are bi-monthly attractional worship services for adults and kids that encourage devotion, connection, life and mission. <em>Family Group Gatherings</em> for devotion, connection, life and mission once a month. <em>Family Outings</em> once a month for connection and mission. <em>Stepping Stone Classes</em> once a quarter to encourage devotion, connection, life and mission within the family.</td>
<td>Family Trips for domestic missions and once every three years for international missions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Circle (8-12 adults within the Family Group)</td>
<td>Meet once a month for devotion, connection, life and mission.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling Group (2-3 same gender adults within the Family Circle)</td>
<td>Meet weekly for devotion and life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Concentric Family Group Rhythms

A Family Group consists of a multi-generational group of 25 to 55 adults who meet together for devotion, connection, life and mission. The size of the group allows the member to be part of a community, a spiritual extended family. The size is ideal for building biblical community, attracting prospects and accomplishing more missionally. Just like any family, a Family Group has rhythms of activity. Family Group rhythms are Family Gatherings, Family Outings, Family Trips and Stepping Stone Classes. These

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19 Breen and Hopkins, chap. 1 under “Clusters are Defined by Mission.”
rhythms provide a plethora of opportunities for family members to serve in various capacities.

Family Gatherings

A family gathering for an extended family is typically a celebration of relationships and life. There are two types of Family Gatherings, a worship gathering and a group gathering. Consequently, a worship gathering is when the entire Family Group meets twice a month for a worship service to celebrate life together in Christ. A church with 1,000 in weekly worship gathering attendance would have approximately 20-25 Family Groups gathered for worship. A church plant of 100 to 150 in weekly worship gathering attendance would have 3-5 Family Groups gathered in the service.

In a weekly worship gathering, each Family Group needs to be identified by some form of unique signage. The signage could be uniform or unique to the group that they may develop on their own. Members of the Family Group are encouraged to sit with their respective Family Group during the weekly worship gathering. Many times worship gatherings are modeled after an impersonal concert, which causes members to feel isolated. The Family Groups during the worship gathering provide each church member a family to sit and connect with during worship.

Guests of the weekly worship gathering are welcome to sit anywhere regardless of the Family Groups who have gathered. The leadership of the Family Group needs to ensure that guests who sit in their Family Group area receive information about their family structure and a calendar of their rhythms. The guest immediately has a sense of

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20 Ibid., chap. 2 under “Vision and Values.”
connection to a family, which will bridge the gap between Sunday mornings and the Family Group’s subsequent rhythms that take place throughout the week.

The Family Gathering during the worship gathering bridges this gap and fear by connecting the guest to a Family Group during the weekly worship gathering. Ultimately, the family gathering provides opportunity for deeper connection with one another and devotion to God. The second Family Gathering is the group gathering. The group gathering is when the Family Groups gather once a month outside of the worship gathering for devotion, connection, life and mission with their Family Group.

Family Outings

Nuclear families typically have a robust rhythm of Family Outings. A family outing may be the family going out to their favorite family restaurant or a day shopping at the nearest mall. Family Groups also have monthly outings or outreaches designed for connection and mission. These are accomplished through connection and mission events. A connection outreach event provides the platform to deepen existing relationship within the Family Group and or develop new relationships. A mission outreach event provides a platform for the family to restore the broken in their community. It is important to note that these are both outreach events and should be designed to reach out to those who are not yet connected to a Family Group. An example of a connection outreach event may be a tailgate party at the high school football game or a night at the bowling alley. An example of a mission outreach event is adopting an elementary school at Christmas to help families in need.

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21 Breen and Hopkins, chap. 3 under “Up:In:Out.”
The sheer size of the Family Group gives them the confidence to take on larger opportunities such as the adoption of a school.\textsuperscript{22} It is recommended that the Family Group schedule sixteen outreach events a year, four a quarter. To break it down further, it is recommended that there are eight annual connection and eight annual mission events. The leadership of the Family Group needs to develop an annual ministry plan that the twelve outreach events are designed to accomplish. An example would be a Family Group developing a ministry plan targeting youth sports. As a result, they may plan six connection outreach events in the form of tailgate parties before Middle and High School football games.

In addition, mission outreach events could be facilitating free one-day sports camps hoping to bless families who may not be able to afford sports camps that require a fee. As it relates to church planting, giving Family Groups the freedom to develop their unique ministry plans will allow the groups to effectively reach their ministry target.\textsuperscript{23}

Family Trips

Family Trips are a rite of passage for the American family. A trip allows the family to experience and accomplish something new together. Family Trips are a normal rhythm for the Family Groups as well. The Family Group leadership needs to include a domestic and international mission opportunity to adopt. Once adopted, it is imperative that mission trips are scheduled in order to expose the Family Group to needs around the world. Every member of a Family Group is encouraged to take one domestic mission trip annually and an international trip every three years. These trips will grow

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., chap. 1 under “Clusters are Defined by Mission.”

\textsuperscript{23} Breen and Hopkins, chap. 3 under “Up:In:Out.”
the missional appetite of the group locally, which will increase the effectiveness of the Family Outings.

Stepping Stones Classes

There will be four standing Stepping Stones Classes which are listed below that seek to explain the importance of each of the discipleship building blocks.

1. Step Into Devotion
2. Step Into Connection
3. Step Into Life
4. Step Into Mission

These four classes serve as a guide to let each family member and group know the steps they need to take spiritually.

Additional Concentric Groups and Rhythms

Within each Family Group is a Family Circle consists of 8-12 same gender adults within the Family Group who meet monthly for the purpose of devotion, connection and life. The preferred locations for Family Circles are homes. Comiskey demonstrates the significance of the home with the following outline of Jesus’ ministry.

• Jesus in the house of Peter (Matthew 8:14)
• Jesus in the house of Matthew (Matthew 9:10)
• Jesus in the house of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
• Jesus in the house of Lazarus and his sisters (Luke 10:38-42)
• Jesus in the house of Jairus (Mark 5:35-38)
• Jesus healing two blind people in a house (Matthew 9:28-30)
• Jesus in the house of Simon the leper (Matthew 26:6)
• Jesus teaching his disciples in a house (Mark 7:17-18; 9:33, 10:10)

24 Ibid.
• Jesus forgiving and healing a paralyzed person in a house (Luke 5:19)
• Jesus in the home of a Pharisee (Luke 14:1)
• Jesus instituting the Lord’s Supper in a house (Matthew 26:18)
• Jesus sent his twelve and his seventy disciples to heal and teach from village to village and house-to-house (Luke 9:1-9; 10:1-11)\(^{25}\)

The home is the perfect environment to cultivate devotion, connection, and life. Family Circles meetings consist of the following four elements: Devotion, Connection, Life, and Mission. The devotion element consists of a group discussion around the previous weekend’s message taught during the Sunday morning worship gathering. The connection elements of the Family Circle happen through strategic times of fellowship and prayer that allow for relationships to deepen amongst the group members.

The Family Circle will have also emphasized mission opportunities. Mission opportunities position the group members to care and serve each other, the church, and the community. The Family Circles are concentrically linked to their unique Family Group rhythms, which are gatherings, outings, and trips. The Family Circle will connect members to opportunities for mission at the Family Circle meetings themselves and the other Family Group Rhythms.

Within each Family Circle are several Sibling Groups. A Sibling Group consists of 2-3 same gender adults who meet weekly for the purpose of devotion.\(^{26}\) In essence, these are accountability groups that provide accountability to spiritual disciplines and the discipleship strategy. Sibling Groups are encouraged to develop organically within

\(^{25}\) Joel Comiskey, chap. 4 under “Christ Initiated a Home Based Ministry.”

\(^{26}\) Neil Cole, 156.
each Family Circle. Sibling groups need the following for their formation and function.

1) One to two individuals of the same gender who will commit to meet weekly for an hour and read thirty chapters each week.
2) A time and place to meet each week.
3) An agenda of five questions of accountability and the prayer guide.²⁷

The five questions and prayer will need to be carefully crafted to complement the proposed church’s discipleship strategy. The Sibling Groups will be very useful to new-believers who need someone to guide them into the distinct Family Rhythms. Once someone confesses Jesus as Lord and Savior, a Sibling Group ought to be the first step for spiritual growth.

Marks

Mancini defines measures or marks as a “set of attributes in an individual’s life that define or reflect accomplishment of the church’s mandate.”²⁸ Therefore, the marks need to correlate with the church’s strategy. If the correlation is not achieved, the church will not be able to truly measure strategy.

The following are the eleven marks to help measure the proposed church’s strategy.

1. Confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior
2. Baptized by immersion.
3. Gives tithes and offerings
4. Attends one Stepping Stones Course annually
5. Joins a Family Group
6. Studies God’s Word systematically
7. Prays systematically for the lost
8. Attends Family Rhythms

²⁷ Ibid., 175, 200-201.
²⁸ Will Mancini, 151.
9. Serves at Family Rhythms
10. Invites guests to family functions
11. Goes on a local and a domestic mission trip annually and at least one international trip every three years

Marks need to be measured objectively and each of the proposed eleven marks are objective. They need to objective for both the church and the individual. In order to measure marks objectively, it is important to outline methods to derive measurements.²⁹

The following chart lists the correlating measurement methods for each of the project’s proposed church marks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Sub point</th>
<th>Objective Measurement Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devoted to Jesus Christ.</td>
<td>Confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior</td>
<td>A written testimony of when an individual confessed Jesus Christ as Lord will be required in the Stepping Stones 1 course. Attendance will be taken to record whether a member has completed the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devoted to Jesus Christ.</td>
<td>Baptized by immersion</td>
<td>A written Baptism testimony of when individual was baptized will be required in the Stepping Stones 1 course. Attendance will be taken to record whether a member has completed the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devoted to Jesus Christ.</td>
<td>Gives tithes and offerings</td>
<td>The review of financial records will provide giving measurements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devoted to Jesus Christ.</td>
<td>Attends one Stepping Stones Course annually</td>
<td>Attendance will be taken to record the courses the individual has completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected to the church for life.</td>
<td>Joined a Family Group</td>
<td>Individuals joining a Family Group will sign covenants. Signed covenants will be recorded to determine Family Group members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected to the church for life.</td>
<td>Studies God’s Word systematically</td>
<td>The Family Circle is designed to cultivate systematically personal Bible Study. Tracking the attendance of the Families Circles will provide a measure of corporate Bible Study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected to the church for life.</td>
<td>Attends Family Rhythms</td>
<td>Attendance will be tracked for all Family Rhythms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected to the church for mission.</td>
<td>Prays systematically for the lost</td>
<td>The Family Circle is designed to cultivate systematic prayer for the lost. Tracking the attendance of the Families Circles will provide a measure of prayer activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁹Ibid., 155.
Connected to the church for mission. | Serves at Family Rhythms | Serving activity will be tracked for all Family Rhythms.
---|---|---
Connected to the church for mission. | Invites Guest | This measurement will be derived generally by calculating the number of guests attending a Family Group’s Rhythms. The number of guests will be divided by the number of Family Group members to calculate average number of guest per member.
Connected to the church for mission. | Goes on a local and a domestic mission trip annually and an international mission trip once every three years | Attendance will be tracked for local, domestic, and international mission trips.

Table 3: Proposed Church’s Marks, Sub points and Measurement Form

**Vision Proper**

Mancini states that Vision Proper is the “living language that anticipates and illustrates God’s better immediate future” which he breaks down into a basic milestone + mountaintop formula. A milestone is a micro goal and a mountaintop is a macro vision. He encourages an organization to adopt one milestone at time and for it to be measurable. Experientially, this author prefers that an organization adopt several milestones, perhaps one for each ministry. The proposed church is a new church and does not yet have a plethora of programs and ministries therefore, adopting one milestone is reasonable. It is recommended the proposed church adopt the following Vision Proper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Mountaintop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start two fully functioning Family Groups within the proposed church’s first year.</td>
<td>Start a Family Group within fifteen minutes of every resident of Hamilton County.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Proposed Church’s Milestone and Mountaintop

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30 Ibid., 113.
31 Ibid., 190.
Summary

Generally, a church plant begins with a vision that God places inside a church planter’s heart. It is imperative that the church planter can articulate the vision in a clear and compelling way. The research of this chapter demonstrates the development required to clarify mission and vision. Mancini’s Vision Frame provided a balanced structure for this development. The research guided this author to a completed Vision Frame for the proposed church plant.

The completed Vision Frame will be outlined in Chapter Six entitled, “Conclusion and Final Recommendations.” The research of this chapter also demonstrated how considering the culture affects how a church communicates the mission and the methods employed to execute it. Forcing a strategic identity upon a culture is not very strategic. The church planter must carefully weigh culture as he or she develops strategy that will effectively redeem it.
Chapter 5- First Year Launch Strategy

Introduction

The chapter will provide an overview of first year launch strategy for a church plant. It is imperative that the actions of launching a church are consistent with the church plant’s church model and strategic identity. The chapter outlines strategic first year steps that will ensure that the proposed church plant’s model and identity are not lost in the activity of launching a new church.

The Initial Team

Every church planter needs an initial team to help start the church. Historically, church planters called this a “Core Group.” The idea of a core group was to enlist and equip a group of people to serve as the foundation of the church.\(^1\) The planter’s goal is to impute the church’s DNA into this group. Once imputed, the planter would officially start the church upon the maturity of this group knowing that the core DNA was set.

Concerning core groups, Searcy and Thomas provide the following disclaimer.

Churches that only use the core-group process tend to start small and stay small. The reason has nothing to do with spiritual depth but rather with psychological laws: Individuals who meet together and work closely with each other for more than a couple of months will develop deep relationships and work to protect those relationships. In short, the group turns inward.\(^2\)

To avoid growing inwardly, Searcy and Thomas recommend initially enlisting and equipping a “Launch Team” to help with the start-up activities of the new

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\(^1\) Searcy and Thomas, 141.

\(^2\) Ibid., 141-143.
church but not to serve as the core of the church.\(^3\) Instead of a lifetime commitment, the church planter asks the launch team for a four to six month time commitment to launch activities that lead to the church’s start. The launch team would dissolve completely once the public worship services and begin to transition into a core group.\(^4\) A church planter initially enlists a launch team who will launch a crowd that will ultimately be funneled or transitioned into a core group, which is essentially a Three-Stage Start.

![Diagram of Three-Stage Start: Launch Team, Crowd, and Core Group](image)

Figure 18: Three-Stage Start: Launch Team, Crowd, and Core Group

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\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid, 141-157.
Enlisting a Launch Team: Three Components

Figure 19: Enlisting a Launch Team

Reputable sales system developers Miller Heiman Inc. attests that many sales people funnel prospects into a “Sales Funnel.” The sales person determines the number of actions required to make a sale and then methodically funnels prospects through the actions. Similarly, enlisting a launch team requires a funnel of the following actions: engagement, experience, and enlistment. It is recommended that Legacy Stone Church engage Hamilton County with intentional canvassing and prayer walking. The engagement is directed toward an outreach event experience. The outreach event is designed to allow the residents of a target area to experience first hand the culture of the

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5 Stephen E. Heiman, Diane Sanchez, Tad Tuleja, and Robert B. Miller, chapter 4 under Key Element 6: The Sales Funnel.
new church. This outreach event needs to be leveraged to enlist residents of a target area to be members of the launch team.

The actions of engagement, experience, and enlistment are designed to take place over the time span of two months. During the first month, the church planter engages the residents of his target area. The second month he provides them an outreach event experience and then enlists them to be members of his launch team.

**Enlisting a Launch Team: Engagement**

God spent the entire Old Testament engaging or rather preparing Israel for the coming of Jesus. Jesus spent three years engaging and preparing His target area before He launched the first church. God did not skip this action and church planters err when they skip it. The action of engagement allows a church planter to discover where God is working within the target area.

The basics of engaging a target area are canvassing and prayer walking.\(^6\) Canvassing can be anything from conducting surveys to soliciting interest and passing out promotional materials for the outreach event experience. Prayer walking is simply walking through neighborhoods and praying for the residents of the target area.

**Enlisting a Launch Team: Experience**

To enlist a launch team, it is important to choose the right outreach event experience. To choose the right event, two important questions must be answered. The first question is “What outreach event experience will effectively connect with the community?” The church planter must select events that will appeal and attract a crowd from the community. The second question that must be answered is “What outreach

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\(^6\) Searcy and Thomas, 175.
event experience can a mission team execute?” Typically, the church planter will have partnered with churches to send mission teams into his target area to help enlist a launch team. The age and ability of the mission team is important. If the target area demographic consists of young families, then a mission team of young families would be essential. In addition, the mission team must have the abilities to execute the event. The church planter may have plans to execute an event such as a sports camp in the area. If the mission team sent to help is not sports oriented, it is safe to assume that camp will not be successful.

**Enlisting a Launch Team: Enlistment**

The actions of engagement and outreach event experiences need funnel to the action of enlistment. The action of enlistment typically takes place in the form of a vision-casting event. A vision-casting event may be called many different things but it is typically designed as a stand-alone event that enables the church planter to share his vision and invite those who attend to join his launch team. The vision event needs to have a casual atmosphere where prospects can meet the church planter and his team and learn about the vision.

**Equipping a Launch Team**

As soon as the launch team is recruited, it is essential that the church planter gather them weekly to equip them on how to execute an outreach event. After six to eight weeks of team gatherings, the team will be equipped to launch an outreach strategy with the church planter. The training at these gatherings can gain momentum if the church planter chooses an outreach strategy that excites the team. When this is

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7 Ibid.
accomplished, the launch team will engage their relational networks to bring friends and family to the events.

**Establishing a Core Group**

Once the crowd is launched and sustained through systematic outreach events, then the church planter can begin to build his core group. The church planter will have to intentionally develop discipleship groups and assimilate the crowd into those groups. The assimilation will typically not happen organically, the church planter must drive this assimilation. Ultimately, these discipleship groups will represent the core of the church.

**Summary**

A new church needs a strong start. The actions that a church planter takes within the first year must launch the church into the culture with the right model and strategic identity. The first year actions must consider the culture and compliment the church plant’s church model and strategic identity.
CHAPTER 6- CONCLUSION AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The chapter serves as the conclusion of the project. The conclusion will include a review of the project and a series of recommendations for the proposed church plant. The recommendations represent a complete research summary of the project.

Project Review

Chapter 1 introduced the thesis of this project, which was to provide a biblical church-planting prospectus that takes into account the culture of the proposed church plant’s area within the Indianapolis MSA area, specifically Hamilton County. In order to take into account the culture of the church plant’s target area, chapter 2 titled “Target Area” provided a full demographic study of Hamilton County. Chapter 3 titled “Church Models” presented an overview of prevalent church models used by existing churches and new churches. Chapter 4 titled “Strategic Identity” developed the strategic identity or footprint required for a new church in Hamilton County. This strategic identity supplied the language and strategy to clearly communicate the mission of the church. Chapter 5 titled “First Year Launch Strategy,” outlined the steps ensure that the predetermined church model and strategic identity of the new church is not lost within the first year activity of a new church.

The following paragraphs will present recommendations from the research for this thesis project’s proposed church plant. The recommendations are limited to the research within the first five chapters of this project. The recommendations will demonstrate that the author deeply considered the culture and how the culture shapes
strategy.

**Target Resident Profile (TRP): Recommendation**

According to Warren, a TRP is a “composite profile of the typical unchurched person” that church planters seek to reach within their target area.¹ Based on the demographic research completed in chapter 2 titled “Target Area,” the author recommends the following TRP for Hamilton County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hamilton County Target Resident Profile (TRP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Value of House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Description</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Hamilton County Target Resident Profile

The TRP will be referred to in the masculine gender. The following paragraphs will describe the author’s general assumptive response to the TRP. The TRP is a thirty-six year old white male who is married with two school age children. He manages a

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¹ Warren, 169.
household income of $84,821. He maintains a professional career that required him to earn graduate-level education. His education, income and profession have allowed him to purchase his perceived dream home with an approximate value of $214,400. He does not over-romanticize his career. He feels like he earned his profession and working is his duty to family and community.

He is motivated by the happiness and success of his family. He will make social sacrifices for the family, maybe even refusing career opportunities because they would not be good for his family. He looks forward to spending time with his family and activities that can be done as a family.

He is also very proud of his community, always citing how great the schools; trails and parks are compared to those of other communities. In addition, he often comments that his community is the perfect distance from Indianapolis, close enough to work and play. He would not want his family to live in the city of Indianapolis but he often visits and enjoys the city’ attractions with his family. He views his community’s proximity to the city as another nice amenity or perks for his family to enjoy.

He appreciates anything that works and brings value regardless of how simple or sophisticated it may be. An example would be his love for sports. Sports bring value to the city economically. Sports bring value for him because they help him remain physically active. Sports are great for his children because instill leadership skills. This pragmatic, practical disposition causes him to be conservative politically. He often finds
himself voting Republican because of the promise of simplified government.

Spiritually, he grew up going to church but hasn’t been active in years. His sense of duty manifests itself spiritually into performance-based religion. He works to be a good student, employee, co-worker, citizen and neighbor for the purpose of being a good person. He inherently believes that spiritual peace is found in doing good deeds.

As a result, he is very kind and hospitable often performing acts of kindness, which is the tangible evidence he needs to prove his goodness. He is very skeptical of any religion that he cannot control with his works. He is also skeptical of any religion that doesn’t work to produce tangible value. Due the fact that he has reduced religion to works, he is apathetic or unemotional about religion or the church.

Target Resident Profile (TRP): Summary

The author’s interpretation of the TRP will obviously not apply to everyone within Hamilton County. The TRP will not apply to everyone evenly within Hamilton County. The TRP is simply a general profile to clarify who the church is attempting to reach.

The development of this church-planting prospectus is sequential beginning with the TRP. The TRP was developed first which shaped the balance of this prospectus. The TRP becomes the mold used to shape on-going communication and program development.

Developing a sales profile is standard practice in secular sales. A familiar sales
training seminar is Miller Heiman Inc.’s “Strategic Selling” which recommends the
development of an “Ideal Customer Profile.”\(^2\) The profile’s “function is to help
[salesmen and saleswomen] in identifying [his or her] real best prospects and in
separating them from ones who will prove liabilities.” The Ideal Customer Profile much
like the TRP clarifies the target customer for the sales forces. The church planter is
not looking for customers but the church is leveraging resources to reach people for
Christ.

**Church Models: Recommendation**

A decision has to be made to discern which church model will effectively reach
the developed TRP. The research of chapter 3 titled “Church Models,” presented the
following church models: Traditional, Attractional, Organic, and a Hybrid or blend of
the two or three of the models. The target area of this project is a growing white collar
demographic influenced by Midwestern culture.

The proposed church plant will be a hybrid, blending the attractional and organic
models. The attractional model will provide an attraction Sunday morning worship
service with children’s ministry. The organic model will provide missional communities
with midsized groups (Concentric Family Groups) for community and small groups for
accountability. An attractional Sunday morning experience and organic missional
communities represent competing philosophies. To bridge the gap between the two
philosophies, Concentric Family Groups are designed with an attractional form. They

\(^2\) Stephen E. Heiman, Diane Sanchez, Tad Tuleja, and Robert B. Miller, *The New Strategic
Selling: The Unique Sales System Proven Successful by the World's Best Companies, Revised and
Ideal Customer Profile.
will be organic in their missional expression but programmed in their structure.

Church Models: Summary

Similar to the challenge facing Basile in his dissertation *A Strategy To Plant A Missional, Multiplying Church In Pulaski County, Kentucky*, it would be difficult for residents of this project’s target area to understand a church without a Sunday morning worship gathering that has some level of children’s programming. Basile addressed this challenge by blending the attractional and organic models. Basile’s strategy provided an attractional Sunday morning experience and organic missional communities.

In contrast to Basile, the target area of this proposed church plant consists of a white collar demographic that places a high value on family and community. Yet, the target area also expects high-level programming on Sunday morning but would appreciate missional expression to the community that missional communities have to offer. Basile and this author have different target areas but a similar challenge and recommendation.

**Strategic Identity: Recommendation**

The church model must be energized with a clear mission and strategy that connects with the developed TRP. Chapter 4, titled “Strategic Identity” utilizes Mancini’s Vision Frame to develop the church’s mission or strategic identity. The Vision Frame provides the necessary framework in the form of five components to complete the development of the church’s mission. The table below outlines the first

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3 Basile, *A Strategy To Plant A Missional, Multiplying Church In Pulaski County*.

4 Mancini, 114.
three components of the proposed church’s vision frame: mission, values and strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision Frame</th>
<th>Proposed Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Building Lives On Someone Greater, Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Six Stones-Story, Truth, Oneness, New-Life, Excellence, Sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>We build ministry environments that encourage devotion, connection, life and mission. The ministry environments are built within Concentric Family Groups (CFG) Each Member is encouraged to join a Family Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family Groups (25-55 adults) are made up of smaller groups called Family Circles and Sibling Groups that meet throughout the week, providing deeper devotion and life opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family Groups gather on Sundays for groups and worship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family Groups have a calendar of Family Outings (Connection and Mission Events) and Family Trips (Mission Trips)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: The Proposed Church’s Developed Vision Frame 2.1

The next table presents the last two components of the proposed church’s vision: measures and vision proper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision Frame</th>
<th>Proposed Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>1. Confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Baptized by immersion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Gives tithes and offerings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Attends one Stepping Stones Course annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Joined a Family Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Studies God’s Word systematically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Prays systematically for the lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Attends Family Rhythms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Serves at Family Rhythms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Invites guests to family functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Goes on a local and a domestic mission trip annually and an international trip once every three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision Proper</td>
<td>Milestone-Start two fully functioning Family Groups within the proposed church’s first year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mountaintop- Start a Family Group within fifteen minutes of every resident of the Indianapolis CSA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: The Proposed Church’s Developed Vision Frame 2.2
Strategic Identity: Summary

Consequently, a church planter must be able to communicate a developed Vision Frame to prospects for his or her church plant. When asked to join something new, reasonable prospects want to know the what, how, why, when and where of what they are joining. The discipline of developing a Vision Frame provides these answers and ensures that they balance with the developed TRP and church model. Similar to the TRP, the Vision Frame shapes on-going communication and program development. In addition, the Vision Frame brings vision to on-going communication and program development.

Church Name: Recommendation

Considering the proposed Vision Frame, it is important that the name of the proposed church communicates the mission or at the very least, complements it. Naming a church is a study all to its own. A quick survey of church names in any given city in North America will reveal a wide range of differentiation. Church names are chosen for many different reasons such as geography, mission, spiritual truth, denominational affiliation, or an appeal to a segment of the population. As it pertains to this project’s proposed church, a name was selected that appealed to a mission, spiritual truth, and the common concern of man. The proposed name is Legacy Stone Church.

Church Name: Summary

A common concern of man is the legacy that one leaves behind. The only true answer to a legacy is the person of Jesus Christ. He is the chief cornerstone of all lasting

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legacies, the Legacy Stone. It also communicates the mission—Building lives on Someone Greater, Jesus Christ.

The concern over legacy is heightened in Hamilton County. Hamilton County residents value family and community and are striving to leave them a legacy. The name Legacy Stone Church should have special appeal to Hamilton County residents.

**First Year Launch Strategy: Recommendation**

Chapter 5 titled “First Year Launch Strategy” outlined the actions of the “Three Stage Start” which consists of the Launch Team, Crowd, and Core Group. As it relates to this project, it is recommended that the church planter implement the Three-Stage Start: Launch Team, Crowd, and Core Group.

A launch team needs to be enlisted initially to launch a crowd through a series of systematic outreach events. Launching a crowd requires minimal training and enables Legacy Stone Church to immediately leverage the gifts and talents reflected amongst his team. In addition, the immediacy of this approach will give the launch team a common cause. Once a crowd is sustained, Legacy Stone Church can intentionally build a Core Group from the crowd.

**First Year Launch Strategy: Summary**

The resident surveys revealed that 88% of the residents surveyed grew up going to church yet only 55% still actively attend. A significant percentage of Hamilton County residents are de-churched. The launch team and the crowd represent new and neutral re-entry points that may be attractive to the de-churched.
The event culture of the launch team and the crowd will demonstrate an “Open Mindedness” and “Welcoming Atmosphere” that were values that the resident surveys revealed. Therefore, the Three-Stage Start is recommended for Legacy Stone Church in order to effectively reach the unchurched and the high percentage of de-churched in Hamilton County.

**Enlisting a Launch Team: Recommendation**

As it pertains to this thesis project, it is recommended that mission teams engage Hamilton County with prayer walking and canvassing. The action should funnel toward an outreach experience event. The experience event should answer the following question: “What outreach event experience will effectively connect with the community?” It is recommended that the church planter choose a Vacation Bible School (VBS) as the outreach event experience to enlist a launch team. In order to gain momentum, it is further recommended that the church planter conduct three consecutive VBS events, on three different weeks, in three different public schools.

A VBS is designed for children, which will bring relevance to the young families in Hamilton County. The church planter surveys revealed that residents place a strong value on “Family.” The demographic study also revealed that Hamilton County has the highest percentages of collective family household measurements across the MSA. A VBS will appeal to the family demographic and the overall the value system of the county.
The resident surveys indicated that residents placed a high value on his or her community. The public schools represent the hub of community life within Hamilton County. Renting the public school buildings for the VBS’s should provide the church plant immediate credibility with parents and the community.

The experience event strategy must also answer the question, “What outreach event experience can a mission team execute? A VBS is a summer strategy, which will enable the church planter to benefit from mission teams who are more available in the summer. In addition, mission teams typically have hands-on experience with the VBS strategy, which will enable them to execute more effectively.

Generally, a month before the church planter conducts the three VBS events, mission teams would need to engage the target area by canvassing and prayer walking in the area surrounding the public schools buildings chosen. The engagement will provide opportunity for the mission teams to share about the new church and invite residents to the VBS events.

The three VBS events would start on Monday and finish on Wednesday. They would be held in the mornings so that the mission teams would be able to continue canvassing and prayer walking in the afternoons. The continued engagement will provide opportunity for the VBS’s to grow throughout the week. Traditionally on the last night, VBS’s have a Family Night where parents can attend with their children. It is

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recommended that the three VBS events have their family night on Thursday night. The family night will be a platform for the church planter to formally invite all of the attending families to an enlistment event. The enlistment event would take place on the Sunday night following the VBS.

The goal will be one hundred and twenty families represented at the three VBS events. Out of the one hundred and twenty represented, the goal would be to have thirty families or twenty-five percent attend the “Vision Event.” Out of those thirty families represented, the goal would be to have at least seven families or rather twenty-five percent join the launch team. The average family size in Hamilton County consists 3.19 family members, which would provide a launch team of twenty-two. The strategy should provide the church planter a launch team of twenty to twenty-five launch team members, in two months.

Enlisting a Launch Team: Summary

The author was surprised to have chosen a church product such as a VBS as the recommended outreach event. The author initially surmised that an area lacking church density would lack consumers who are seeking church products such as a VBS. Ultimately, the goal is to enlist a launch team. Enlistment is simply easier with those who are seeking a church. In addition, the resident surveys indicated a large percentage of residents who are de-churched. A VBS or rather a church product would have appeal to those who have familiarity with the church such as the de-churched residents. The VBS model was chosen to attract seekers and those who have familiarity with the church.
**Equipping a Launch Team: Recommendation**

It is recommended that the church planter spend six to eight weeks training the new enlisted Launch Team. The training will be focused on leveraging the launch team to launch a crowd through a series of outreach events. A series of outreach events provide on-the-job intuitive training that is conducive to a movement. A newly enlisted Launch Team member can immediately show up and help at the next outreach event with very little training.

The launch of a crowd is a paradox of sorts. One method can draw an enormous crowd one day while drawing no one the next. As it relates to launching a crowd that will ultimately transition to a core group, one isolated event may not be adequate. Therefore, it is recommended that the launch team execute a series of outreach of events over the course of several weeks and perhaps months.

Eventually, after three years of public ministry, Jesus gave his ultimate challenge to the crowd: Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’ (Mark 8:34). Jesus was able to ask for that kind of commitment from the crowd only after demonstrating his love for them and earning their trust.8

It is recommended that the outreach events take place Sunday mornings. These outreach events will allow the church planter to build a sustained crowd on Sunday mornings. A sustained crowd on Sunday mornings will be useful when the time comes to transition to Sunday worship experiences.

The goal of the outreach events would be to sustain a crowd and grow the launch team. The Sunday outreach strategy would continue until the launch team grew from 22

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8 Warren, 135.
to 75 members. A launch team of 75 would be large enough for the church planter to transition the crowd into a core.

Equipping a Launch Team: Summary

Initially, this author developed a plan to have multiple outreach events on Friday and Saturdays. Ultimately, this author recommended a series of outreach events on Sunday mornings. Living in Hamilton County, this author has discovered that residents are generally familiar with what a church is supposed to look like in the main. Outreach that dismisses the importance of Sunday morning may be even be considered uncouth by the culture. The Sunday morning outreach will help position the church plant as a legitimate Sunday morning option for prospecting launch team members.

In addition, the resident surveys indicated a strong value on community. It is recommended that that Legacy Stone Church position many of the Sunday morning outreach events toward tangibly loving the community. Doing so will excite the launch team and build credibility within the community.

Establishing a Core Group: Recommendation

Johnston’s dissertation “Developing Missional Communities at The Chapel in North Canton” documents transitioning an existing attractional church to an organic hybrid model.9 The transition for a church plant at this point is similar. The Sunday outreaches are purely attractional. The crowd that the outreaches attracted now needs to be transitioned into a discipleship strategy with organic missional expression.

As it pertains to Legacy Stone Church, the recommended discipleship strategy to make this transition has already been identified as Concentric Family Groups (CFG’s).

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9 Johnston, 155.
The crowd that was formed from the launch strategy would be the church’s first Family Group, which would be led by the church planter. The first Family Group would initiate the rhythms prescribed by the CFG strategy in the recommended sequence illustrated below.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 20: Establishing a Core Group**

The first Family Group would break up into four Family Circles and meet in homes once a month. These four groups would be two men’s groups and two women’s groups. The Family Circles would break down further into smaller Sibling Groups, which would meet weekly.

The Family Group would cooperate together to continue the Sunday outreach events that developed from the launch strategy. The Sunday outreaches would take the
place of the Family Gatherings and Family Outings for the first three months of the Family Groups. The continuation of the Sunday outreaches would enable the Launch Team to continue to grow through the transition from crowd to core.

Within three months, the first Family Group and perhaps a second depending on growth would launch Sunday morning rhythms of weekly Family Gatherings and Outings. At this point, the Family Groups will gather weekly on Sunday morning at 10am. The recommended Sunday morning rhythms are illustrated in the chart below.

Figure 21: Proposed Church’s Sunday Gatherings and Outings
The Family Groups will meet for a worship gathering the first two Sundays of every month. The church will meet for a group gathering the third Sunday of every month. The church will meet for Family Outings the fourth and fifth Sunday of every month for connection and mission events. These rhythms will naturally roll out the building blocks for the discipleship strategy.

In addition to the Sunday Rhythms, the Family Circles and Sibling Groups will meet throughout the month. Within the first year, the Family Groups will choose a domestic mission opportunity and send family members to that location for family mission trip. The Family Group will also be making plans to take their first international mission trip.

This Sunday Rhythm is unconventional but will allow the church planter to intentionally lay the discipleship building blocks into the culture of his church. At some point, a weekly worship gathering may need to be implemented. If it is determined that a weekly worship gathering is needed, the rhythms would then flow directly from the Family Groups throughout the week.

Establishing a Core Group: Summary

Williams’ dissertation entitled A Strategy For Planting A Multiplying Church In Midlothian, Virginia proposed an attractional worship gathering with an organic group strategy for his white-collar community.¹⁰ The strategy of Legacy Stone Church is similar but doesn’t rely on the health of the missional communities or Family Groups to happen organically. The strategy employs some level of attractional programming into the Family Group structure and even the attractional worship gathering to ensure that

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¹⁰ Williams, entitled A Strategy For Planting A Multiplying Church In Midlothian, Virginia.
disciples are practicing healthy rhythms. William’s challenge in his target area is managing the white-collar demand for additional programming and ministries, which will also challenge Legacy Stone Church. The attractional form of the proposed church will help subside this demand.

**Chapter Summary**

The recommendations provided a biblical church-planting prospectus that took into account the culture of the proposed church plant’s area within the Indianapolis MSA area, specifically Hamilton County. The discipline of developing the church-planting prospectus flowed from this author’s desire to follow Jesus’s example with His incarnation. The recommendation of this prospectus was not compromised by culture. The recommendations of this prospectus simply considered it deeply in hopes of leveraging it for the purpose of redemption.

**Thesis Restatement**

The thesis of this project was to develop a biblical church-planting prospectus that takes into account the culture of the proposed church plant’s area within the Indianapolis MSA area, specifically Hamilton County. This thesis clearly introduced the reader to the research and development required in order to write a church-planting prospectus. In addition, this author hopes that the proposed prospectus will challenge church planters to develop a church-planting prospectus before they move into their target area and attempt to start a new church. To maximize Kingdom resources, it seems wise for church planters to develop a target area profile, church model, strategic identity, and a first year launch strategy.


October 2, 2013

Joseph Lightner
IRB Exemption 1659.100213: Midwest Mission: Developing a Church Planting Prospectus for the City of Indianapolis

Dear Joseph,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless:
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

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Resident Survey

1. Did you grow up in the Midwest?

2. Did you grow up attending church? If so, what church?

3. Are you actively attending any church? If so, what church?  

4. What do you think is the greatest need in this area?

5. Why do you think most people don’t attend church?

6. If you were to look for a church to attend, what kind of things would you look for?

7. What advice can you give to a new church that really wants to be helpful to people in the community?

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11 Warren, 190-191. (Questions 3-7 are taken directly from Warren.)
Church Planter Survey

1. Did you grow up in the Midwest?
2. What five words would you use to describe Midwestern culture?
3. What are the top three values of Midwestern culture?
4. What three words would you use to describe Midwestern spiritual culture?
5. What is the most attractive aspect of the Gospel to a Midwesterner?
6. What are the top three barriers to the Gospel that are unique to the Midwest?
7. What methods has your church utilized to effectively address these barriers?
8. What must a church planter remember in order to be effective in the Midwest?