

KNOW YOUR MISSION FIELD

Purpose

- To open yourself to information that can further clarify God's calling in your life;
- To fully explore and understand the community, the people, the needs, and your own compatibility in order to increase your effectiveness as a church planter;
- To strengthen the viability and relevance of your new church plant;
- To establish the need and the potential for success for a new church in the proposed area (required by many funding organizations and sometimes referred to as a "feasibility study").

Potential Sources of Information

- **Written:**
 - Demographics: www.mbc.org using Scan/US
 - Census 2000 Census.gov
 - Area realtors
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Public Schools
 - Local Newspapers
 - Local Civic Club
 - City & Community Publications
- **Observation/Conversations:**
 - PROBE 2 – contact the Church Planting Department
 - Teams driving or walking through the area and carefully observing the community
 - Door-to-door surveys (if accepted positively in community)
 - Conversations with public leaders, community and/or city employees
- **Personal Involvement:**
 - Personally developing long-term relationships with neighbors & residents
 - Involvement in local community activities & events
 - Volunteer service in community organizations
- **Ongoing Personal Prayer** and Conversations with spouse, family, core group, mentor, and church planting coach.

KNOW YOUR MISSION FIELD
A Worksheet of Suggested Information to Gather & Consider

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age? Ethnicity? Language spoken at home?
Education levels? Income? Employment Status?
Housing type (owned, rented)? Transportation Availability?
Family/Marital Status? Average Family Size?
% of Newcomers?

BELIEFS & PRACTICES

What other churches are in the area?
Are they well attended? Effective?
Are they reaching the entire population?
Are there mosques? Temples? Palm Readers?
Obtain phone numbers of other religious/spiritual leaders in the community. Meet
with them to share perspectives and learn from them about the community.

LIFESTYLES / LIFE STAGES

There is some overlap of definition in the terms "lifestyle" and life stage." Generally, "lifestyle" represents conditions of life which involve some degree of choice or control exercised by the individual (though this may be severely limited in such cases as poverty, homelessness, etc.). "Life stage" generally indicates a natural or progressive passage of life such as adolescent, student, newly married, parents of toddlers, empty nest, widowhood, etc.

Community/Public Services & Institutions:

Schools, Hospitals, Critical Care Units
Community Medical Clinics, Nursing Homes
Retirement Centers, Adult Day Care, Child Care Centers
Detention Centers, Half-way houses, Correctional Facilities,
Shopping centers, Grocery stores, Specialty Stores
Parks, Playgrounds, Community Centers
How do things look? Well-kept or not?
Who is going in and out of the facilities?
Is there any information available to the public?

Housing Facilities

Apartments? High-rise, multi-unit? New? Old?
Single Residences: Age? Price range? Appearance? Condition/
How many for sale? Occupied? Vacant?

Other Indicators

What does the community look like during the day? At night?
Is it gated? Are people outside?
Trash & Litter or Well-manicured lawns?
Children playing? Adults loitering?
Playground? Toys in front yards?
Recreational vehicles? Bicycles, Boats, Campers
Types of vehicles?
American-made cars? Trucks with gun racks? SUV's?

All these and others can give you clues about how people live. As you get to know people in the neighborhood, discover how they spend their leisure time, what their concerns are, where they work, and where their children go to school.

PHYSICAL / SOCIAL NEEDS:

What needs are indicated by what you have observed thus far?
What do public servants, officials, and community leaders say?
What do the neighbors say?

SPIRITUAL NEEDS:

Signs of excessive materialism? A self-absorbed lifestyle?
Sexually oriented businesses? High incidences of loitering
Signs of gang activity?
Palm-readers? Temples? Mosques?
What can you observe about the spiritual condition of the community?
As you talk with people, what concerns do they express?
How do they spend time and money?
What is the status of their family life?

CHANGES:

Observe all signs of change:
population increases or decreases?
economic growth or decline?
new construction of homes or businesses?
homes for sale? residences, multi-housing complexes or businesses vacant?

RECEPTIVITY:

Are there signs of receptivity to spiritual things?
Temple, mosques, palm readers may indicate spiritual seeking.
Are there members of the community willing to become a part of your core group or launch team?
Is there a person in whose home you can meet?

- *Gather all the information you can about the mission field God is calling you to.*
- *Prayerfully seek God's guidance in understanding the implications of that information for your new church start.*
- *Prayerfully seek counsel from your spouse, your core group, your mentor, and your church planting mentor concerning the implications for your new church start.*