

Demographic Survey Taskbook

Target Location - _____



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Introduction

A church planting demographic survey is strategic for a church planter, Church Planter Resource Team, Core Group Launch Team, and/or particular church in order to analyze a geographical ministry target location and determine if the targeted area would be receptive to a new church plant. This manual can also inform a particular church about its target area or a new community the church wants to reach.

The **Population Survey** investigates the growth trends from various perspectives: historical, population movements in or out of the target location, ethnicity, housing and income statistics. A population survey should reveal who lives in the target location, their housing, their income level, population density, and employment information. A target area should begin to surface through this survey.

The **Ecclesiastical Survey** locates existing evangelical churches, church plants, Christian organizations and ministries in the target location. This survey should assist in selecting a target location that is not already saturated with the Gospel witness and also determine where partnerships can be made with other churches and Christian ministries.

The **Community Survey** is a sociological tool to study the target location's community characteristics, political, educational, business, media and social life. This information will be helpful in making contacts and sensing the heartbeat of community life. Note: Church Extension has available a "BFC Community Survey Manual." This manual is geared toward doing a "needs assessment" of a community.

The **Community Targeting** aspect of the demographic survey is very valuable. At this stage interviews will take place, excursions into the target location are arranged, and a vision for where the church should be planted begins to emerge.

The **Conclusion** to the demographic survey is the compilation, study, and discussion of all the findings from the various sections of the survey. During this final stage, the planter and or team or church will formulate recommendations for where the church should be planted in the target location, what people should be targeted, and develop recommendations for approval. All this will assist the church planter and his core/launch team.

It should be noted that it may be tempting to take some shortcuts with the survey by generalizing information about the target location or accepting someone else's evaluation of the target location. The profit of doing this survey is for those doing the survey to come to their own understanding and interaction with the target location and compile an accurate and informative tool for planting.

A final reminder: church planting and the targeting of an area are ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit and the direction He gives during the course of the demographic survey (Acts 16:1-10). Those doing the demographic survey should bathe their work in prayer and seek the Holy Spirit's leading. During the course of the survey the planter and/or team should be looking for the Spirit to open doors and close some. They need to look for His leading to helpful people in the target location and His direction for the place he wants the church to be planted. Prayerful and diligent work will lead to a target location that is warranted by the demographics and the Holy Spirit's blessing.

Note - Demographic Indicators for Planting

- There is no Bible Fellowship Church presence or the presence of a church that holds to the BFC Reformed doctrinal distinctives.
- There is little evidence of a discipling church. A discipling church is one that focuses on the preaching and teaching of the Word versus a charismatic, Pentecostal, or liberal approach to ministry.
- The population in the target area has demonstrated growth for at least the last three years.
- New churches are needed to accommodate the growth of the area.
- Existing new and projected new residential communities exist and/or are planned.
- Retail business has grown in the last three years with projections for more growth.
- There is little evidence of vacant homes and businesses. The economy for the area is positive.
- There exists the presence of potential meeting facilities.
- Positive and interested responses are received from the interviewing of local pastors, business and officials.
- Positive and interested responses are received from the community surveying.
- There is a positive atmosphere for marketing the new church, i.e. openness from officials for placing signage, holding community meetings, community surveying, etc.
- Was anyone saved during the penetration attempts into the target community?
- Are other para-church ministries in the area and are they willing to cooperate with a new church plant?
- Other church plant attempts having succeeded or failed. Why?
- There are small exciting churches or church plants in the area willing to partner or join with a new church plant.
- The Resource Team displays a positive attitude toward continuing on to plant.
- There are evidences of the Spirit's confirmation of planting, i.e. the people the team meets in the target area, the salvation of a soul, the responses of people in the target area to join up, the opening of facilities to meet, finances being offered for the plant, etc.
- Are prayers being answered?

Add your Indicators:

Demographics

Population Survey

I. Search the U.S. Census Bureau’s website for the latest population statistics on the community under investigation. Here are more helpful sites:

- * <http://www.perceptgroup.com> (*This one is the most helpful.*)
<http://maps.huge.info/zip.htm>
<http://www.ethnicarvest.org/regions/mapdoc.htm>
<http://www.city-data.com/zips/19119.html>
<http://www.church-marketing.com> – free demographic report
<http://www.churchplanting4me.com/request-demographic.htm>

Note: Look at age, income, housing, and ethnic categories specifically.

Assigned to:

Project Completion Date:

II. Search the local statistics of the target location. Visit the city and county planning or zoning offices, usually located in the county courthouse and/or city hall.

Note: Look for a “Census Tract,” or a recent planning projection booklet, maps or other information that will give you a breakdown of what areas of the county/city are set aside for residential development. Seek to determine if the county/city has a proposed “planning” strategy for the future. This will help you determine if certain areas are designated for future housing or future industry. When in the zoning or planning offices pick up all the various maps that are available and look them over carefully and highlight pertinent information.

Assigned to:

Projected Completion Date:

Ecclesiastical Survey

I. Complete a church survey. Search for all the evangelical churches in the target location and any church plants.

Note: A good place to start is at the Yellow Pages website or a Google search – type in churches and the area. Try to find a copy of the most recent publication of a local religious newspaper. Look for the religious section of a weekly paper and scan local shopping papers. Locate any ministeriums in the area. Contact the local “council of churches.” Although mostly liberal, they may have some useful information. Learn what conservative representation is on the council. Another good idea is to do a drive-through of the county/city to locate churches that may not be listed in publications. List all churches on a county/city map. List all names of pastors, addresses, phone numbers, denominational affiliations, and times of services, if possible.

Helpful sites:

<http://www.christianchurchtoday.com>

<http://www.yellowpages.com>

<http://www.switchboard.com/>

Assigned to:

Projected Completion Date:

II. Complete a community Christian organizational survey. List any of the following in the target location: Christian schools, local missions organizations, Christian youth centers, pregnancy care centers, Christian social services (include Catholic and others under the name of Christian), Christian day-care centers, Christian food banks, etc. List the names, addresses, phone numbers, description of services, director or leader’s names, and office hours.

Note: Find out the mission statement of each ministry and why they exist. What is their purpose in the target location? Try to get brochures or any printed information about the group.

Assigned to:

Projected Completion Date:

Community Survey

- I. Complete a civic/social/educational/media survey. Locate social clubs or organizations, newspapers, radio stations, television stations, fraternal organizations, recreation centers (Olivets, PAL, etc.). List schools in the target area and identify the principals and administrators. List names, addresses, phone numbers of directors or leaders.

Note: Find out what the mission of the school or organization is and its reason for existing. Collect all printed materials and brochures. Go to the schools and talk with the principals.

Assigned to:

Projected Completion Date:

- II. Complete a political/government survey. List public officials in county/city government, police force officials, etc., and try to determine if any are Christians. List names, offices held, addresses, phone numbers, and responsibilities.

Note: The city hall and courthouse may be good places to go after this information, or if someone on the survey team knows a police officer or politician it would be helpful to contact them.

Assigned to:

Projected Completion Date:

- III. Complete a business survey. List key business leaders in the county/city and try to determine if any are Christians. List names, addresses, and phone numbers.

Note: Try to locate a local business directory. Look for advertising in newspapers. You may want to check with the Chamber of Commerce or civic groups like Rotary, Lions, Realtor Board, etc. Also, the Christian Business Guide (Christian yellow pages) is available at www.cbg-pa.com.

Assigned to:

Project Completion Date:

Community Targeting

- I. Field Review - It is a valuable experience for the demographic team to take several drive-throughs of the potential target area of the county/city. This should be done as a group. As you drive through, look for places where people gather, ethnic and cultural characteristics of the community that stand out, and other things that will help identify the community.

- II. Field Survey – Identify a small housing development or community in the potential target community and do community surveys (see *Community Survey Manual* at www.churchplantingbfc.org). The surveys and scripts are available through the Church Extension office and the director will be willing to train your group before going out.

Drive-through #1 – Location _____

Project Completion Date:

Drive-through #2 - Location _____

Project Completion Date:

Drive-through #3 - Location _____

Project Completion Date:

II. Interviewing - Seek to interview individuals in each demographic category and ask the following questions:

- What are some of the greatest needs in the community?
- What can churches do to assist in meeting these needs?
- What is your opinion of the church's role in the county/city?
- What advice would you give a new pastor seeking to establish a church in the county/city?
- Where in the county/city do you think a new church would most helpful?

Try to meet the person at their place of work or business and set an appointment assuring them that this will take very little time and that they will be of great help to you. Give your credentials as representatives of the Bible Fellowship Church. Carefully note responses.

One person asks the questions while another person records responses.

Interview #1 - A Businessperson -

Assigned to:

Project Completion Date:

Notes:

Interview #2 - Two Local Evangelical Pastors -

Assigned to:

Project Completion Date:

Notes:

Interview #3 – A County/City Official:

Assigned to:

Project Completion Date:

Notes:

Interview #4 – A Cultural/Civic Leader -

Assigned to:

Project Completion Date:

Notes:

Interview #5 – A Ministry Director (i.e. Crisis Pregnancy Centers)

Assigned to:

Project Completion Date:

Notes:

Interview #5 – A School Principle

Assigned to:

Project Completion Date:

Notes:

Conclusions

Concisely record what important observations and conclusions you have discovered while completing the demographic and field surveys, and interviews. You may want to list the team's responses on a black/white board and then the team can prioritize the observations. Remember that your information, observations, and conclusions will assist the future church planter and his team as they begin their ministry.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Recommendations

Where do we go from here?

Your observations and conclusions will lead you to see more clearly where you should go after completing your demographic survey. Consider several of the following directions:

- If your survey leads you to believe that a BFC church should be planted in the county/city, then you may want to:
 1. Take your findings and recommendations back to your particular church and present them to the missions committees and elder boards for consideration.
 2. If the churches are supportive, organize a Church Planting Resource Team (This team may already be in place to conduct the demographic survey).
The Resource Team will contact Church Extension and request that Church Extension facilitate the team in the planting of a new church. When the request is approved by Church Extension and a new mission church is opened, the Resource Team can proceed.
- Develop a profile of what the church planter would look like for the new plant.
- Identify the ministry target area.
- Develop a plan and timeline for launching the new mission church. (See *Forming a Church Planting Resource Team and Core Group/Launch Team* located in the ***Daughter Church Planting Guidebook***, available from Church Extension.)

Recommendations to Elders and Mission Committees:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Church Extension will be available to assist you with each step of this Demographic Survey. Please do not hesitate to contact the director if you have any questions or need further clarification during the survey. May the Lord bless this wonderful opportunity to learn about your community, as well as discovering the Lord's will for a church to be planted.

Checklist and Schedule

ASSIGNMENT

DATE COMPLETED

1. Population Survey

2. Ecclesiastical Survey

3. Community Survey

4. Drive-throughs

5. Interviews

6. Conclusions

7. Recommendations