

NEW LIFE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

Twenty-Four Month Strategy

New Life Community Baptist Church is a new church being planted in Rhea County, Tennessee. As the name implies, we feel that it is essential for believers to live in newness of life. It is our desire to see people transformed from a life that is held captive by sin, to a life that has been set free in Christ. The mission of New Life Community Baptist Church is to gather disoriented people in our community through prayer, aggressive outreach, and family oriented activities, then direct them in the Word through small groups, Bible studies, and fellowship as we build community.

The purpose of New Life Community Baptist Church is four fold as we strive to become "Fully Devoted Followers of Christ. "

- * To share the gospel message with unbelievers so they may come to **KNOW** Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- * To teach and equip new believers to **GROW** in their knowledge and understanding of God and His Word and in their relationship with Christ
- * To provide opportunities to **SERVE** God through involvement in worship, fellowship, and small groups.
- * To **GO** and reach others through evangelism and ministry in our community and throughout the world with the plan of starting other churches.

This document contains a strategy developed from demographic information, community surveys, interviews with local pastors, discussions with the local Director of Missions, personal knowledge of the needs in the area, and other available information. This strategy is simply a projected plan for the next twenty-four months and will remain flexible to accommodate any changes in the circumstances surrounding the church plant.

April - November 2001

The process to start New Life Community Baptist Church will begin in the spring of 2001. Our first priority will be to develop a prayer team that will be responsible for building a foundation for the church plant. This team will pray for each of our leaders, for the hearts of the lost to be softened, for the obvious working of God, and for the leading of God in all that is done. We feel that this prayer foundation is more important than any other part of this strategy, and will receive much of our attention in the early stages of the work. Once the work is begun, the prayer focus will continue as a working ministry of the church.

During the month of April, efforts will be focused on developing relationships with the sponsoring church, the Tennessee Valley Baptist

Association, and with other churches who would be interested in being involved in this church plant through providing mission teams, supplying some of the physical needs, and by helping with financial needs. After securing the relationship with the sponsoring church and the association, efforts will be focused on visiting each of the member churches in the association to encourage their involvement in this work. The average church will not be able to help financially, but many of them can help by providing people to work some of the events we have planned including the summer blow out, backyard Bible Studies, and with monthly worship services. Other churches outside of our association will also be contacted to help garner the financial support needed for the church plant and to solicit the help of mission teams to be involved in both outreach and worship events.

The priority of the church planting team during the month of May will be to generate a core group. In order to develop a core group, we will use a variety of communication mediums and relational outreach mediums to network with persons in the community. Some of these communication and relational outreach mediums will include advertisements in the local paper, press releases, communication through local churches, communication through Bryan College, and networking through established friendships.

On May 3rd we will have an informational meeting held on the campus of Bryan College. This meeting will be advertised through our local paper (appendix D), radio (appendix E), and through word of mouth. From this informational meeting, profile information will be gathered on all individuals who are interested in helping with the church plant. An informational form will be provided to collect the profile information. The form will solicit personal data such as the individual's name, address, and phone number. The form will also solicit ministry specific data such as the individual's ministry gifting and the ministry area in which they desire to serve. A sample informational form is included in appendix F. This information will help us to know the level of each individual's interest and will help us to evaluate possible ministry assignments and to select a leadership team.

Out of this group of interested individuals will come our core group and the beginning of a leadership team. The key leadership team opportunities will include small group leaders, a worship leader, Bible teachers, children and youth ministry leaders, greeter coordinator, administrative personnel, and a CARE team leader. After a series of interviews with all core group members, several will be invited to become a part of the leadership group. This group will be responsible for leading and hosting small groups, developing and leading outreach events, and preparing for our monthly worship services. All members of the leadership team will go through an intensive fifteen-week course that will cover all four levels of our L.I.F.E. classes.

While in the process of training our leadership team, the members will be involved in several outreach events to help identify prospects interested in the new church start. Some of these events will be:

- * Mailings to new movers and new parents.
- * Door hangers in prospective neighborhoods.
- A three-night summer blowout.
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The first project will involve obtaining new mover lists and new parent lists. We will target these families and individuals because we feel that they are responsive to change in their lives and would be interested in becoming involved in a new church, possibly for the first time in their lives. After receiving the new mover lists and new parent lists, each prospective family will be sent a letter appealing to their specific situations and needs (Appendix A). A reply card will be included with the letter allowing the family to request a New Testament and more information about the church. Each positive response will be followed up by a phone call and an in home visit by one of the team members. During this visit, the team member will outline the vision of the church, will share additional information about New Life Community Baptist Church, and will work toward assimilating the individual into one of our small groups.

The second project will be to distribute door hanger bags in neighborhoods where we plan to begin a new Bible study or small group. After we identify a home to host the small group, then the leadership team will campus the surrounding area and distribute door hanger bags in which we will include a bottle of Coke, a bag of microwave popcorn, and an invitation to attend the new Bible study in their community. The invitation will read; 'Something new is popping up in your neighborhood.' Information will be included covering the location, dates, and time for the Bible study. We will also supply a brochure about New Life Community Baptist Church.

The third project will be to host a three-night summer blowout. This event will be held in late July or early August and will be advertised through our local newspaper and radio stations. The event will carry a fair theme and each night will feature different activities as well as different worship groups and musicians. Although the fair will mainly target children and youth, we will also try to have several attractions to interest the parents. The event will be hosted in a field bordering Hwy 27 in the Evensville community. We will erect a large tent in which we will hold our main outreach event. For an hour each night, there will be black lights and puppets along with a dramatic presentation of the Gospel message. Surrounding the tent will be many booths. Some of these booths will include a dunking booth, basketball throw, inflatable jumping room, a booth for hot dogs, popcorn and drinks, etc. There will also be a booth introducing New Life Community Baptist Church, providing information on our small groups, and giving away New Testaments and copies of the Jesus Film. At the information booth, personal information cards will be provided. Each person who fills out a

card will be eligible for a drawing on the final night of the event. The winner of the drawing will win a new Lay-Z-Boy recliner provided by the Lay-Z-Boy Corporation here in Rhea County. There will also be an outside stage erected on which we will host an hour-long concert each evening. On the final night of the event, we will feature singer Benny Berry, a contemporary country gospel singer. We feel that this would attract many of the parents to be there for the final night and to possibly hear the Gospel message for the first time. Every person working the event will wear a T-shirt imprinted with the church name and logo. News media will be invited to cover the event in order to garner as much exposure to the community as possible. WAYA / WDNT, a local radio station, has agreed to do a live broadcast as well. We hope that this event will catapult our small groups and lead to the launching of several new groups.

Small groups will be at the very heart of New Life Community Baptist Church. Our desire is that these small groups become the front door to our church. Each group will target the specific needs of certain groups of individuals. Since our focus will be on reaching Baby Boomers and younger, we want our small groups to reach the needs of these individuals. Some possible small groups will be young married couples, college students, singles and single parents, adults over forty, and neighborhood Bible studies. We will model the small groups after the Purpose-Driven-Church (PDC) Small Group model developed by Saddleback Church in California.

Beginning in July, and continuing on the second Saturday of each month, we will come together for a time of corporate worship, Bible study, vision casting and fellowship. This meeting will be held either at the Rhea County High School or in the sanctuary at First Baptist Church in Dayton. Each service will be designed to bring our group into a worship experience with God. This service will include challenging preaching, drama, and, of course, a time of music and worship led by worship teams from sponsoring churches. Each service will feature groups from different churches who will help with childcare, drama, music, and refreshments. We will continue to use these teams until we develop leadership in these areas from among our own people. Following the service each evening will be a time of fellowship during which newcomers will have the opportunity to formally meet the pastor and will give the pastor a good opportunity to build relationships with these people. Following the launch service, these fellowships will become our "New Comers Luncheon" and will follow the morning service once a month.

By the end of November 2001, there should be six to seven small groups in place. These small groups will be meeting in homes and will be led by members of the church planting team along with one or two apprentices. By this point, the total number in the core group should be around fifty-to-sixty people.

December 2001 - February 2002

In December, we will move from a monthly worship format to a bi-monthly worship format to increase the group's time of corporate worship, vision casting, and leadership training. We project that the group will grow at this time, increasing the core group to approximately seventy or eighty people. Special services will be planned around the holiday season to celebrate the birth of Christ and to take advantage of the openness that exists within the hearts of unbelievers during the holidays. Outreach and ministry events will include Operation Shoe Box, Christmas food drive, and toys for needy children. Local families will be chosen to receive this help through the recommendation of the local Social Services agency.

In order to encourage relationship evangelism at this time, training opportunities will be offered to members of the Core group using the Contagious Christianity materials from Willow Creek Church, Share Jesus Without Fear by William Fay, or other similar materials. In addition, efforts will be made to help core group member discover areas of ministry giftedness using Saddleback's S-H-A-P-E methodology, a spiritual gift assessment method. The church planting team will continue to build networks within local and partnering churches, businesses, Bryan College, and other areas of influence.

During February of 2002, the church will focus on preparations for the launch service or "Grand Opening" of New Life Community Baptist Church. The church planting team along with the small group leaders and apprentices will finalize all necessary advertising and communication mediums to be used for the "Grand Opening". We will attempt to secure coverage of the launch service through local television and radio stations, as well as advertisements on the radio, billboard, and the front page of the Herald News Shopper (a local shopper used for community news delivered to 14,000 home in the Rhea County area). We will also make sure that we have all the necessary items secured for the door hanger bags to be distributed throughout the community in March. These items include 1000 of each of the following: One liter bottles of Coke or other soft drink, microwave popcorn, Jesus Films, New Testaments, and brochures about the new church and the first service. All printed materials will need to be designed and delivered to the printer by this time.

In addition to the on-going activities and training, informational meetings will continue to be hosted for those expressing interest in the new work. These meeting will be much like the first meeting in May in that they will provide a casual atmosphere with child care and refreshments in which to explore the vision of the new church. The goal is to hold at least one a month through the "Grand Opening" of New Life Community Baptist Church. These events will begin in January of 2002.

The Small groups will also begin holding a "New Life Party" each month. The purpose of these parties is to provide a low-pressure and low-expectation

atmosphere in which to invite unchurched friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors. These meetings will serve as a front door into the small groups.

March 2002

By the first week of March, a second full time person will be hired to lead the worship team and to serve as an associated pastor. This pastor will help to carry much of the load as we lead into the launch service.

As we continue into the month of March with preparations for the launch service, it will be critical that we step up and intensify all previously mentioned activities. With this in mind, added emphasis will be placed on prayer and fasting among the leadership team and in the small groups. Each small group will continue training on the importance of prayer as we emphasize prayer as one of the biblical purposes of the church. Once a week, the church planting team will come together collectively as the church leadership and ask for God's blessing upon the preparation of the launch service.

In the first week of March, the church will rent two billboards in the community for advertisement purposes and place a 4" by 6" advertisement announcing the upcoming events of New Life Church. During the second week of March, we will canvass all neighborhoods within a five mile radius of the church using members from our core group, students from other churches spending their Spring Breaks serving on mission teams, and other volunteers to deliver at least 1000 door hanger bags. Finally, during the third week of March, the church will implement a formal campaign to inform the community of the "Grand Opening." Advertising mediums will include an invitation from the senior pastor in the form of 10,000 invitation cards provided by Outreach Marketing, commercials on the WAYA / WDNT, and an ad on the front page of the Herald News Shopper announcing the "Grand Opening" of New Life Community Baptist Church. Efforts to reach the unchurched will be conducted in a professional and quality manner consistent with our goal to create and maintain a "positive" image within the community.

During this month, preparation will take place for the upcoming Sunday morning services. This preparation will include training greeters and host/hostess, CARE callers, leaders for children's church and the nursery. Depending on the location of the launch service, it may also be necessary to spend time preparing the facilities for the first service. Cleanliness will be imperative, especially in the bathrooms, nursery, and any areas used for children's church. This will help to insure the confidence of parents who might leave their children in our care.

The final preparation for the launch service will be a weekend prayer retreat with the leadership team. This retreat will take place on the Friday and Saturday immediately preceding the launch service. The retreat will be held at

Fall Creek Falls State park in Pikeville, Tennessee. This retreat will be a time of spiritual focus and refreshing for the members of the leadership team. Childcare will be provided in order to provide focused opportunities for prayer and worship. This retreat will also serve to show thanks to all those who have put so much effort into preparing for the launch service.

March 24th, 2002: First Worship Service - Palm Sunday

On Palm Sunday 2002, New Life Community Baptist Church will formally launch its first Sunday worship service. Based upon projected core group size coupled with the marketing strategy, we anticipate over two hundred guests at the first worship service (this includes members of the core group).

Since first impressions are lasting impressions, New Life Community Baptist Church will strive for perfection in every area of the launch service. The music will consist of a blend of hymns and contemporary praise and worship songs performed using modern worship instruments such as guitars, keyboard, drums, brass and stringed instruments. The use of drama, innovative video, and biblical, relevant preaching will also be key elements of the worship experience. We feel that the proper use of these elements in worship will be helpful in creating an atmosphere where the unchurched can experience the healing and working of the Risen King.

During the service, every effort will be made to make all guests feel welcome and as comfortable as possible. All members of the leadership team will be encouraged to be "real". After all, we are striving to bring "real" people, with "real" needs, to a "real" God. We will strive to model our values in a culturally relevant way while remaining doctrinally pure to the Word of God. Additional attention will be given to the greeters and host/hostess ministries in an attempt to make the guests feel at home. The greeters and childcare workers will wear nametags and matching vests with the church logo embroidered on them. Each person in attendance will be given a church registration/information insert form to fill out. The information gathered will allow the church to develop and maintain a prospect list and will help us best meet the needs of each individual as we follow up on their visit.

The sermon will be the first in a series entitled, "Why you can believe in _____" with the first sermon dealing with "The Coming King," the second with "The Risen King," and the third with "The Living King." By beginning a series on Palm Sunday, we hope to minimize the fall off rate during the following weeks. People will be more likely to return for the continuation of a series and for Easter Sunday, than they would for any other weekend.

April - August 2002

Immediately following the first service, effective follow-up will become top priority. All guests will be sent a letter from the senior pastor (Appendix B). During the week, attempts will be made to follow up with an in home visit by the pastor or another member of the leadership team. Each person visited will be given a small thank-you from the church and encouraged to return for the Easter service.

As we begin to see conversion growth, the New Life New Believers' ministry will be started. This ministry will be the key to decreasing drop out rates and will help in assimilating new believers into the life of the church. This ministry will foster relationships and provide accountability and critical support for new Christians. The 1-to-1 Mentoring/Discipleship program, new believer Bible studies, and an introduction to "shallow ministries" (greeters, folding weekly programs, set-up and tear down, Servanthood Evangelism, etc.) will fall under this dynamic ministry.

During the month of May, outreach efforts will be intensified as we begin the "New Life Servanthood Evangelism" program. This program will provide opportunities for members and non-members alike to be involved in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ while helping to build a positive image in the community without having to approach people in a confrontational way. One of the easiest of these outreach events will be to give away soft drinks, bottled water, and candy at the softball complexes located throughout the county. Along with each soft drink and bottle of water we will hand out an outreach card on which will be printed;

YOU LOOKED TOO THIRSTY TO PASS UP.

We hope this small gift brings some light into your day. It's a simple way of saying that God loves you - no strings attached. Let us know if we can be of more assistance.

On the reverse side of the card will be information about New Life Community Baptist Church including service times and directions to the church. Other outreach ideas may include handing out balloons and soft drinks at the Strawberry Festival in downtown Dayton, mowing lawns for some of the elderly in the area, delivering baby needs to new mothers, shopping for groceries for shut-ins, and holding block parties for neighborhood children. This list is in no way exhaustive, but provides a good start. Providing an opportunity for our people to be involved in this way will benefit in the assimilation process, increase the numbers of guests, and most importantly, it will help bring people to a saving knowledge of Christ. The ministry will also benefit those involved by allowing them to experience first hand the grace of God at work.

In the midst of this evangelistic outreach, we anticipate beginning five to ten new small groups. These groups will include seeker small groups, fellowship

small groups and service-oriented small groups. The seeker small groups will be for those who are searching out their place in church and have never committed their lives to Christ. The focus on this group will be sensitive to the unbelievers need for Christ in non-offensive ways. The goal will be to “lead” them to Christ, rather than trying to force them to Christ. The fellowship small groups will be for those who enjoy the social atmosphere and simply want to fellowship with other Christian friends. The service-oriented small groups will provide opportunities for those interested in gathering for ministry opportunities. The small groups will be diversified to help meet the needs of each individual. The new small groups should be up and running by the end of July.

During the summer months, the church will develop and distribute another mailer. Special announcements will be made concerning the Mother’s Day (May 12th) and Father’s Day (June 16th) series and special guests. Momentum is important going into the summer months. Statistics have shown that there is generally a significant decrease in attendance during this time. Members will be encouraged and reminded to invite their neighbors and friends to the different summer events.

A Vacation Bible School will be scheduled for the end of July 2002. The week will conclude with a “Summer Blowout” for all of the kids, their parents, and friends. This “Summer Blowout” will be much like the one held during the previous summer but will be held to a one-night format. It will be a time of drama, games, fireworks, food, and praise and worship. Promotion of Vacation Bible School and the Summer Blowout activities will begin on Mother’s Day.

The New Life Membership Class will also be implemented following the launch service. This class will be the first in a series of four L.I.F.E. classes and will cover the plan of salvation, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, the vision, mission, and beliefs of the church, and the meaning of membership at New Life Church. We will also discuss the organizational structure of the church and provide opportunities for new believers to get involved in church ministry. During the course of the class, the class participants will be given the opportunity to accept Christ as their Savior. Also, each participant will be given the opportunity to sign up for baptism, sign the church membership covenant and apply for church membership. (New Life Community Baptist Church will require each person desiring Church membership to sign a membership covenant prior to becoming a member. Once an individual has met with the pastor, elders and has signed the membership covenant, they will be presented before the Church as new members.) The New Life Membership Class will be in place by the end of April.

September - December 2002

During the final quarter of the year, the holiday season will become a large part of the focus of the church. The season will begin in mid-September with a Fall Festival. This festival will be planned around “Friend’s Day” at the church. It

will include fun activities for children, a fall concert by a professional musician or group, and plenty of refreshments (i.e., homemade desserts and drinks provided by members of the church hospitality team). Next, New Life will also host an alternative to Halloween, which will be for the entire family. The "Halloween alternative" event will include a black light and puppet show, hayrides, a bonfire with hotdogs, marshmallows, hot chocolate, and coffee. In November, New Life will host a Thanksgiving service on Wednesday, November 27th at the church with a dinner followed by a Thanksgiving service. On Tuesday, December 24th, New Life will hold a Christmas Eve service and one week later a New Years candle light service. Each of these services will be promoted through the use of radio and newspaper as well as mailings to the local community.

In September, we will begin to offer the second of our L.I.F.E. classes, the New Life Maturity class. This class will focus on helping the believer to grow in Christ. The topics discussed in this class will include stewardship, Bible study, scripture memorization, prayer, and having a quiet time. The church will develop a maturity covenant, which class participants will have the opportunity to sign at the conclusion of the class to commit to spiritual maturity. In addition, the New Life Development Process will begin during the fall. The New Life Development Process will consist of specialized classes on topics such as prayer, tithing, and faith. These classes will be offered periodically in the form of in-depth Bible studies offered on a quarterly basis. Each class will last from five to seven weeks.

January - April 2003

In January, the third of our L.I.F.E. classes will begin to be offered. The New Life Ministry Discovery Class will help launch our members toward their God-given ministries. This class will help members to discover their unique design for ministry, develop their God-given gifts and abilities, select an area of ministry that best expresses who they are in Christ, and serve in that ministry to the best of their abilities.

In March, the fourth and final L.I.F.E. class will begin to be offered. The New Life Multiplication Class will help our members learn to reproduce by leading the lost to a relationship with Jesus Christ, and then to lead them in becoming Fully Devoted Followers of Christ.

The first anniversary of New Life Community Baptist Church will be a special time in the life of the church. In order to make the anniversary memorable, the church will begin another rigorous advertisement campaign. We will advertise our 1st Anniversary services and any upcoming special events using direct mailers, invitation cards for members to pass out, radio spots, and a local newspaper advertisement.

Our first anniversary will be a huge event on New Life Community Baptist Church. On Palm Sunday, 2003, New Life will host an all day celebration of both Palm Sunday and our Anniversary. The Day will begin with our morning celebration and worship service followed by a huge feast that will include the roasting of a couple hogs, a full steer, and all the desserts a person could want. Musicians will be invited to perform during the meal, and there will be activities for the children.

This strategic plan reflects the culmination of hard work and desire to see a successful church plant in Rhea County, TN; however, the work and desire are void and useless without the grace of God laced throughout the pages. Our prayer is that God will use this strategy for His glory and honor to build His kingdom, using men and women who desire to be a part of His perfect plan.