



Planting Strategy

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Imagine...

...a place where you are welcomed and where warm, friendly people greet you and help you find your way.

Imagine...

...a place where you and your children can develop lasting friendships and feel like part of a close family.

Imagine...

...a place where you can be encouraged and find answers to your deepest questions.

...a place where the teachings are relevant and sound and the music is meaningful and uplifting,

Imagine...

...a place where you can go and be accepted just as you are.

...a place where you have an opportunity to develop your gifts and talents.

You don't have to imagine anymore.

Harvest Community Church is Here!

Our Mission

Our mission is to reach out to people and to develop them into fully mature followers of Jesus Christ.

Our Purpose

EXALT Jesus Christ through
Worship.

EQUIP believers for service through Discipleship.

ENCOURAGE one another through Fellowship.

EVANGELIZE our world through our Witness.

Community Overview/Rationale

Avon, Indiana, is a small, suburban community located approximately five miles to the west of Indianapolis. It is surrounded on all four sides by towns that are also growing very rapidly: Plainfield—eight miles to the south; Danville—seven miles to the west; Brownsburg— eight miles to the north; and Indianapolis' West Side—located just over the county line to the east.

The town was originally known as *Hampton* when the post office was established in the area in 1833. The name changed frequently over time but finally received its current name by the officials of the Transportation Department. Although Avon has been established for some time, it did not officially incorporate until May 20, 1996. Prior to that time, the area was primarily home to families who farmed the surrounding land. Interestingly, even though it has a long history, Avon did not officially incorporate until May 20, 1996, getting its very first uniformed police officer later that same year.

Avon is positioned in the east-central part of Hendricks county, and its growth is due very much in part to the growth and expansion of Indianapolis. Over the last 20-30 years the growth of Indianapolis has been concentrated to the north, in Hamilton County, and to the South, in Johnson County. During this time, Avon was a separate entity from Indianapolis, both officially and visually. In the late 80s and early 90s developers were faced with the reality that the north and south sides of Indianapolis were saturated and could sustain no further growth. So, they began to look to the West Side–Hendricks County.

There are three main roads leading from Indianapolis into Hendricks County—excluding interstates. The northern-most road is 136, leading to Brownsburg. This road is not a main thoroughfare and therefore has led to rather modest growth. US40 connects Indianapolis with Plainfield, the largest town in Hendricks County. Still, US40 does not have the growth potential as Rockville Road (US36) which leads right to the heart of Avon. This road is, and has been for some time, a four-lane divided highway from Indianapolis to seven miles west of Avon into Danville. This makes Rockville Road ideal for rapid expansion.

In addition, Avon’s overall location makes it perfect for residential and commercial development. Avon itself is located on two major roads: US36, running east and west, and Highway 267 which runs north and south through the state. The town is also located within 15 minutes of the I-465 beltway circling Indianapolis and connects with I-70, I-74, I-65, and SR37 leading to Bloomington, as well as US40 and US36 leading to Terre Haute. For those who travel by air, Avon is also located approximately ten minutes from a private airport to the northeast and Indianapolis International Airport fifteen minutes to the south.

Through much of its existence, Avon had the reputation of a “Don’t blink or you’ll miss it” town, having only 1,000 residents in 1990. That reputation no longer applies. From 1990 to 2000, according to U.S. Census figures, the population of Avon increased by 400%. Based on current lot permits, area planners estimate that the majority of land in the township will be developed by 2005 and that the number of residents will reach 20,000 within the next 10 years. Avon is now considered to be the fastest growing suburb in Indianapolis, the third-fastest growing town in the state of Indiana, and, according to the Indiana Research Center, stands 33rd in the nation in job-opportunity increases, between Orlando, FL, and Milwaukee, WI.

A large percentage of those moving to the Avon area are from the Indianapolis area. However, in the middle 90s United Airlines brought in several thousand employees from California. The Avon Chamber of Commerce reports that a “significant number” moved into the Avon area.

NAMB estimated that Avon had 7,216 residents in 2000, projecting an increase of 17% to 8,477 in

2005. Considering the nature of the area, this projected increase is a conservative figure. As the population has increased, many other changes have resulted. The majority of new residents are families. The average adult age is between thirty and forty and most have school-aged children. The average income has also drastically increased, largely due to the influx of young professionals. The average income in the area is between 60k and 100k annually.

There are many small churches in the area, however, Indianapolis and the surrounding communities have historically had little Southern Baptist influence. Plainfield Baptist Church has around 250 members and will simply be unable to effectively, by itself, reach the growing (and diversifying) population of Plainfield. Hillcrest Baptist Church in Danville is a very small congregation that has been struggling for years. With the exception of Faith Baptist Church, an independent church in town, there is no Baptist presence. There is a large Lutheran and Catholic population in Avon, in addition to many people attending Christian churches (disciples of Christ).

The rationale for choosing the name Harvest Community Church involves several issues. "Baptist" was not used in the name. First, based on the interviews with pastors and the door-to-door survey responses, there seems to be a negative connotation associated with "Baptist" in the Avon area. It would seem many people would discount a visit to a church simply because it had "Baptist" in the name. Secondly, there have been several previous failures of Baptist church plants in the area. Finally, the team thinks that by not using "Baptist" in the name, the church would be able to reach a broader spectrum of the community and would be able to avoid barriers that people have put up. Simply using "community" seemed to be the best choice in accomplishing that goal.

However, the church will be Southern Baptist and will use the SBC logo on the sign and brochure. The beliefs outlined in the brochure will clearly be Southern Baptist beliefs. The church will also be listed in the phone book under Southern Baptist churches in order to also be easily recognized by believers who are looking for a Southern Baptist church.

The worship service will utilize a blended, contemporary style of music in order to appeal to a larger segment of the community. Most of those living in Avon are families with school-age children and teenagers. The church plant will target the families. A blended style will allow the music to reach many age groups. If the music were limited to only contemporary or only traditional, a large part of the population would be left out, and as a result, the music may only appeal to a part of a family. However, the surveys indicated that people wanted church to be a family atmosphere and to have activities for everyone in their family. While not everyone will always be pleased, the hope is that somewhere during the worship service, at least one song will reach and connect with each person. Using blended style also would allow for flexibility later and give the church an option of leaning more towards contemporary or traditional, depending on how the church grows.

The service will last from 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM. The service will be done professionally and with quality. It will be well planned and rehearsed in advance. There will be a band and a worship team. Much

effort will be made to make smooth transitions from one part of the service to the next. Effort will be made to allow people, if they wish, to participate through singing and other means. However, there will also be great effort made to ensure people are not singled out against their wishes.

Community (felt) Needs

This has been difficult to establish given the nature of the project. In order to establish the felt needs of an individual, a relationship with that person must first be established. People are not generally willing to share their deep needs with a stranger completing a short survey. For the purposes of this project, then, several assumptions will be made, in addition to the limited information gathered.

The overwhelming need that was directly conveyed during the interviews was a desire for the sense of family within the church. This is not surprising considering the targeted group. As a result, the church will need to meet needs that span all age groups of the family. The first need, although it was not implicitly stated in the interviews, is for the church as an organization to have a positive image and be worthy of people's trust, particularly in relation to the children. The church's leaders must be intentional about making themselves visible, positively. One way of doing this is for a member of the team to join the Chamber of Commerce in Avon. This is unusual for a church, but it opens the door to many meaningful relationships. They must also work towards developing relationships with key community leaders, including the school board members and school administrators.

Much of the church planting literature puts the focus on having a worship leader first, then a youth leader later. Given our target group, both are equally important. Otherwise, there is the possibility of the children and youth ministry being viewed as an afterthought and not a vital part of the church. Parents, in fact, will evaluate the ministry for their children as a kind of litmus test for the entire church.

It is the mission of the church to reach people for Christ. We are going to have to think "outside the box" in order to reach this very busy population of people, particularly in the area of service times. The school system of Avon is heavily sport's oriented. This poses problems to traditional church schedules. Once the launch has occurred and the church gets officially established, it may be beneficial to consider having services at non-traditional times, such as Tuesday or Thursday as opposed to Wednesday. Sponsoring a little league team might also be beneficial. There is a significant percentage of the workforce that must work on Sundays. This might, as the church grows, warrant a Saturday night service as well.

Strategy Time-line

1. Purchase new mover lists
2. Utilize Wedding and birth announcements:
3. Follow-up Surveys
4. New Phone Survey
5. Visit Favorable Responses
6. Begin creating first core group
(14-16 people by end of February)
7. Begin discipling group
8. Train two leaders from initial core group.
9. Arrange for core groups to meet in basement or Remax building on US36 in town

1. Continue Evangelism to build group size
2. Begin developing worship teams for services
3. Begin search for facility for April launch
4. Split 2 groups into 4 by end of December
5. Pastor to begin 5th group
6. Formal leadership training to

1. Immediate follow-up on guests at launch. (Small group leaders and Pastor)
2. Assign groups to follow-up.
3. Send letter out immediately re: launch and invitation to following Sunday Easter service.
4. Place AD for Easter Service
5. Change billboard emphasizing Easter service.
6. Begin New Members classes.
7. First Charter - September, 2003

1. Split into 2 groups (leaders from first group to lead two groups)
2. Initiate Evangelism Strategy
3. Continue follow-up on new mover lists
4. Pastor to continue developing

1. Intensify leadership training geared towards launch service
2. Mass mailings
3. Billboard
4. Postcards
5. Flyers on cars?
6. Utilize phone bank
7. Press Release
8. Finalize location,



**Launch Date:
April 13, 2003**

Goal: 200

The following is an eighteen-month strategy for Harvest Community Church. The time-line consists of five phases: four pre-launch, one post-launch. This strategy is an *estimation* of what will take place and is designed to be flexible as needs, resources, and information change.

PHASE 1 - November, 2001 - March, 2002

The process to begin Harvest Community Church will begin in the late fall of 2001. The first step will be to create the first core group. To begin, we will purchase new mover lists and utilize wedding and birth announcements and send out letters related to their specific need. We will conduct follow-up door-to-door surveys and telephone surveys, and identify individuals that have interest. In addition, we will be intentional about developing relationships with people in the community. After initial contact is made through the mail, those showing a favorable response will be contacted in person. Evangelism will be the primary focus of these initial visits.

By the end of February, 2002, we anticipate our first core group to be complete at 14-16 people. We will enlist the help of a partner church to assist with the children of the core group. During the month of March, 2002, we will begin training two leaders who will serve as group leaders in the next phase. Formal discipling will take place throughout this phase. The group will meet in the basement of the REMAX building on US36 during the initial phases.

PHASE 2 - April, 2002 - July, 2002

During phase 2, the first core group will split into two groups. The two leaders that were being trained will take the lead in each of the two groups. The leaders will have the task of discipling and, through help from the pastor, begin an evangelism strategy in their groups as well as developing new leaders.

PHASE 3 - August, 2002 - December, 2002

During this phase, the two core groups will split into 4 and the pastor will begin creation of the 5th core group. Evangelism will continue to build core group size. Formal leadership training will begin. A search team will be selected to search for a facility for the April 13th launch. Monthly fellowship meetings of all the core groups will take place in the basement of the REMAX building to build overall group cohesiveness. In addition, we will begin developing a worship team for the April launch either by using members of our core groups, or by utilizing people from partner churches on a temporary basis.

PHASE 4 - January, 2003 - April, 2003

The primary focus of this phase will be preparation for the April 13th launch and subsequent Easter Sunday service which will be the week after the launch.. Leadership will intensify geared towards the launch. The location will be finalized and an inventory of needed equipment will be prepared. As the launch date approaches, we will lease two or three of the billboards in town announcing the launch service. The first billboard will simply read “Imagine.” Elements then will be added to the billboards as the launch approaches. This will enhance the interest level and make the billboards more noticeable. We will also utilize mas mailings, postcards, flyers on cars, and press releases.

PHASE 5 - November, 2001 - March, 2002

This phase will begin with the immediate follow-up of those attending the launch service. Priority will be given to those who requested to be contacted, then the others will be contacted. The week after the launch will be a critical time both for follow-up and for a renewed push for the following Sunday’s Easter service. Billboards will be changed and ads placed with the goal of the Easter service to EXCEED the launch service.

In regards to the follow-up, the pastor and group leaders will assign groups to those who need followup. The groups, then, will take the primary responsibility of following up. Letters will be mailed out to attendees with a formal invitation to attend the Easter Service.

During this phase, New Member classes will begin with the existing group members attending. New small groups will be added to the five the preceded the launch service. Some people will be added to existing groups, while others will join new groups. The number of groups actually started will depend on the responses to follow-up. The first charter will be established some time in the month of September with the small group members serving as the charter members of the church. Estimated length of time from beginning to charter is two years.