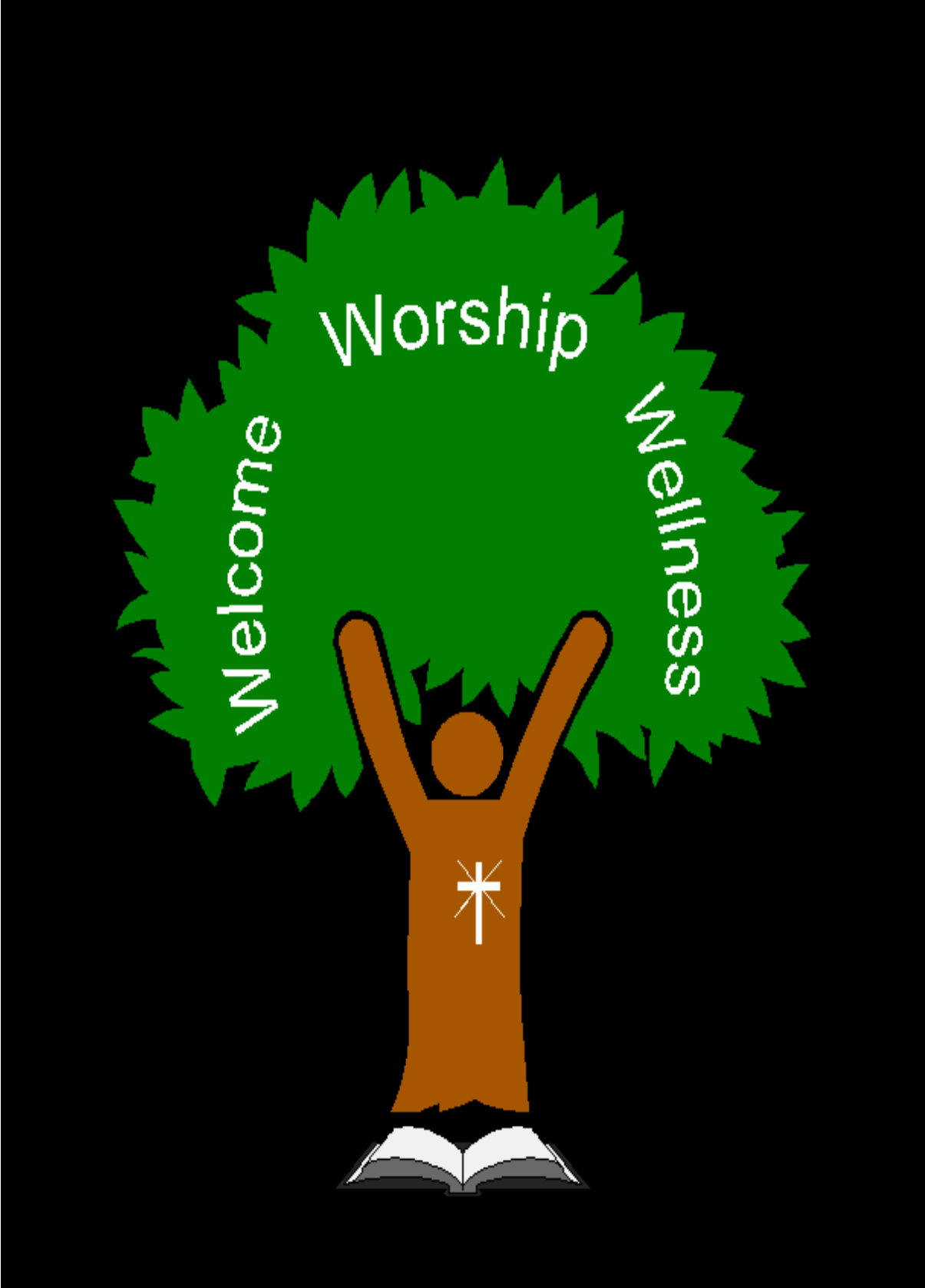


The following is a strategy plan for the Suburban neighborhood of Monfort Heights, Ohio located on I-74 on the North/Northwest edge of Cincinnati, Ohio. Monfort Heights is an area that is very well established. Actually, the area should be represented by the name Monfort Heights/White Oak/Cheviot because of the near metropolitan connection of the three townships. In the area there are around 20,000 homes with a population between 75,000 to 100,00. The population of the area is split between retirement age adults and Boomers and Busters with one or two children. The area is community minded with much of what goes on in the community being directed at the children. One specific area of interest for the family and what seems to bring a sense of pride is the sponsorship of the Boy Scouts of America by local churches. Monfort Heights is populated with individuals which seem to be looking at today and how they can get by and supply for their family. It is a typical fast paced, high expectation kind of area. With this in mind we propose the planting of Crossroads Church to meet the needs of the community when they are faced with the crossroads of life.

In the plan you can expect to see the following: Church paradigm, Assimilation methods, a month by month plan for the planting of Crossroads, the Purpose and Missions statements of Crossroads, a description of the target individuals at Crossroads, demographic analysis of the area, a proposed budget for the first year, interviews with individuals already in the area, mass mailing letters and follow-up procedures, and the overall focus the Strategy Planning team prescribes.

Gary Durham, Tony Randall, Michael Hunkus, Joel Rainey and Tim Pattison



CROSSROADS

Purpose

Crossroads welcomes all peoples, with the purpose of bringing about a complete well-ness in their lives, which includes salvation in Jesus Christ, growth in their worship of Jesus Christ and a deepening knowledge of the Word of God and then translates into fruitful living for the Kingdom of God.

Mission Statement

To meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of Greater Cincinnati by sharing God's love to those at the crossroads of life.

**Please notice in the Purpose statement the direction of well-ness in individual lives, worship of Jesus Christ and a deepening of the knowledge of the Word of God. At Crossroads we believe the whole person needs to be addressed. It is important that we first address the present need in people's lives. Many times the felt need of a person is not the "real" need they have but it is where we must start in order to gain an audience with them. We have to take care of their complete well-ness in order for them to worship God and learn about Him.

Assimilation of members:

FOLLOWING THE W.O.R.D.

W- Word 101. Welcome into membership.

After someone has expressed interest in uniting with Crossroads they will complete a pre-membership class. They will learn the doctrines of the church, the expectations of the church members, the physical make-up of the governing of the church, and be presented the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They will be required to sign a covenant of commitment upon completion of the course.

O- Word 201. Ongoing Maturity.

In Word 201 members will learn the steps to becoming more dedicated to God. The need for daily quiet time will be stressed and a basic how-to course on how to approach God will be presented. At this point members will go through Spiritual Gifts Inventories to find out how God has created them to serve Him.

R-Word 301. Relational Refinement.

Word 301 is the nuts and bolts of the W.O.R.D. program. Once an individual has gone through Word 201 they should have a direction for the ministry they are called to. In Word 301 they will be placed with a mentor and there will be specific steps to be completed in order for certification. The steps will vary according to the specific ministry one chooses. In Word 301 the individual will learn the specifics of personal evangelism and be encouraged to be a witness to Greater Cincinnati.

D- Word 401. Deployment.

Word 401 constitutes completion of Following the W.O.R.D. Once a person has completed all steps with their mentor they will go through a graduation ceremony and then be assimilated into the ministry of the church. At this time, the individual will be qualified to become a mentor themselves.

Throughout the course of the calendar year there will be periodic refresher classes in the specific ministry areas to insure members are still on the same track they started on.

Cincinnati at a glance

Cincinnati is comprised of 13 counties and the corners of three states- Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. Greater Cincinnati is home to more than 1.8 million people. It features all the amenities of a large, bustling metropolis while maintaining a friendly, small town atmosphere which is a unique balancing act but one that makes the region a remarkably flexible location filled with a wealth of opportunities and options.

Greater Cincinnati was ranked in the top ten by Fortune Magazine as a great place to live and work in the United States. The area has the seventh-lowest crime rate, one of the lowest costs of living among major U.S. metropolitan areas, median home prices that are 11% below the U.S. average and an under 30-minute commute for 70% of the workforce.

There are over 30 area hospitals. There is a Children's hospital as well as the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine which have both received top national rankings.

There are numerous family attractions throughout the city starting with the Cincinnati Reds, the first professional baseball team which was formed in 1869. Also, Cincinnati is home to Paramount's Kings Island theme park, The Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens and the Newport Aquarium which has aquatic life from all over the world, including sharks which are always a favorite with the children. There are numerous museums, theaters, opera, ballet and music attractions to keep any family occupied.

Cincinnati has a workforce which provides a 39% higher productivity than what is the national average. Cincinnati has a total workforce of 1.54 million which includes 40,000 engineers and scientists. The Cincinnati workforce area encompasses a 50-mile radius of the city. The unemployment in Cincinnati stands at 2.9% while the labor force has grown 14% in the last two years. The number employed stands at approximately 1,012,500.

There are twenty colleges and universities in the Cincinnati area.

The median age in Cincinnati is 34 which is younger than the national average.

**All information on Cincinnati was obtained from the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce at www.greater-cincinnati.com/.

Monfort Heights Community Profile

- ◆ Very well established area
- ◆ Older homes with a mixture of new homes being built on all available land
- ◆ Busy main road (North Bend Road) which is highly commercial
- ◆ New elementary school (Monfort Heights Elementary)
- ◆ New Sam's Wholesale store
- ◆ Population is a high concentration of retirees (20-25%)

- ◆ Churches are very community oriented as they sponsor Boy Scouts and other programs for the children
- ◆ High concentration of Catholic with St. Ignatius located on North Bend Road
- ◆ Area seems to be anti-SBC
- ◆ Housing ranging from \$100,000 to \$250,000
- ◆ 5 zip codes involving 45,000 to 50,000 homes
- ◆ Growth in the area of Cincinnati is trending towards this section of the city

Community Narrative provided by Dino Sensei (Director of Missions)

Monfort Heights is a strategic location for a new church start in Greater Cincinnati. The possibility of a regional draw exists because of the proximity to the West-Northwest population growth that includes the Indiana area. Monfort Heights is also in driving distance to a vast population base to the east that includes Northgate and south and far as Western Hills. The population is blended both racially and economically. A multicultural/blended and contemporary approach might be appropriate.

The population base is growing west of North Bend and the I-74 intersections. New schools and businesses, particularly Sam's Wholesale Club and Wal-Mart, have moved into the area, which reflects optimism about the consumer base.

The closest existing Southern Baptist works are Friendship Baptist Church, a large, growing, and very traditional work, and First Baptist Dent, a growing work to the north of Monfort Heights. Dent has more of a blended worship style. Most of the church planting in Greater Cincinnati of all denominations is north and east of 275. Part of our vision in Greater Cincinnati is to have more "perimeter" churches along the 275 corridors that have the potential to grow to 500 or more. The population base we are not reaching in our existing SBC churches in Baby Boomers and Busters. Monfort Heights in our opinion would be a strong location to consider a contemporary or even a blended worship model of a new church start to reach into the estimated 60% or more of the population who are unchurched.

Area Overview

Greater Cincinnati is a diverse city which provides a good quality of life for those living or working in the city. It has a strong workforce and a progressive mind-set to grow even large than its current size. Cincinnati is a large city comprised of numerous smaller city which strive to maintain their own identity. One such area is Monfort Heights which while receiving the benefits of being a part of Cincinnati it also retains its individuality. Cincinnati is a metropolitan city which expresses community pride and a sense of togetherness but we must not forget that it is not a small, "southern" town. While the communities have a sense of pride the people who live in the towns maintain an aloofness. In today's fast paced society Cincinnati has kept up

very well. Neighbors really do not know their neighbors, except in passing, because of trying to make ends meet somewhere they need to.

Monfort Heights is about five miles outside of downtown Cincinnati located on I-74 just a few miles from the 275 interchange. It is a very community and family oriented location. It has a high concentration of Catholics as well as many other denominations which seem to hold an aversion to Southern Baptist. Monfort Heights tends to be influenced by world opinion and while being a relatively educated area it is also influenced highly by the media. Monfort Heights population base is very well divided among the different age classifications on the Acorn demographic profile. Roughly fifteen percent of the population are Boomers, fifteen percent Busters and fifteen percent Builders. The overall population of Monfort Heights is relatively unchanged in the past five years but if there is any inclination in direction of growth it would be toward a decline. The income base falls between \$25,000 and \$75,000 for most of the people but there are a small percentage in the \$100,000 plus range.

The population breakdown by race and ethnicity is a diverse grouping. Depending on zip code you have a near 50-50 split white to black to a 99-1 white to black ratio. The overall breakdown of the five zip code area comes to approximately 85% white to 15% other with the highest concentration being black. The one area that is 50-50 is located closer to downtown Cincinnati and may experience a natural barrier of Mt. Airy Forest. While the forest is not a true barrier which would inhibit anyone from attending Crossroads it may be a mental barrier between the have's and the have nots. The overall income differences are not that great but there may be a mental barrier due to location of living dwelling.

Individuals living in the Monfort Heights area are hard working people who spend much of their spare time on family affairs. They are very interested in the children of the community and they are drawn to churches who pay attention to the children. The Boy Scouts of America is a prominent group in the Monfort Heights area and the churches are very involved in it by providing the facilities for the meetings. While churches play a prominent role in outside activities they still have a difficulty drawing people in due to the statistic of 60% unchurched in the area.

While Monfort Heights may be a difficult area to evangelize it is also an area in great need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

CROSSROADS CRAIG AND CANDACE

- ◆ AGE: 25-40
- ◆ MARRIED
- ◆ 1-2 CHILDREN
- ◆ INCOME: \$25,000-\$75,000
- ◆ OWN HOME (BUT WITH LARGE MORTGAGE)
- ◆ SUBURBANITE BY CHOICE
- ◆ RELIGION BACKGROUND: NOMINAL CATHOLIC OR DIS-ENFRANCHISED PROTESTANT
- ◆ EMPLOYED BY CORPORATE AMERICA (EITHER IN MANAGEMENT OR BLUE COLLAR)
- ◆ STAY AT HOME MOM
- ◆ HOLD A BIGGER IS BETTER ATTITUDE

The target individuals for Crossroads Church are a young, married couple between the ages of 25 and 40. They are the typical Boomer/Buster couple. They probably have one or two children in which they dedicate all their time outside of work. If you were to ask Crossroads Craig or Candace what was important to them they would undoubtedly say family and making ends meet in their family. If you were to ask the question what is it you don't have enough of the any would probably be time. Crossroads Craig and Candace are on the go, hopefully up and coming individuals who want to have the world by the tail but their not quite at that point. Yet, they attempt to live that lifestyle which can be seen in the cars they drive and the houses they live in.

When Craig and Candace were asked the question if they attended church regularly they said they were Catholic. When asked where they went to church at sometimes they had to hesitate before answering because they had to think about the name. They feel they are part of the local Catholic parish because their children attend school there but they themselves rarely attend any service. Work takes up six days a week so Sunday is the only time to get caught up. For Candace being a stay at home mom you would think she would have all the time in the world but her week stays busy trying to keep the house running that church is the last thing on her mind. As a couple Craig and Candace spend very little quality time together which leads to a tremendous amount of stress in their marriage and which many times leads to divorce. While family is important the family they view as the most important is the children and the relationship between the man and wife becomes strained.

Crossroads Craig and Candace are typical Boomers or Busters. They are too busy for the world they are living in. They are too busy for church but they want to be affiliated with one.

They want to have the appearance of belonging because they typically grew up in a church background. Craig and Candace do not have to be Catholic but in Monfort Heights many are. There is also a good number of Protestant background individuals who for one reason or the other have been turned off by the church. Maybe the church wasn't there for them when they needed it the most. Maybe they never developed a deep relationship with Jesus Christ because the teaching in the church was shallow. Maybe they were never explained to about the hard times Christians face. For whatever reason Crossroads Craig and Candace no longer attend regular worship. They have allowed the world to be their guide and the only thing that will bring them back is if they see how church can be relevant to them, how it can meet their needs.

Community Concerns

1. Family
2. Job security
3. Stress
4. Teen pregnancy
5. Divorce
6. Substance Abuse
7. After school programs
8. Single parents needs
9. Youth emphasis
10. Money

Ways of meeting the concerns and needs of the community

As Crossroads becomes more and more established in the community various counseling areas will be set up. Initially it will be difficult to staff such a large undertaking so Crossroads will set up a video and audio counseling library. The sermons will be applicable to the needs of the community and will inspire a desire to be understood on the part of the unchurched. The library will be free of charge and in addition to the library a directory of Christian counselors will be kept to provide for those in need.

As Crossroads expands the church will become very youth minded. It will present alternatives for the youth of today away from the temptations of society. The youth/children's program will be very interactive in order to keep the kids minds off of the streets.

For the adults many conferences and seminars will be held ranging from marriage enrichment to financial planning to stress management.

Month by Month Strategy Plan for Crossroads

September, 2000

- ◆ Arrive on the field
- ◆ Start survey work-door to door
- ◆ Continue to cultivate sponsors
- ◆ Develop follow-up for next month's phone bank

Upon arrival on the field the church planter must make his presence in the community known. The best way to do this is through door to door visitation. He will be developing relationships that will be of great importance to his work. In addition to his survey work he must continue to cultivate potential sponsors for the plant. He must realize in order to plant a regional church he must have the financial backing.

October, 2000

- ◆ Start phone survey bank using mother churches volunteers
- ◆ Secure prayer warriors for the ministry

After making his presence in the local community known it is time to start working toward starting the first bible study group. In order to get prospects for the bible study a phone survey bank will be set up using volunteers from the local mother church. Other volunteers may come from the door to door surveys preformed in September.

November, 2000

- ◆ Start first bible study
- ◆ Continue securing more sponsors-hopefully from the local area
- ◆ Sponsor youth league basketball or football team

Using the follow-up strategy developed in September the church planter will start his first bible study. The study group will be from the immediate area around the church. At this time the church planter must instill in the members of the bible study the vision of planting a regional church. He must not allow them to think small from the very beginning. He must instill in them that they are going to be a part of something big. The church planter must not lose sight of the necessity of continued financing. He must continue to cultivate churches and individuals for additional support by selling the vision.

In order to really spread the name of Crossroads the church planter will sponsor one of the local youth athletic teams, either football or basketball. This can be a relatively low cost venture compared to the amount of community awareness publicity it can bring. It shows the community that the church has the needs of the children and the family at heart.

December, 2000

- ◆ Send out first mailer-local area only
- ◆ Join mother church for Christmas service
- ◆ 1st Bible Study Bash

December is a very busy month for everyone but it is a time the church planter cannot overlook even though the church is still in its infancy. An initial mailer will be sent out in the general area around the church location (2 mile limited radius). The mailer will be a basic introduction letter stating the purpose of the church and the mission statement of the church. The bible study groups will be invited to join the mother church for their Christmas celebration service. About a week before Christmas the bible study group will get together for a Bible Study Bash, a fellowship where members can get to know each other on a more personal level.

January, 2001

- ◆ Start second bible study
- ◆ Cast regional vision
- ◆ Start assembling support staff-music and youth/children

Using the response from the initial mailer the church planter will start a second bible study. At this time he will cast the vision for the church as being a regional church, one that reaches out to all of Cincinnati not just the Monfort Heights/White Oak area. The church planter will now start assembling his support staff in order to be prepared for the first preview service in April.

February, 2001

- ◆ Send out second mailer-Postcard
- ◆ Start bible studies in four corners of western Cincinnati

A second mailer will be sent out, this time it will be a postcard which will go to a broader area. The church planter is now acting on the regional vision he has cast. The purpose of the broader area is to start four new bible studies, one in each of the four corners of Cincinnati West of I-75.

March, 2001

- ◆ Enlist mission groups for Spring break (College BSU teams)
- ◆ Preparation for first preview service
- ◆ Sponsor youth baseball team

Mission groups from nearby universities will be asked to come and conduct Backyard Bible Clubs during their spring break. This may run throughout March and part of April depending on the availability of the teams. During this time additional survey work will be done on a broader scale than previously. During the survey time publicity for the first preview service will take place by word of mouth. The preview service will be held to get as many as possible in attendance but with minimal expectations. The service will be used as a training ground for upcoming services. Continue to be visible in the community and express interest in the children of the area by sponsoring a youth league baseball team.

April, 2001

- ◆ 2nd Bible Study Bash

Are you stuck at an interchange of life?



Let us Help!



- ◆ 1st preview service to be held on Easter Sunday

The second Bible Study Bash will be held one week before the first preview on Easter Sunday. By this time the study groups should be becoming very close to each other. The bash will be for them to start to feel like a church and enable them to mingle with members from other groups. The first preview service will be as much for the members of the bible study groups as it is to reach others in the community. The members missed out having their own Christmas service because of their infancy the preview service will provide them with a sense of accomplishment.

May, 2001

- ◆ Begin saturation Backyard Bible Clubs
- ◆ More survey work in preparation for September launch

With summer approaching and the concern for children and family in the area May will start a saturation period of Backyard Bible Clubs which will run the end of July. The BBC's will be held every 2-3 weeks in order to saturate the various communities of the bible study groups. This may mean BBC's going on in all four corners simultaneously. We realize this may be deemed a baby sitting job but it provides a sense of dependence on the church in preparation for a September launch. During this period more survey work will take place setting the table for the upcoming launch.

June, 2001

- ◆ Continue to feed/grow regional bible studies
- ◆ 2nd preview service

Through the publicity of the BBC's a second preview service will be held. This time more attention will be paid to bringing in the unchurched. Crossroads really needs to start showing the community what it can expect from the church. At this point relations should be strong in the community and a concerted effort to reach the lost must now be forming.

July, 2001

- ◆ 3rd Bible Study Bash (4th of July)

In July there will be many people taking vacations so it will be somewhat of a restful time for the core group. The 3rd Bible Study Bash will be held to coincide with the 4th of July. The groups have been going at a fever pitch since March so they need a little breather in order to prepare for the next two months.

August, 2001

- ◆ 3rd Preview service
- ◆ Final preparation of mass mailer announcing launch on September 16th, 2001

◆ Four corner block parties to publicize launch

Things really start to heat up in August with the 3rd and final preview service. By this time everything needs to be running smoothly for the service in order to be ready for the big launch. Final preparation needs to be made for the launch mailer which needs to be ready and waiting by the end of the month. There is no need to be rushing at the very end to get the last envelope addressed. The bible study groups in each of the four corners will host a block party to publicize the launch on September 16th. The atmosphere will be very family oriented and put forth the best foot of the core group.

September, 2001

◆ Mass mailer goes out one week prior to launch

September 16th, 2001 Crossroads holds its first service. One year after arriving on the field.

Proposed Budget for Crossroads

Income:

NAMB and State Convention of Baptist in Ohio (SBCO)	\$850.00/month with \$2600.00 start up funds
Local association	\$200.00/month with \$2000.00 start up funds
Sponsoring churches	\$1000.00/month

know Christ and become fully devoted followers of Christ who reproduce themselves spiritually.

1a. What is your impression of the Monfort Heights area?

My impression of the Monfort Heights area is that it is two areas in one. Monfort Heights East has about 4,000 people in it. It is 91% white. It has a stable population. The people there may or may not have some college, although they tend to have high school diplomas. Monfort Heights South has about 4800 or 4900 persons. It is more white on a percentage basis. There seems to be a bit of growth in this area (just a bit more so than the East community). The projected growth is about 7%, which is not very much, but somewhat significant to mention. There are about 15,000 households in a two-mile radius between the two communities. There is a mix of life styles. The upper, middle, and lower income groups. The largest lifestyle, representing 2,416 households is called New Empty Nests. These are middle adult couples who have pretty well raised their kids and they have a new freedom to travel, volunteer, and enjoy each other as a couple with the grown kids out of the house (perhaps).

2. What do you think is the biggest obstacle to reaching this area?

I think the biggest obstacle to reaching this area would be having patience enough to work in a somewhat settled community and have a passion to find indigenous folks there who would be a part of a nucleus to make a viable new work happen.

3. What type of worship style do you think would work well in this area?

What worship style? Traditional might work fairly well if it were done creatively, but a contemporary approach done tastefully would be my best guess.

4. What evangelism strategy do you think would work best in this area?

Building relationships, doing quality media work and utilizing mailers, having attractive subject matter for life-related messages, workshops, etc.

5. What do you think of the idea of having Dr. Mohler-our seminary president-engaging the archbishop of Cincinnati in a "Baptist-Catholic dialogue" in order to reach this area?

It would be interesting to have Dr. Mohler do a dialogue. It could create interest and help with the general climate of starting a work. However, the immediate impact would perhaps be minimal, at least in the local community.

Dino Senesi, Director of Missions, The Harvest-Focused Baptist Association of Greater Cincinnati. Interview performed by Gary Durham.

Dino is looking for a regionally minded church plant in the Monfort Heights area according to the Glen Mary study. He sees a North/Northwest growth pattern for the area which is about 60% unchurched. He realizes the needs of the community to be family and marriage, financial management and general concerns about the community in which individuals reside.

He has the vision for a church that will reach out to all of the community and plant an

interracial congregation. In looking at the growth patterns of evangelical church plants in Cincinnati most of them are going to the East side of I-75. A Monfort Heights plant which reaches the needs of the people should, in his opinion, be a success because of the open fields.

When questioned about worship style for a Monfort Heights church plant he felt a contemporary or blended service would work well. Above all the atmosphere must be one that provides comfort to the unchurched.

Mark Milioni, Church Planter, Dayton Ohio. Interviewed by Michael Hunkus.

1. What methods of evangelism would you recommend?

We encourage all types. First, relational+those closest to you. We do servant events to the community, big parties and give aways. We train our people to share their faith in small groups.

2. What are the top felt needs in the community?

We get a lot of requests for financial assistance. There is an abundance of alcoholism. There are many failed marriages.

3. Did you use a survey or other tools to get started? Please explain.

We had a survey provided by the state convention of Ohio. It was not very helpful. They suggested several things which turned out to not be a good idea. The main things to look for are population, and if churches are available that are doing the job.

4. What worship style do you use?

We do some of everything. I don't and won't put a label on what we do. It took us a long time to learn about the culture, in order to reach it we must relate to it. Most new church plants think everyone must us the latest in everything, what people need is to find the hearts and minister to them.

5. What group/s are not being reached?

Probably those that are poor. There are many families that are suffering from drinking and divorce but are overlooked by churches. There are also very upscale communities that churches assume they can't reach.

6. Would you say that Catholics heavily populate the area?

I wouldn't say it is heavily populated, but it is populated. I find more ex-anything-Baptists, Church of God, Methodists, Presby, Lutheran than Catholics.

7. Why are the unchurched not coming?

Most unchurched around here do have a church background. They have left for one reason or another. Church is too strict, problems in church, church not relevant, many reasons. Most still claim to have a church or say they are a Baptist or something but do not attend.

8. What non-church religious/cults are pulling people?

Sports. Sunday morning sports is becoming bigger and bigger.

9. What are the top 3 things holding back church growth in this area?

Tradition. Most people do have some church background and expect all churches to be the same+boring, hypocritical and judgmental. Relevance. Lack of excitement.

10. Please offer any data that may be helpful.

If you are looking for church data+we began on April 4, 1999. We had 123 at our launch service. We now average 145. Our weekly income is approximately \$1500.00 per week.

11. Do you dress casual or formal?

I would describe our dress as sharp casual. I don't wear a suit, but I don't wear jeans.

12. What media forms have and do you use?

We use power point very effectively with a video projector.

13. What number came to you 1st service, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th?

Our actual first service had 24, same second week, 30 third week. We launched two months later.

14. What building do you meet in and why?

Currently we rent the dining area of a Masonic Temple. This sounds very weird to a lot of people but it works very well. It is reasonable financially, and it is located just off I-75. A great location.

15. Would you have done anything different?

I would have tried to raise more money to do promotion.

David Smith, Pastor of Creek Road Baptist. Interview by Tim Pattison.

Creek Road Baptist is located in the Northeast corner of the Greater Cincinnati area.

1. How would you describe the composition of your congregation?

We are well mixed in age with the lowest population being young singles 18-25. We are primarily Caucasian, with a low number of Asians and Asian Indians.

2. What type of worship style do you use?

We employ all three worship strategies, or will soon. Our Sunday morning worship is

blended. Sunday evening is traditional and starting in January we will establish a contemporary service on Wednesday evening.

3. How do you incorporate the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper as part of your worship?

We integrate both ordinances into the service. Many times I will use the ordinances as an illustration for the message.

4. What is your strategy for discipleship?

The small group in Sunday School is our primary discipleship tool. The adult study on Wednesday evenings is D T material and has become a very important tool of discipleship here. We also do discipleship through Mens and Women's ministries.

5. What is your strategy for evangelism?

The Sunday School is the primary evangelistic arm of the church. But we do other things as well. We are the mother church for an Asian Indian Church plant in Cincinnati, next year we will do FAITH training for our Sunday School and start a mission Sunday school in the neighboring community. We do the usual yearly evangelistic events such as Revival, VBS, Fall Conference, and our Christmas and Easter productions. We have a web site and have had an evangelistic page. We do a yearly Car Show here on church property which is intended to be an evangelistic outreach.

6. What is your preferred method of preaching?

I preach expository messages, maximum impact for my ministry is when I am in the pulpit. That is when I am reaching the majority of this congregation. Therefore, if I am to take seriously my calling to teach, reach, exhort and encourage the flock I believe I must preach directly from the scriptures.

7. What translation do you preach from?

I normally read from the KJV when I preach but I freely translate.

Rob Renner, Church Planter, Gateway Church, Cincinnati, Ohio. Interviewed by Joel Rainey.

Gateway officially started on November 7, 1999. Renner was Minister of Education/Administration in a large church. That church and three others came together to plant Gateway.

Renner is using a non-Charismatic "vineyard" style of worship and is seeing a very positive response from the people. He is reaching primarily those in the 25-35 year old range with small children. Average attendance is around 80 with a membership of 40.

Initially he found the community skeptical toward church in general, but very receptive to Gateway.

He has tried a couple of different methods to reach the people with varied results. Door

to door canvassing has worked really well but direct mailers did not work for him. He did not use phone survey.

The way to reach the people is through their “felt needs”. He has tried the contemporary worship style which has worked but he is still looking for the “hot button.”

Even though Gateway was started by four different churches he has received some hostility by some SBC churches close by, as they see Gateway as a threat. He hasn't as of yet had time to build relationships with these churches.

Advice for Monfort Heights:

-if enough preliminary work is done, a plant there should go really well.

-would not try traditional worship. His opinion would be Vineyard.

-the last thing he would do would be put “Baptist” in the name

2 reasons: Catholicism

Negative view of SBC

(He lost one family over this and another said if they knew Gateway was SBC, they would never have come.)

Brian Kershaw, Sr., Pastor First Baptist Church of Dent. Interviewed by Michael Hunkus.

1. What type of evangelism would be appropriate?

Personally, I have been trained in several techniques and have reached several conclusions. First, there is not a method that can effectively substitute for good positive impact in daily living. I personally attempt to get among the people in the area. We further attempt numerous outreach exposure events to gain a hearing and also to compile prospect information. We have done harvest parties, totally free car washes, concerts, and have had a booth in the “taste of Green Township.” We are presently utilizing the FAITH materials for evangelism. God has honored our efforts. The FAITH has not involved the bulk of our church due to the time demands. The events especially the car wash was a great win for enthusiasm and involvement. The harvest party also accomplished this result for our church. We are planning to continue with the FAITH process and supplement it with the events.

2. Community would need to be defined for our particular context. Our church family consists of no less than seven different zip codes. Within a five mile radius our church more than 100,000 people reside. Within one mile of the church are more than one thousand apartment/condominium type dwellings. These factors do not comply with one distinctly defined community. With this in mind allow me to share some needs that God has presently laid before us. First is the need for a Christ centered approach to chemical dependency. We have begun such a group without any advertising whatsoever and are laying a solid biblical foundation for discipling people through an overpowering struggle. Second is a great need for a strengthening of couple relationships. Too many families are disintegrating before our very eyes including inside our church. To address this need we plan to begin a study launched around

Valentine's Day for 16 weeks. The third outstanding need is for individuals to become involved in a Bible study with an opportunity to have a real and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I struggled with third because of a high commitment to youth; however they fall into this overarching goal. I have engaged in several conversations with key leaders about some home study groups, and I believe that God is leading strongly to begin several of these.

3. The majority of our attenders come from middle class suburban type families.

4. We attempt to use a blended style of worship. I use this term blended knowing that its meaning is very broad and quite vague. I will emphasize that our Sunday morning worship is much more geared to seeker sensitive environment. Our Sunday evenings are more traditional in the music. Most of our morning worship is with the use of overheads and very much the worship type choruses. There are some of the older hymns used to give a blend. The congregation is standing throughout the participation of worship. I usually do not preach behind the public.

5. Some of our weak areas of groups not being effectively reached would be younger adults between 18 and 25, and adult singles both in that age group and beyond. We also have not been truly effective in reaching the divorced. Again this people group is a single.

6. Regardless of what I say, the people would say it is heavy in Catholic population. I believe they are correct. There are many Catholic churches and schools in our area, and the events have always shown a strong influx of Catholics. However, many are not faithful to their church and some are even searching for a real relationship with Jesus in another church.

7. Our area has many various groups that are impacting the people to one degree or another. The latter day saints, Islamic, and Jehovah Witnesses are three. Wiccan, Satanism and other witchcraft teachings have also filtered into our culture.

8. The first dam of the church growth river is compromised by living by the church. The second is a mentality of instant everything. Church growth takes hard work. The third is leadership. We need to develop leaders in the church who have a vision of growth and a hunger for God. The fourth is an enhanced working relationship between the pastor and the congregation. Distrust, suspicion, and disunity have too long plagued the most powerful organism in this world.

Lawrence and Katherine Langford, Long-time resident. Interviewed by Gary Durham.

1. How close to the Monfort Heights area do you live?

I live 5 miles from the border of Monfort Heights. Monfort Heights lies between Cheviot and White Oak. Both have the city of Cincinnati for a southern border.

2. Are you a member of a Southern Baptist church and if so how long have you been a member?

My wife and I are members of the Lakota Hills Baptist Church at Westchester, Ohio.

Our son Will is our pastor. We have been members for around five years.

3. Do you know of any Protestant work in the area and if so do you know how well it is being received?

St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church located at 5222 North Bend Road is a large Catholic church that also operates an elementary school to grade 8. They have a large enrollment. They also sponsor one of the largest Boy Scout troops in the area.

The Monfort Heights United Methodist Church is a active and large church with an enrollment of 800 plus. The church is active in the community. They also sponsor a large Boy Scout troop and Explorer post of the Boy Scouts. The church is community minded.

On Jessup Road near Monfort Heights, there is a Community Baptist Church with an enrollment of 200. They do not seem to have any outreach.

At 5000 North Bend Road the Joy Community Church. This is a non-denominational church with 4-500 members. There is little activity at the church other than Sunday morning services.

There was an Independent Baptist Church on West Fork Road, a satellite of the Landmark Baptist Church in Cincinnati. The church never got off the ground and after 3-4 years Landmark withdrew support and the building was sold. The harshness of their attitude and preaching left a bad taste in the mouths of the natives who attended the church. Folks don't separate Southern Baptist from Landmark. They are all Baptist in their eyes.

4. In your opinion what are the needs of the 30 to 50 year old range in the Cincinnati area?

Many of the residents are in the 30-50 group, however there is a larger number of Seniors living in Monfort Heights. Many of these seniors are the most faithful members of all the churches, Catholic and Protestant. In my opinion the more successful churches are helping meet the needs of their members; such as sponsoring scout and like groups, senior's groups, etc. This does not mean that the successful churches neglect the preaching and teaching of the gospel.

5. If you were going to attend another church, instead of where you now attend, what would be the number one factor in your decision?

Going to a new church is difficult. At 75 I will not be changing churches again. If I were looking for a church I'd try to find a church where I knew others, and could feel good about the change.

6. What do you think the people of the area are looking for in a church?

Many people are looking for a church that will help them with their family and with life's struggles.

7. Do you think a conservative, bible based church could be a success in the Monfort Heights area?

A Southern Baptist church would have to labor for years to change the people's attitude toward Baptist. The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message has hurt the image of the SBC. People have swallowed the criticism of the BFM hook, line and sinker and the press and CBF people have not stopped in their criticism. It would be difficult to have a successful church in this Catholic stronghold.

Don Dudash, a new convert. Interviewed by Tony Randall.

1. How well do you know the area of Monfort Heights?

Since we have only been in the area for five years we are not familiar with the specific area in question. We do know that greater Cincinnati has a mix of diverse people.

2. How did you come to know the Lord?

I was saved on January 31, 1999. This came about primarily through my wife, who has been a Christian since 1988, and the love of other church members. I basically grew up as a Catholic but my family really didn't practice it. After we moved to Cincinnati I began to see things through our church from a much different perspective than the church we attended in Cleveland. God was making himself more obvious through various circumstances of my life. I wouldn't say there as any real "program" that met my needs directly, although I did join the choir prior to my salvation and realized how powerful music could minister and reach people.

3. If you were to describe a "typical prospect" for this church, what might be your life characteristics?

(Since Don was unfamiliar with the specifics, he provided his own). Married, 2 children, the ages of he and his wife are 9 years apart, so we would fall into the early 30's to early 40's group. We are white and attend a Southern Baptist Church. We own our home. I would consider us to be in the \$65,000-\$70,000 combined income level.

4. What major establishments or employers can be found there and are they well recognized in the area? Are there any distinct "output's" of the area?

General Electric and Proctor and Gamble are the major companies in the area.

5. If we were trying to "catch the eye" of local prospects, where/how should we look to do that?

I'd suggest the Cincinnati Inquirer and probably the local paper for the area. Some local events might be Taste of Cincinnati, Labor Day fireworks display down at the river, Oktoberfest, maybe the Boo Fest at Kings Island.

7. We encountered primarily Catholic people in the area, and you shared that you came out of that tradition. How might we reach similar people?

Make sure that you are non-judgmental in any way with any program. It must be non-threatening because a lot of Catholics are very committed to their faith and it is very hard to get them to be open to other denominations. Remember that they have been programmed to believe that if you are not Catholic, you can not get to heaven. All churches may not push this issue but we know that it is part of the faith.

Support groups are non-threatening for Catholic and non-Catholic alike. From a Catholic's viewpoint who may not be getting the support needed from their church, this would really help someone who is interested in growing as a person or working through difficult situations. Divorce recovery would show God's love and forgiveness in a big way, since divorced people in the Catholic church are almost treated as outcasts. Related to divorce, maybe there could be a support team for children or even the parents to help children through the

process. Other ideas could be abuse, alcohol/drugs, troubled teen/children, etc. I'm sure you can imagine how many options there are, but I would suggest you focus on some areas that the Catholics really look down on and don't promote the grace of God unless you follow their rules and pay more to receive forgiveness.

Another possibility is providing good Biblical programs for elementary children and teens. Most Catholics want their kids to be "good" by nature, so you could provide something to help them in that area. A joint ministry project with the community might be a good idea. I don't think Catholics would be threatened by this. It is not at the church and it shows outreach possibilities for the churches.

8. How would you suggest that we reach people who are not in church at all?

A lot of the information for Catholics apply. Music programs would draw them, so perhaps an Easter or Christmas program might work. I know from a financial standpoint this may be difficult but maybe you could design a program around some Christian holiday.

For the kids (they have two boys, age 11 and 17), they think you need to provide some alternative programs geared to the youth of today, such as youth trips offsite. There are various places that provide "fun things" to do like video games, laser tag, batting cages, etc. Again, it provides something to have the kids get to know one another better and the unchurched or Catholic would realize that these kids are OK. For the younger kids, you could provide an alternative to some secular holidays, such as a Harvest Party on the night of Halloween. We also have a Thanksgiving alternative, which included a praise celebration with TRUTH and a night for the youth. Don't forget about New Years; that is always big.

There are a lot of hurting and lost people searching for answers and if we can minister to their needs first, then God takes care of the rest.

Conclusion and suggestion

Monfort Heights is a highly Catholic area which will be hard to reach. In order to reach the area any church plant will have to be relational in its approach. The trust in the community must be rebuilt. From our survey work we came to the conclusion that most people in the area proclaim to be Catholic that many of them are nominal. Monfort Heights is centered around family and family concerns which makes the relational aspect of ministry all the more important. For a church to reach the unchurched in Monfort Heights there will be a large need to meet the physical, felt needs of the community with programs aimed at recovery, such as divorce, drug/alcohol abuse, etc.

It is our opinion that a church plant that just concentrates on the Monfort Heights area will not be successful. It is an area with negative population growth and an ever aging population. In order to plant a successful church we feel it necessary to make it regionally minded to reach out to the Western half of Cincinnati. The initial location would be the elementary school in Monfort Heights but with the lack of available land relocation would

probably be necessary as the church starts to grow. One suggestion would be to relocate to the crossroads of I-74 and I-275. The church needs to remain visible from the interstate to provide the largest presence in the community.

It is our opinion that a successful church plant is feasible but much prayer and hard work must go into the planning to insure a church that meets the communities needs. With the history in the community they will quickly lose interest if a church is not cutting edge from the beginning.

