

## Community Research

Complete the project based on the people your current church is attempting to reach or the people your church plant is called to reach. A good place to start is your community's chamber of commerce. A great deal of information is also available via the Internet starting at the US Census Bureau at <http://www.census.gov>. Another helpful site is <http://www.freedemographics.com>. Don't limit your research to formal sources. Go into the community and talk with people. This project assumes that you will interview people in your community related to their needs (revealed in answers to number 3 below).

1. Whom are you called to reach? How do you know that you are called to reach them?
2. What do you know about the people you are called to reach?
  - Is it a small community or large community? Is it a community within a larger community?
  - What ethnic, age, gender, family, language or custom considerations are relevant?
  - What socio-economic factors are important (income, employment rate, etc.)?
  - Are there cultural distinctions or affinities that are relevant? If so, describe these and their implications for your outreach to them.
  - What natural affinities already exist between the community and the church?
  - Are there existing relationships with these people or the possibility of new relationships? Both? Describe these.
  - What do you know about the religious affiliation and status of these people?
  - What philosophical factors are relevant (e.g., predominance of postmodern thought, etc.)?
  - **Examples:** Working poor; Blue collar workers; Families of Prisoners; College students; Stressed out suburbanites; First Generation immigrants from Central America; Hopes for a brighter economic future for their children, etc.
3. What needs of these people are you called to meet? (You cannot meet all of them, so be strategic!)
  - Describe their spiritual needs.
  - Describe any physical needs you may be able to meet.
  - Describe lifestyle needs you can meet (e.g., time management, debt management, etc.).
  - Describe their emotional/relational needs (e.g., single parents have different emotional and relational needs than young, upper income married couples, etc.)
  - Describe needs your church is already meeting and how it is doing so.
  - **Examples:** Want to find purpose in their life; desire for intimacy in their relationships but afraid of it; healthy lives for their family; improved economic status; Looking for someone who cares; Secure a better future for their children, etc.
4. Describe how you will meet those needs.
  - Personal relationships.
  - Group ministries, if so, for what reason?
  - Public services, if so, what kind?
  - Specialized ministries.
  - Social services/Community partnerships.