

Planting a New Outreach Ministry

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MissionInsite helps churches of all sizes create a strategy for outreach by providing information about the mission target area.

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Large churches have been planting second sites of ministry for some time, but today even medium-sized churches are seeing the value in establishing another site of outreach. Outreaches connect with a new lifestyle segment on their own turf, and focus the mission heart of the parent congregation. How do you do it?

Recently, I consulted with a Christ Lutheran Church just east of Rockford, Ill., within commuting range of west Chicago. Here is how MissionInsite helped.

The QuickInsite report confirmed that population in the target area was projected to grow by 29.9 percent. Big increases were projected in the “Phases of Life” for singles, young families and children requiring formal schooling (ages 5-19). Many of these new households will speak Spanish as the language of origin.

The church discovered that almost 85 percent of the population projected for 2013 for the target area would be composed of just two lifestyle segments: Family Convenience and Second Generation Success. After reading the Mosaic descriptions, it realized that these folks have strong extended family commitments, enjoy inexpensive outings,

watch television, listen to country and Latino music and love the outdoors. They look for churches that provide transformational worship, lifestyle coaching and opportunities to improve quality of life. They’ve known hard times, are gaining confidence and are looking for hope.



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Christ Lutheran, a case in point

Using the MissionInsite research engine, church leaders explored the psychographics of the target area. We customized a report

based on the “Viewpoints” of the target area, clicking the tabs for “Life Concerns and Well Being,” “Lifestyle Preferences,” “Personal Perspectives,” “Religious Practices” and “Social Values.” Here are some insights:

Insights about our target area	Insights about our congregation
➤ They find it difficult to say no to their kids.	➤ We want children to express themselves.
➤ They enjoy spending time with family.	➤ Friends are more important than family.
➤ They have a practical outlook on life.	➤ How we spend time is more important than money.
➤ They only work their current job for the money.	➤ Our work is a career, not just a job.
➤ They are interested in other cultures.	➤ We’re interested in other cultures, too!
➤ They respect other customs and beliefs.	➤ We expect others to take us as they find us.

Such research helps leaders see the contrast between the expectations of the mission field and the habits of their congregations, and gives them clues for adapting programs and training leaders.

Church leaders can test these insights with conversations with local leaders in education, health care and social services. So far, we learned that the target area experiences tremendous pressure on dual career marriages and on children to succeed in school. The county already is expanding hospitals and clinics, and a number of churches have opened day care centers.

The next steps

Now the church took all this information to prayer. The congregational mission is “to Make Christ Known.” They think there is openness to a sacramental tradition from another culture, but it may take awhile to build trust. And they doubt these lifestyle segments would drive very far when they

already have high gasoline bills. What’s the best way to bless them?

The church rented 1,200 square feet of storefront space in a strip mall to establish “LifeLight Ministries.” Designated staff host open houses and network with the community. The vision is still “percolating” (according to the pastor), based on a core message of light shining in the darkness (John 1). The outreach will start with small groups to explore faith, and eventually form a worshipping congregation. What kinds of family-friendly, cross-generational, cross-cultural activities will encourage this community?

They may create a Christian Family Support Center that provides counseling services

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and tutoring for children. They could hire a certified marriage counselor who speaks fluent Spanish as well as English, raise money for computers and software, train church volunteers for tutoring with advice from the school board — oh, yes, and they might only play the latest country and Tejano music onsite and have lots of home-made snacks donated from the community.

About the sponsor: *MissionInsite supports the mission of churches around the world by providing denominational agencies and congregations a cost-effective, innovative system that includes high quality demographic research, real-time congregant analysis and easy to use Web-based discovery tools. The company was co-founded by Mike Regele, Chuck Salter and Peter Wernett. Together, they bring more than 75 years of experience in the fields of church development, strategic planning and mission context analysis. With a shared passion for the church and its faithful missional engagement of North American culture, Regele, Salter and Wernett are excited to offer the next generation of mission context analysis tools for the church.*