COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT MANUAL

Where is God Working in Your Community?

NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD

KBC
KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

CONTENTS

If your's is like most congregations and ministries, the day is already full with ministry tasks, committee meetings, administrative responsibilities, and keeping the bills paid. You are constantly juggling things to get it all done! Then somebody tells you that you need a current community assessment and you wonder if its worth the time and effort. The answer is unequivocally, YES!

You may think you already know your community, after all people bring their needs to your doorstep every day. But how do you know yours is the best place to meet those needs? A community assessment can give you the information you need to be the best stewards of the resources God has given you. Not only will a community assessment show you things you do not know about your community, but it will open doors to relationships in new and exciting ways. As you interview community service organizations, businesses, community leaders, residents, religious organizations and church members you will learn many things:

- You'll see more clearly what God is doing in your community
- You'll learn what resources and strengths are in your community that might be of assistance to you in the ministry God has called you to
- You'll hear what the community thinks of your ministry. (This might be one of the most valuable pieces of information you'll gather!)
- You'll find new possibilities for collaborations
- You'll uncover the gaps in ministry in your community
- You'll be able to discover whether or not your ministry is meeting the most pressing needs in your community or duplicating other capable ministries
- You'll discover hundreds of possibilities of ministry. If you can't find a ministry to do after a community assessment, you just don't want to do ministry!

While gathering information is important, it is not the most important thing you will be doing through a community assessment. The most important thing you will accomplish is the building of relationships. You will come in contact with community leaders that you might not otherwise have opportunity to meet. You will gain access to information and resources you need, but didn't even know existed. Above all, a community assessment may be God's way of giving you the opportunity to share the gospel with

community leaders or to encourage a brother or sister in Christ. You do not want to miss the opportunity!

A community assessment can be as simple or as complex as you make it. The more pieces you include, the better understanding you will have of your community and the more information you will have to make responsible decisions about your ministry. Here are some of the tasks that will give you important information about your community.

- **Prayer Journey through your community**. Going out in groups to pray for your community allows God to speak to you about what He is already doing as well as what He would like to do in your community.
- **Interview local services organizations** to discover what services they provide. No matter how big your congregation or ministry is, there is no way you can meet all the needs of all the people who come to you. Knowing what service agencies are in your community and what services they provide helps you know where you can make referrals. It will also help you see where there are gaps in services that you might be able to provide.
- **Interview local leaders** such as the mayor, chief of police, school principals, and fire chief. They will give you valuable information about your community and opportunities to serve. This may also provide your community leaders with an opportunity to discover an organization that is available and willing to help them meet the needs of the people they serve.
- **Interview local businesses** to discover what employment opportunities might be available. Discovering what obstacles they face in filling their positions might give you clues to potential ministries. In addition, you can learn how local businesses are giving back to your community and how you can participate with them.
- **Interview the local religious community** to see what other churches are already doing in your community. It will reveal opportunities to work together as well as show where there are needs that are not being met by an evangelistic ministry. As you discover other faith communities, you will also know how to educate your church members about the beliefs of other faiths.
- **A Church Assessment** will help you discover the skills, abilities, gifts, and interests your church members have for ministry. Remember, when God calls you to a task He provides all you need to

accomplish the mission. This will help you see what resources God has put in place.

- **Gathering demographic information** from various sources will give you a better "big picture" of your community. Are there more preschoolers or senior adults with needs? Are the homeless in your community veterans or single moms?

The potential value of a community assessment is great. In this manual you will find tools to help you plan for the assessment, gather the information, and put it all together to help you see where God might be leading you to reach out to the people in your community.

> *"I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you invited me into your home. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me."*
> *Then these righteous ones will reply, "Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?"*
> *And the King will tell them, "I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sister, you were doing it to me!"* (Matt 25: 37-40)

Do you know where the hungry are God is calling your congregation to feed, or those in prison He wants you to visit, or the strangers in need of shelter in you community? God has given your congregation gifts and resources for ministry. Do you know what they are? Do the people sitting in your pews know how they can use their abilities and resources to serve the living God by serving those around them? A Community Assessment can help you uncover the multitude of opportunities that surround you and provide your congregation with direction as you seek God's plan to reach your community through ministry evangelism.

It doesn't matter how much information you collect, how many people you interview, or how many opportunities you identify, if God is not a part of the process you are wasting your time. The most important factor in collecting information, building relationships, and evaluating data is how carefully you listen to the Holy Spirit. Prayer will lead the way. Pray as you seek to identify which community leaders to interview. Pray for those God is

preparing to go out and build relationships with community leaders and residents through the interviews. Pray as you knock on a door. Prayer before you start, as you go, and while you evaluate will ensure that God is a part of the process from beginning to end. Even if everything points to the need for a particular ministry, if you don't feel this is where the Holy Spirit is leading you, don't do it! God has plan for your church, your ministry, and your community. A Community Assessment is one tool you can use to allow God to lead you in the way He would have you go.

PUTTING TOGETHER A TASK FORCE

Putting together your task force is the first order of business. The task force will lead your congregation or organization through the community assessment process. This group should be prayerfully selected keeping in mind they will be the cheerleaders, encouraging everyone along the way and administrators, giving instructions and making sure all the details necessary for effective community assessment are taken care of. Also, remember that group chairpersons will be responsible for recruiting volunteers to join them and for leading the group to carry out their assignment. You want people who are passionate about ministry in the community and who want to see God at work through the churches.

Chair Person and Vice Chair person

Select a chair person and vice chair person. It will be their responsibility to work with each of the group chair persons to be sure they have what they need to complete their job. It will also be their job to keep everybody excited and motivated about the project.

Task Force Representatives

If the assessment is being done by a group of churches, you will need a representative from each church on the task force. It will be the responsibility of these people to carry information back to their congregations, recruit needed volunteers, and get information from the church back to the task force. If an individual congregation is doing the assessment you will need representatives from the various areas of the church (men's ministries, women's ministries, Sunday School, outreach, etc.) in order to get good support for the project. If the assessment is being conducted by an individual community organization you will want to include individuals from your organizational leadership team, and from churches or groups that assist you in your work.

Secretary

The secretary will keep minutes of all the task force meetings. This person will also be responsible for keeping track of all the data and ensuring a final report is completed of the project. The secretary will need to recruit volunteers to assist with the work.

Prayer Group Chairperson

A community assessment is a large project and has the potential to make such a huge difference in your church/organization and community. You can be assured that it will only have an eternal impact if it is carried out under the leadership of the eternal God. Prayer is the key to preparing your congregation and the community for the work God wants to do through your church or organization. The prayer coordinator will recruit people who will pray for the project, pass on specific prayer needs, and recruit people to walk or drive through the community, praying as they go. They will look for strengths

and weaknesses in the community, possible ministry opportunities, and build relationships with those they encounter.

Interview Group Chairpersons (5)

These groups will be responsible for coordinating the interview process with **community service organizations**, **elected and appointed city officials**, **people who live in the community, business leaders,** and **the religious community**. The chairpersons will recruit others to help set up interviews, recruit and train volunteers who will conduct the interviews, coordinate the survey on the appointed day, and compile the results.

Demographics Group Chairperson

This group will be responsible for gathering demographic information about the community and compiling a summary of the information. This information is critical to understanding who lives in your community, how your community is changing, and where specific populations in need are clustered in your community. An individual or a small group could accomplish this task. It will help if the chairperson is familiar with demographic data.

Church Survey Group Chairperson

This group is responsible for coordinating the survey of church members. If the community assessment is being done by a group of churches the chairperson will want to recruit a representative from each church. If the assessment is being conducted by an organization you will want to survey the members in each of the churches that assists you in your work. This group is also responsible for collecting the surveys and compiling the results.

COMMUNITY PRAYER JOURNEYING

Community Prayer Journeying is a great way to combine prayer and witness in a natural, non-intrusive way. The creation of field teams and support teams allow for everyone to be involved in covering the community in prayer. Community Prayer Journeys are local church based and intentionally evangelistic. Many groups are already using every form of transportation to cover their communities in prayer so Community Prayer Journeys may include not only walking, but biking, driving or even rollerblading!

A Community Prayer Journey is an intentional coordinated effort to pray for and share Jesus with every person in a chosen geographical area or cultural community. Community Prayer Journeys help believers to balance the importance of prayer in preparation for witnessing, ministry, or during outreach events. The entire geographic or cultural area must be saturated in prayer.

God awaits our prayers to release the spiritual power that enables us to follow through on His Plan. Community Prayer Journeys draw believers closer to God and give them a vision for the lost. This intentional prayer releases God's power and love as believers agree with His plans for an area. Community Prayer Journeys help each believer focus on their own responsibility to reach their neighborhood.

Field teams: Field teams travel into the communities for direct contact prayer with the areas they are asking God to touch. Field teams also learn to be sensitive and responsive to the divine encounters that occur during Community Prayer Journeys. A divine encounter is when the Spirit of God leads someone into the path of a believer so they can hear the gospel, be encouraged, or receive ministry. This happens in every Community Prayer Journey where field teams come into contact with people.

Field teams may walk, drive, bicycle, rollerblade, fly, or ride a subway or train. A field team that is walking may have two or three people in it. Field teams walk with heads up and eyes open. Other modes of transportation may include 2-5 people. The point is to cover the community in prayer and take advantage of divine encounters. Team members listen for the Spirit to speak to them based on what they see, hear, and smell. It is not just a devotional walk or drive, but an intentional time of intercession for others. Walking and public transportation have the advantage of increasing the potential for divine encounters.

The teams usually do not stop in front of a home or business. As they walk or ride they pray silently or softly voice aloud a prayer based on what they see and feel. The prayers are short, specific, and powerful. Field teams can begin with the neighborhoods closest to the church. Map out the journeys so that every neighborhood in the community is covered in prayer.

Take precautions for the safety of the team. Some areas require larger field teams or should be driven through. Encourage teams in problem areas to have a cell phone with them. In some areas it may be a good idea for the coordinator to drive around the target area to check on each team every fifteen minutes. Do not avoid these areas, they need

prayer. But there are tiems when the admonition to "be shrewd as serpents and harmless as doves." **Matt. 10:16** (NASB), is especially important.

Support teams: Support teams remain at the church or in homes to provide prayer support for the field teams. This allows those who cannot physically journey with the field teams to participate. Support teams intercede on behalf of the community, the field teams, and lost people.

The support teams will pray over maps of the area. They will pray for each house, apartment and business on the streets where the field teams are journeying. Create one or more teams of 2-5 people to pray over the areas where the field teams are praying. You can get maps you're your local visitor's bureau. Maps are also available from the Mapping Center for Evangelism, www.map4jesus.org.

The field teams and support teams need to decide the length of time each Prayer Journey will last. The length of time depends on many factors. Usually assign the field teams to be out for about one hour. It passes surprisingly quickly. Vary that amount of time depending on weather, geography, number of houses, and number of field teams that are walking or using other transportation. Begin at the door of the church and fan out down the streets. Send some teams out to other neighborhoods in the community. Some teams will need to drive a while, park in a safe place and walk through their assigned neighborhood.

As you are journeying through the community, be very observant. Ask yourself the following questions?

1. What am I observing that is good about this community?
2. What am I observing that may be an opportunity for our church to meet needs or build relationships?
3. Who is already ministering in this community?
4. Are there people or organizations here that might be potential collaborators?
5. What opportunities for employment are here?

When you return to the church, record your observations right away. If you wait until later, you might forget them. You might want to have a designated recorder or two on your journey so you can capture thoughts as soon as they occur.

For a more in depth study of Prayer Journeys, a free downloadable resource is available at http://www.namb.net/site/c.9qKILUOzEpH/b.743379/k.992F/Taking_Prayer_to_the_Streets.htm

Steps to Community Interviews

1. Determine the agencies/individuals to be interviewed.
2. Select a date for the interviews.
3. Recruit volunteers to conduct interviews. Enlist the same number of volunteers as the number of agencies/individuals to be visited.
4. Set appointments with agencies, organizations, and community leaders. Each team of two volunteers will visit two agencies/leaders. Schedule half the appointments for 10 o'clock and the other half for 11 o'clock.
5. Send a letter of confirmation one week before the appointment date. Include in the letter the questions to be discussed in the interview. Giving interviewees the questions up front allows them to prepare answers in advance and may give you better information.

Recommended Schedule for Day of Interviews
8:30 am   Continental Breakfast
8:50 am   Pairing of teams and distribution of assignment cards. (Avoid sending couples together.)
9:00 am   Orientation/Interview assignments
9:30 am   Departure for appointments
10:00 am First appointment
11:00 am Second appointment
Noon   Lunch and sharing, time to complete written reports

Procedure for Interview Day
1. Give each volunteer a card listing the agency name, contact person to be interviewed, address, phone number, directions, and time of interview. Each team will receive appointment cards for two agencies located near each other.
2. Distribute "calling cards" to all volunteers. Volunteers will print their names on the cards to leave with the people they visit. Cards may be from the church, the association, or whatever organization is sponsoring the community assessment.
3. Give interview forms to all volunteers. The form lists the questions to be discussed and provides suggestions for beginning and concluding the interview. Review the form with the volunteers. When they make a visit, one person is the spokesperson and does the interview. The other person is the scribe for that visit and records the answers. This allows the interviewer to make eye contact with the person being interviewed and build a relationship. It is suggested that they change roles during the second visit.
4. Remind volunteers that they are on a fact finding mission. They are not to make any commitments during their visits. This may be a temptation, but they must refrain from doing this. Many of these leaders have had unfulfilled promises from churches before. Making a promise and not keeping it will hinder building positive relationships.
5. Remind volunteers that they have asked for 30 minutes of this person's time and they need to honor that. It is a matter of integrity. If the 30 minutes is up and the interview is not completed, offer to leave. If the person being interviewed offers to continue the interview, remain at their request to complete it.

6.　At the end of the interview, volunteers should tell the person begin interviewed that they are going to pray for them and ask for prayer requests.　Most people will readily give you prayer requests.　If a person does not want you to pray with them, respect their wishes and pray for them after you leave.

7. Give interview report forms to volunteers when they return from their appointments so they can complete them.　They have probably been writing very quickly during the interview and will need to re-write in a legible fashion.

8.　Give results to the chair person of the secretary group so the reports can be prepared.

Interviewing Community Service Organizations

Potential Organizations/Individuals to Interview include:
- Senior Adult Centers
- Head Start Programs
- Senior Adult Day-Care Centers
- Salvation Army
- Habitat for Humanity
- Human Services Departments
- Public Health Departments
- Mental health Departments
- Counseling Services
- Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Programs
- Food Banks
- Community Cooperative Ministries
- Food Pantries/Soup Kitchens
- Shelters
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- School Counselors
- Civil/Criminal Court Administrators
- Chaplains
- Jail and Prison Administrators
- Housing project Managers/Resident council Presidents
- Multihousing Community Managers
- Hospital Administrators/Chaplains
- Military Base Commanders/Chaplains

Interviewing of Elected and Appointed Officials

It is the responsibility of elected and appointed officials to know the people who live in their communities and what their needs are.　Their jobs depend on it!　They have a lot of knowledge that will help you know your community.

Possible people to visit include:
- Mayor
- City Council Members

- Chief of Police
- Fire Chief
- Sheriff

Interviewing of Local Business Leaders

Business leaders can give you several types of information that will be helpful to you. First, they employ people who live in your community. They can tell you about employment opportunities and what the prospects for employment are for the future.

Second, they can let you know what the qualifications are for employment. If you decide an employment preparation ministry or job skills ministry is where God is leading you, this will be very important information.

Third, they can give you insights into obstacles people face for employment such as child care or transportation. This information may give you clues for new ministries.

Fourth, most businesses give back to the community. During the interview you will find out what this business does in the community and discover possibilities for getting plugged in.

Interviewing the Religious Community

There are three basic reasons for assessing the religious community.

1. Before you get started with a new ministry, is would be a good thing to know what other churches in your community are already doing in that area. If three churches are already doing a soup kitchen in your area, there might not be a need for a fourth one. It might be better to ask your church members who want to work in a soup kitchen to volunteer in the soup kitchens that are already established.
2. Knowing what other churches are already doing helps you to see possibilities of collaborations. Working together, we can accomplish a lot more than each of us working alone.
3. In every community there are a multitude of faith communities. Knowing who is there helps you to provide appropriate training to your members. If there is a large group of Buddhists in your community, your church member need to know what Buddhists believe and be equipped to share their own faith with a Buddhist.

The best place to start is with the yellow pages. Make a list of all the different religious groups in your community. Contact them to discover how many local members they have.

Have a list of all the Christian churches in your community and plan to visit as many as possible to fill out the religious community survey form.

COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION
INTERVIEW FORM

1. Introduce yourselves and present calling cards with your names and phone numbers.
2. Explain that you are one of many teams doing a community assessment.
3. Say, "Thank you for your time. We represent churches that want to learn more about our community so we can be better neighbors."
4. Ask the following questions. Take careful notes. Obtain quotes where possible.

1. What services do you provide?

2. What are the qualifications for receiving your services?

3. What are the strengths you see in this community?

4. What problems do you face as an agency?

5. What problems and needs exist among those you serve? (Write quotes.)

6. What trends do you see that will affect your work over the next five years?

7. What can a church, a group of churches, or volunteers do to help?   and/or What are your volunteer needs?

8. If you had an opportunity to speak to challenge church people, what would you say?

.   May we pray for you and your work before we leave? (Pray for the person interviewed, the agency/organization, and the people/families served.)

SURVEY OF ELECTED/APPOINTED OFFICIALS

5. Introduce yourselves and present calling cards with your names and phone numbers.
6. Explain that you are one of many teams doing a community assessment.
7. Say, "Thank you for your time. We represent churches that want to learn more about our community so we can be better neighbors."
8. Ask the following questions. Take careful notes. Obtain quotes where possible.

1. What makes this a good community to live in?

2. What are the strengths of this community?

3. What services does your office provide to the community?

4. What hindrances do you encounter in carrying out your services?

5. What problems and needs exist among the people you serve?

6. What would you say are the top three issues facing this community?

7. What do you see as the role of the church in making this a strong community?

8. What changes do you see coming in the next five years?

9. May we pray for you and your work before we leave? (Pray for the person interviewed, the business and for its clients.)

LOCAL BUSINESS INTERVIEW FORM

9. Introduce yourselves and the congregation or organization you represent.
10. Explain that you are one of many teams doing this community assessment.
11. Say, "Thank you for your time. We represent churches that want to learn more about our community so we can be better neighbors."
12. Ask the following questions. Take careful notes. Try to write exact quotes.

1. What type of business is this and what services do you provide?

2. What strengths do you see in this community?

3. What opportunities for employment to you have? What are the qualifications?

4. What problems do you face as a business in this community?

5. What are some of the needs you have observed in this community?

6. What trends do you see that will affect your business over the next five years?

7. How does your business give back to the community?

8. If you had an opportunity to speak to, or challenge church members, what would you say?

9. How can we pray for you and your business?

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY
INTERVIEW FORM

13. Introduce yourselves and present calling cards with your names and phone numbers.
14. Explain that you are one of many teams doing a community assessment.
15. Say, "Thank you for your time. We represent churches that want to learn more about our community so we can be better neighbors."
16. Ask the following questions. Take careful notes. Obtain quotes where possible.

1. What services do you provide for the community?

2. What are the qualifications for receiving your services?

3. What are the strengths you see in this community?

4. What problems do you face in doing ministry in this community?

5. What problems and needs exist among those you serve? (Write quotes.)

9.   May we pray for you and your work before we leave? (Pray for the person interviewed as well as the ministries their congregation provides.)

INTERVIEWING PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

Many churches/associations have found it helpful to interview people who live in the community. This can be a helpful source of information. Before doing this, consider the appropriateness of doing this in your neighborhood. If you decide to do a door to door survey, keep safety issues in mind:
- Remain on the porch. Do not go inside unless you know the person.
- Go during daylight hours and during good weather
- Go in pairs. Never knock on someone's door alone to do an interview.
- Be aware of your surroundings while walking in the community
- Respect signs that indicate the person does not want a visitor.

Once someone answers the door, explain that you are surveying the neighborhood to discover ways that your church (or group of churches) can be a better neighbor. Identify your church or association by name.

After they answer the questions, thank them for their time and responses. The following would be appropriate responses on your part at this time:

1. Based on their answers you believe the person is already a growing Christian. Rejoice with them that you are brothers and sisters in Christ and that you had this opportunity to serve them and to get to know them. Pray with them that God will continue to bless them and that they will continue to grow in Him.
2. Based on their answers, you believe the person is a Christian, but is not growing. Rejoice with them that they are saved and know that they will go to heaven when they die. Explain that God wants them to be in a right relationship to Him and to be growing as a Christian. Help them find a church if they are not already members somewhere and encourage them to fellowship with other believers. Be sure they have a Bible and encourage them to be reading it and studying it on a daily basis. Encourage them to spend time with God in prayer every day. Pray with them that they will begin to grow as Christians and that God will lead them to other Christians that they can grow with.
3. Based on their answers, you believe this person is probably not saved. You can say, "You know, there was a time in my life when I didn't believe spiritual things were important either. Can I tell you my story?" Then share your testimony and lead them in a gospel presentation.
   You could make a similar transition statement as a result of their answer on any of the 6 questions. The important thing is that you use this tool as a transition to share the gospel with this person.

Thank them for their time and for the information they provided. Do not promise anything. Explain that you are only gathering information and that decisions will be made later about what the church will do. Offer to pray with them and ask if they have specific prayer requests. If a person does not want you to pray with them, respect their wishes and pray for them after you leave their property.

COMMUNITY RESIDENTS INTERVIEWS

Address_____

Ages of children living here:
Number of Adults living here:

1.   What is the best thing about living in this community?

2.   Are you aware of our church? If so, what have you heard about it?

3.   What problems and needs are there in this community?

4.   What could a church or group of churches do to help?

5.   If you could speak to a church group, what would you say?

Spiritual Emphasis Questions:

1. Among the people you know, would you say interest in spiritual matters is:
    a. [ ] on the increase, b. [ ] on the decrease, or c. [ ] about the same? (If needed, clarify, "God, Heaven, Prayer, etc.")

2. Would you rank your own interest in spiritual matters as:
    a. [ ] on the increase   b. [ ] on the decrease   c. [ ] about the same?

3. Would you say Jesus Christ has had:
    a. [ ] a major influence in your life   b. [ ] a minor influence in your life   c. [ ] no influence in your life.

4. Would you say the local church is:
    a. [ ] very relevant to your life   b. [ ] somewhat relevant to your life   c. [ ] not relevant to your life.

    If they are a member of a local congregation or faith community, please record the name of that congregation or faith community:

5. An overwhelming number of Americans have indicated they believe in life after death and a real place called Heaven. The Bible says that everyone will spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. In your opinion, do you believe this to be true?
    a. [ ] Yes   b. [ ] No   c. [ ] Not Sure

6. Do you believe it is important for a person to understand how they can have a personal relationship with God?
    a. [ ] Yes   b. [ ] No

Respond appropriately. Offer to pray with them.

USING DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics give you the big picture of who lives in your community and what some of their characteristics are. It is a good tool to assist you in deciding what ministry your church needs to start.

Demographics can be obtained from several sources. One is the federal census bureau. You can get a wealth of information at www.census.gov. This site will give you national and state as well as local demographic information.

You can also get demographic information from local colleges and universities, from your local city planner, from chambers of commerce, school boards, and utility companies.

If you are a Kentucky Baptist Convention Church, you can contact the state convention (1-866-489-3530 or ministries@kybaptist.org) send an e-mail to demographics@namb.net and get clear and helpful demographic information to assist you in realizing how to communicate the gospel using opportunities right outside your doors. NAMB's research team obtains information from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources for a given area, then compiles a demographic report in easy to use format along with guidelines for effective ways to use it. You can ask for information about your zip code. You can also provide the physical location of your building and NAMB can provide you with demographic information for a one mile, three mile, and five mile radius from your building.

Let's say a church's missions committee wants to find ways to bring people into the church who are not currently drawn in by the church's ministries. The committee members start kicking around ideas and decide they have a big gymnasium that sits empty most of the week. They think maybe athletic type ministries for young adults might be effective, but they don't know how many young adults live in their community. So they ask NAMB for a demographic study.

They are surprised that the study reveals a larger than expected number of single parent families. How can they use their under utilized gym to minister to this group:
- Parenting classes
- After school tutoring
- Once a month Saturday "Parent's Night Out" ministry
- Budgeting classes
- Single Mom's support group

This becomes a whole new line of thinking for the committee opening up new possibilities for ministry they had not thought of before.

Your state Baptist Convention and local association may also be able to provide this information. If you are not Southern Baptist, ask your denomination if they can assist you.

Guidelines for looking at demographic information:

1. Compare demographics from your community with state and national information.
2. Note any categories that contain any high percentages or large or unusual numbers.
3. Compare data from several sources to get a more accurate picture.
4. Compare the demographic characteristics of your church with the demographic characteristics of your community. Look for population groups present in your community that are not being reached by your church or its ministries. Do you need to start new ministries or do you need to examine your style of worship, building structure, attitudes, and modes of outreach to see what barriers might be there?
5. Look for institutional group quarters such as colleges, long-term care hospitals, jails and prisons, and the military. Very specific types of ministries are needed for people living in these quarters as well as their families.
6. Look for rapidly growing populations. New ministry opportunities will come as these populations grow and your church can get ready for them now.
7. Look for rapidly declining areas. Most likely the decline will be accompanied by worsening economic and social welfare of the population. Specific ministries geared to meet these new needs will be needed. New ministries could include things like job skills, job referrals, literacy training, food pantries, clothing closets, after school children's ministries, and day care.
8. Look for populations of children who may need tutoring, after-school ministries or child care. Is there a need for summer ministries such as VBS, sports clubs and music camps?
9. The presence of young adults in your community may indicate two avenues of evangelistic ministry – one to singles and the other to married young adults. Possible ministries may include recreation, pre-marital counseling, marriage enrichment, singles retreats, campus ministries, mother's morning out, parenting classes, single parent support groups, crisis pregnancy counseling and AIDs ministries.
10. Perhaps one of the greatest challenges to the church today is effective evangelistic ministries to the growing senior adult population. As a senior adult's social network is diminished by the death of long-term friends and family, a church with holistic ministries can provide redemption in both spiritual and social areas.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Instead, it is intended to get you started at interpreting demographic information in a way that will assist your church in making ministry decisions.

CHURCH SURVEY

Surveying your church is a vital part of the community assessment process. You are looking for the following information:

- What areas of need in your community are your church members aware of? Depending on the community you are targeting, you probably have members who live there.
- What areas of ministry interest them? If they were given good training, what kinds of ministries would they most likely be willing to serve in?
- What skills, knowledge and abilities do they have that could be used for ministry. God can use even unlikely skills. A Baptist Center director in East St. Louis had a computer programmer offer to volunteer in the ministry. The young man said, "I know you can't use my computer programming skills, but I'm willing to do anything." The director was actually thrilled to have a computer programmer. He asked the young man to develop a data base program for the Center. Now volunteers log on when they are interviewing clients and enter the information gathered from the client. When the volunteer completes the interview and selects "submit," he gets a print out of community agencies that might be able to assist the client. The volunteer can then give that list to the client so they will know where to go for further assistance. The computer also prints out a list of other Baptist Center services that would be of value to their client.

  The computer automatically lets other ministry areas in the building know what is needed from them. The food pantry is able to pack a box of food specific for the needs of that family. The clothing closet knows exactly how many pieces of clothing that family is eligible to receive. The storage closet knows what hygiene products are needed and whether or not dish or laundry detergent are needed. All because a computer programmer was willing to do whatever skills he had!

- What connections do they have in the community? Your members belong to clubs that do community service projects. Maybe your ministry could become a service project. Your members serve the boy scouts, the girl scouts, the boys and girls clubs, and other youth organizations. Those could become important connections.

Don't hand out the surveys and ask members to return them the next week. Less than 20% will actually return them. Instead, give them out in Sunday School classes and give members time to fill them out there. Or consider a service where the theme is serving your community. As part of the service, pass out the forms and ask members to fill them out while music is playing.

Please review the following list of people, places and needs. Check areas of need that the church can meet. Also check any areas with which you would like to work.

Topic	I know of a need in this area:	I would like to work in this area
Where are these people?		
1. Inner-city areas		
2. Suburbs		
3. Revitalized neighborhoods		
4. Urban fringe areas		
5. Isolated communities		
6. Unchurched communities		
7. Transitional areas – racial		
8. Transitional areas –ethnic		
9. Transitional areas – economic		
10. Multifamily housing		
11. Low-income housing		
12. Mobile homes		
13. Condominiums		
14. Governmentally impacted areas		
15. Industrially impacted areas		
16. Militarily impacted areas		
17. Resort areas		
What language-culture groups are affected?		
18. Immigrants		
19. Refugees		
20. Internationals		
21. Diplomats		
22. Seamen		
23. Foreign tourists		
24. Temporary workers		
25. Foreign wives/children		
26. Undocumented persons		
27. Language – Europeans		
28. Language – Hispanics		
29. Language – American Indians		
30. Language – Middle Easterners		
31. Language – Caribbeans		
32. Language – Asians		
33. Language – Deaf		

What racial factors affect them?		
34. Black churches affiliated with SBC		
35. Other black Baptist churches		
36. Other black denominations		
37. Racially mixed churches		
38. Unreached black communities		
What physical and emotional problems do they have?		
39. Long-term illness		
40. Disability		
41. Blindness		
43. Visual handicap		
44. Aging disability		
45. Emotional disability		
46. Developmental disability		
Are people in these institutional settings in need?		
47. Nursing homes		
48. Hospitals		
49. Hospices		
50. Military installations		
51. Reserve-duty locations		
52. Juvenile homes		
53. Jails		
54. Prisons		
55. Industrial complexes		
56. Rest homes		
Is help needed for people who spend their time as . . . ?		
57. Entertainment workers		
58. Campers		
59. Vacationers		
60. Sports fans/participants		
61. Boaters		
62. Race track workers		
63. Truck drivers		
64. College/technical students		
Is help needed for people with socio-economic needs?		
65. Drug/alcohol abusers		
66. Gamblers		
67. Retirees		
68. Unwed mothers		
69. Divorced people		
70. Single adults		

71. One-parent families		
72. Children of working parents		
73. Widows/widowers		
74. Abused children		
75. Abused spouses		
76. Non-readers		
77. Non-English-speaking persons		
78. Criminals		
79. Juvenile delinquents		
80. Transients		
81. Unemployed		
82. Migrants		
83. Hungry		
84. Economically disadvantaged		
85. Children doing poorly in school		
What do they believe or profess?		
85. Catholicism		
86. Eastern Orthodox		
87. Protestantism		
88. Charismatic beliefs		
89. Islam		
90. Buddhism		
91. Hinduism		
92. Judaism		
93. Sects' beliefs		
94. New religious movements		
95. Occult religions/witchcraft		
96. Scientism		
97. Mormonism		
98. Other:		

Information about you:
Name:_____Ethnicity_____

Address:_____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Gender _____

E-Mail_____

What skills do you have? (Please include both professional and personal skills)
Artistic_____

Business_____

Child Care_____

Clerical_____

Construction_____

Counseling_____

Computer_____

Financial_____

Food Services_____

Foreign Languages _____

Gardening and Lawn Care _____

Health Care _____

Musical _____

Working with Internationals_____

Other _____

Do you belong to any groups that serve our community? (e.g. Boy Scouts, PTA, Civic Club, etc.)

Needs of People/Places:
If you know of specific persons or places related to areas checked on survey form, please list those to whom the church might minister.

Ministry Need	Name of person or Place	Address/Location

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now that you've gathered the information for your community assessment, what do you do with it? You probably have notebooks full of information that seems overwhelming! How do you decide which ministry is right for your church or organization? Here are some tools to help you decide.

Weighted Ministry Evaluation Chart

Start by deciding what criteria are important to your church or organization in deciding what ministry to begin. In the example you will note the congregation chose the following criteria:
- Is this a genuine need in our community?
- Do we have people in our congregation with the needed skills and knowledge for this ministry?
- Do we have members who are willing to work in this area of ministry if we provide good training for them?
- Do we have the resources needed to do this ministry?
- Do we have the space that will be required to do this ministry?
- Do we have the financial capability to do this ministry?
- Are there organizations or people in our community who might be willing to collaborate with us to do this ministry? (This could include other churches.)

After you decide what your criteria are, you need to decide how important each criteria is by giving each one a percentage value. Be sure all the percentage values add up to 100%.

From the example you can see they decided
- the need in the community was worth 15%
- having people with the needed skills and knowledge was a little more important so they made it worth 20%
- having people willing to work in the area of ministry was also worth 20%
- having the necessary resources was worth 10%
- having the space needed was worth 10%
- having the finances needed was worth 15%
- and potential collaborators was worth 10%.

Every church needs to struggle with what criteria they will use and how much of a percentage each one will receive. Your list of criteria may be totally different from the ones listed in this sample.

Once you have your criteria in place across the top of the chart, you begin listing the ministry possibilities you think are the most likely possibilities for your church. You can see on the example some of the things they listed:
- After School Tutoring Ministry
- Pregnancy Care Center

- Food Pantry
- Teen-age Boys Mentoring Ministry
- Skate Boarding Ministry
- Etc.

You could list all the possibilities, but a typical community assessment will yield 500-1,000 possibilities! Your committee will probably only want to list on the chart the ministries that your church is most likely to adopt.

Once you have your top ministries listed, you can weigh each one against your criteria. Each one is given a score from 1 – 10 with 10 being highest and 1 being lowest. Take the after school tutoring ministry for example.
- Need in the community – This church discovered from interviewing school principals that their community had a drop out rate of 40% after 7th grade. Keeping kids in school was a pressing need for their community so they gave it a 9.
- People with needed knowledge and skills – This church had 8 retired school teachers who were willing to work in this area and train others. They gave it an 8.
- Volunteers willing to work – There were 27 church members who said they would be willing to work in this area. They gave it a 7.
- Resources – They had classrooms with either chalk boards or white boards that could be used for practicing skills. They had a kitchen where snacks could be prepared and served. They had a playground where children could spend a little energy before settling down to more study. They gave this a 5.
- Space – They had Sunday School classrooms that were sitting empty every day after school. They gave this an 8.
- Finances – There would be some cost for supplies, but it wasn't going to put a financial burden on the church so they gave it a 5.
- Potential Collaborations – They thought there might be a few stores that would give them supplies like paper, pens, pencils, and markers. They also thought they might be able to work out some kind of agreement with the public library. They gave this a 2.

After all the criteria were scored, they multiplied the scores by the percentage given to that criteria. For example, criteria one was given a score of 9 and the criteria was weighted at 15%. So they multiplied 9 by 15% - 9 X .15 = 1.35. The second criteria was given a score of 8 and was weighted at 20% so they multiplied 8 by 20% - 8 X .20 = 1.6. Once all the calculations were done, they added the scores across the line and came up with a total score of 6.6 for an after school tutoring ministry.

They continued the process for each of the ministries they had listed. From the sample chart you can see that an Individual Development Account (IDA) Ministry[1] received the

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[1] IDA Ministry – People who live in poverty do not have economic assets that allow them to come out of poverty. An Individual Development Account allows a person living in poverty to have a savings account with less than the minimum that banks require. An IDA can be started for one of three reasons: a down

highest score of 7.2. The next highest score was 7.05 for a missionaries to area service organizations ministry[2]. After school tutoring received 6.6 points and a food pantry earned 6.35 points. Based on the scores, these are the four ministries most likely to succeed in this church at this time.

Church/Organization Effect Matrix

The next thing you want to know is how your church might be affected by starting the potential ministries. You begin this process by listing eight core values (also known as characteristics) of your church or ministry. These are things that make the church or ministry what it is. If any of these things change, the church or ministry will be very different. Every church has to decide what the core values are for them.

You can see from the example that this church chose the following characteristics:
1. Christ-centered. They did not want to do any ministry that would take their eyes off of Him.
2. Works through small groups. The primary way this church gets things done is through small groups. Any ministry they adopted had to match this style of doing things.
3. Funded by gifts or members. They felt that most of the money used for ministry needed to come from its members. If more than what could be raised by the members was needed, it would be a problem for them.
4. Evangelistic. They would not do any ministry that would prevent them from sharing the Gospel with people.
5. Family Oriented. They valued families working together and spending time together. They wanted ministries that would allow families to serve together.
6. Stays out of debt. This church had never been in debt. When they built a new building, they raised all the money before they began construction. They would not go in debt to begin a new ministry.
7. Equips members to use their spiritual gifts. They believed all members had spiritual gifts and it was the job of the church to help them identify those gifts and

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payment on a house, tuition for college, or starting a new business. The congregation or organization hosting the ministry collaborates with a local bank for accounts. The congregation or organization agrees to at least match everything the client puts in the account up to an agreed upon amount. This allows the client to save faster. While the person is saving, the organization is working with the client to increase his or her skills and ability for success. If the person is saving for college tuition, the church might be working with him to increase his reading and math skills and improve study habits so he is more likely to succeed in college. If the client is going to start a new business, volunteers are working with her to develop a sound business plan. If the client is saving to purchase a new home, volunteers are working with him on how to choose a good house, how to maintain the home, etc. The most important part for churches is the opportunity to develop relationships with clients.

[2] Missionaries to Local Service Organizations – this is where the local church equips and commissions church members to serve as missionaries to the local service organizations. These missionaries serve as volunteers in these organizations where they can bring the spiritual aspect to what these organizations do.

use them for ministry. They wanted ministries that would allow their members to exercise their spiritual gifts.

8. Inclusive. They wanted everyone, no matter what race or nationality, to feel welcome in their church. Any ministry they adopted would also need to be inclusive.

These were the criteria this church chose. Your church or ministry might choose completely different criteria. What is important is that your church or ministry recognizes what core values are important to you that you would not want to give up. Once you determine these core values, you decide how each of the top four proposed ministries might affect these values for the short term as well as for the long term. In the example, the church gave each of them a score from – 5 to + 5. They decided that doing Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) would not affect their ability to remain Christ-centered in the short term, so they gave it a 0. However, they felt it might even increase their ability to remain Christ-centered over the long term, so they gave it a 3 for the long term. They decided that this ministry would need to be done in small groups so it would increase working in small groups in the short term and they gave it a 2. But in the long run there might be lots of small groups working with individuals and families through the IDA ministry so they gave it a 5 for the long term. They followed that all the way through the eight core values for each ministry possibility.

You also need to look at the major objectives of your church or ministry. Major objectives are the categories of things you want to do. All of the ministries you do should fall under one of your main objectives. In the example, the church decided their main objectives were to:

* Equip members to evangelize the world – they wanted all of their members to be equipped to share their faith with every body they met
* Engage every member to be a minister – they believed that every member was a minister, that God was calling every one of them to be ministers. Therefore, it was the responsibility of the church to help every member find a place to minister and to equip them for ministry.
* Equip every member to have a healthy family – They believed that God had ordained the family as the unit where children were to grow and be nourished both physically and spiritually. Therefore, they felt it was the church's responsibility to help every family represented in the church to be healthy.
* Provide opportunities for worship – They believed one of the responsibilities of the church is to provide opportunities for its members to worship God. Because they had a membership made up of a wide variety of people, they wanted to provide a wide variety of opportunities for worship so everyone would be able to find an opportunity to worship that was comfortable for them.
* Make the church relevant to the community- They believed there were people in the community that just didn't see how the church was relevant to them. So they wanted to do things to be good neighbors and help people who were not churched to see that the church does have relevancy.
* Educate every member to be Biblically literate – They believed that every member should be able to study the Scriptures for themselves and interpret them

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they wanted to equip their members to study the Scriptures and give them opportunities to be taught what the Scriptures had to say about things that were relevant to them.

After you decide what your objectives are, you measure the top four ministry possibilities against how they might affect your objectives. In the example, for the first ministry, Individual Development Accounts, they looked at Objective 1, Equipping members to evangelize the world, and decided it really wouldn't have any affect on that objective in the short term. They already had members who could share their faith and there probably would not be a significant increase in members who could share their faith in the short term as a result of establishing an IDA Ministry. But in the long term, they thought more people would want to learn how to share their faith so they could share their faith with the clients in the IDA ministry so they gave it a one for the long term.

They looked at objective 2 – Equipping every member to be a minister, and decided it would increase the number of people who were equipped in the short term because they would at least need a small group of people who knew how to carry out this ministry. So they gave it a 1. But, if the ministry was successful, they would need even more people to be equipped so they gave it a 2 for the long term.

They looked at objective 3 – equip every member to have a healthy family – and decided that beginning an IDA ministry would not have any affect on this in the short term or in the long term. So they gave it a 0 for both.

They continued with this process until they completed all their objectives for all four of the top ministry possibilities. They discovered that, although an IDA ministry was the top scorer on the Weighted Ministry Evaluation Chart, it had the lowest score on the Ministry Effect Chart. Missionaries to Service Organizations and After School Tutoring Ministries were the top scorers both in the short term and in the long term. For this church, according to these two tools, those are the ministries that are most likely to be successful.

Don't start too many ministries at one time! It is hard work to begin a new ministry and it takes time. If you start too many, a year later none of them will be operational and people will be discouraged. It will be a lot more difficult to start a new ministry in the future because people will be afraid of getting burned out and failing. It is better to start one ministry and allow it to grow strong. Once it is going well and you have the volunteers to carry it out, you can always pick up another ministry.

Things to Consider

Don't do a ministry because you see other people doing it and being successful. Maybe there are five successful food pantries in your community, but that doesn't mean you should start a sixth one! Is there another ministry that no one else is doing? Maybe that's where you can find your niche.

You don't always have to start a new ministry. You might join someone else that is already doing a ministry and just add something to that ministry. Maybe there is a job skills program in your community. Don't start a new job skills ministry. Offer to provide mentors for the clients in the job skills program. Provide or start child care for participant's children. For those who need a little extra encouragement, mentors could mean the difference between success and failure. This would provide an opportunity for your members to build relationships with clients while mentoring them and develop a relationship that might lead to new opportunities for ministry.

Offer to add the spiritual aspect to an existing program. Maybe you could offer to provide Bibles at the community food bank for people to pick up with their groceries. Or you could offer a worship service following the meal that would be voluntary for those who want to attend. Maybe you could offer to help literacy students learn how to read their Bibles. They are already in a literacy program, but your volunteers help them read the Bible which gives them practice and allows your members to build relationships with them.

Finally, don't ever let a tool take the place of the leadership of the Holy Spirit in your decision-making. You may see that both the weighted ministry matrix and the church effect matrix tell you that your church needs to do an after school tutoring program. Everything else scores way below that ministry. But if your committee feels like the Holy Spirit is guiding you to do an Individual Development Account Ministry, do the Individual Development Account Ministry! Be obedient. These are tools that can help you sort things out, that God can use to speak to you. But, the most important thing is that you hear God speak. He has a plan for your church or ministry and for the community where He has planted you. Listen for His voice.

	Criteria 1 - Need in the Community	%	Criteria 2 - People with needed knowledge and skills	%	Criteria 3 - Volunteers willing to work	%	Criteria 4 - Resources	%	Criteria 5 - Space	%	Criteria 6 - Finances	%	Criteria 7 - Potential Collaborations	%	Totals
SAMPLE WEIGHTED MINISTRY EVALUATION CHART															
Weight (total must equal 100)	15		20		20		10		10		15		10		100
After School Tutoring	9	1.35	8	1.6	7	1.4	5	0.5	8	0.8	5	0.75	2	0.2	6.6
Pregnancy Care Center	7	1.05	3	0.6	4	0.8	5	0.5	7	0.7	5	0.75	3	0.3	4.7
Food Pantry	6	0.9	9	1.8	8	1.6	4	0.4	5	0.5	3	0.45	7	0.7	6.35
Teen-age Boy's Mentoring	8	1.2	4	0.8	3	0.6	9	0.9	9	0.9	8	1.2	3	0.3	5.9
Skate Board Ministry	3	0.45	1	0.2	2	0.4	2	0.2	2	0.2	2	0.25	1	0.1	1.8
Day Care	8	1.2	2	0.4	4	0.8	3	0.3	3	0.3	2	0.25	3	0.3	3.55
Prison Visitation	4	0.6	3	0.6	3	0.6	9	0.9	9	0.9	9	1.35	1	0.1	5.05
ESL	5	0.75	1	0.2	5	1	3	0.3	4	0.4	4	0.6	1	0.1	3.35
Refugee Resettlement	7	1.05	2	0.4	8	1.6	8	0.8	8	0.8	5	0.75	7	0.7	6.1
DDM Ministry	6	0.9	2	0.4	4	0.8	6	0.6	5	0.5	5	0.75	3	0.3	4.25
Missionaries to Service Organizations	9	1.35	5	1	4	0.8	8	0.8	10	1	8	1.2	9	0.9	7.05
Job Preparedness	7	1.05	1	0.2	4	0.8	3	0.3	4	0.4	4	0.8	5	0.5	4.05
Individual Development Accounts	3	4.5	0	0	4	0.8	2	0.2	9	0.9	1	0.2	6	0.6	7.2

WEIGHTED MINISTRY EVALUATION CHART														Totals
	Criteria 1 -	%	Criteria 2 -	%	Criteria 3 -	%	Criteria 4 -	%	Criteria 5 -	%	Criteria 6 -	%	Criteria 7 -	%	
Weight (total must equal 100)															0
														0
														0
														0
														0
														0
														0
														0
														0
														0
														0
														0

CHURCH/ORGANIZATION AFFECT MATRIX					
Ministry		Individual Development Accounts	Missionaries to Service Organizations	After School Tutoring	Food Pantry
Core Value 1 Christ Centered	Short Term	0	1	3	4
	Long Term	3	3	5	5
Core Value 2 Works through small groups	Short Term	2	2	2	2
	Long Term	5	5	5	3
Core Value 3 Funded by gifts of members	Short Term	-1	0	0	1
	Long Term	3	5	4	5
Core Value 4 Evangelistic	Short Term	0	1	2	1
	Long Term	2	4	5	3
Core Value 5 Family Oriented	Short Term	0	0	0	0
	Long Term	0	2	2	3
Core Value 6 Stays out of debt	Short Term	-2	0	0	-1
	Long Term	0	3	3	3
Core Value 7 Equips members to use their spiritual gifts	Short Term	1	3	2	1
	Long Term	5	5	5	3
Core Value 8 Inclusive	Short Term	1	1	2	2
	Long Term	3	2	3	2
Objective 1 Equip Members to Evangelize the World	Short Term	0	1	2	1
	Long Term	1	4	4	3
Objective 2 Engage every member to be a minister	Short Term	1	3	1	1
	Long Term	2	5	3	2
Objective 3 Equip every member to have a healthy family	Short Term	0	0	0	0
	Long Term	0	1	1	1
Objective 4 Provide opportunities for worship	Short Term	0	0	0	0
	Long Term	0	2	1	1
Objective 5 Make our church relevant to our community	Short Term	1	2	1	2
	Long Term	4	5	4	5
Objective 6 Educate every member to be biblically literate	Short Term	0	0	1	0
	Long Term	1	3	4	3
Short Term Total		3	14	16	14
Long Term Total		29	49	49	42

CHURCH/ORGANIZATION AFFECT MATRIX					
Ministry		Individual Development Accounts	Missionaries to Service Organizations	After School Tutoring	Food Pantry
Core Value 1	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Core Value 2	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Core Value 3	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Core Value 4	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Core Value 5	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Core Value 6	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Core Value 7	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Core Value 8	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Objective 1	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Objective 2	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Objective 3	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Objective 4	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Objective 5	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Objective 6	Short Term				
	Long Term				
Short Term Total		0	0	0	0
Long Term Total		0	0	0	0