



The People Spot Missile: Farming a Community

Years ago, I was pastoring in the small farming community of Mt. Victory, Ohio. One of our farmers told me he practiced intensive farming. I asked, “What do you mean?” He responded, “I work the fields to the fencerow as close as I can get. I do everything that I can to maximize the performance of my farm.” I had watched him and believed he was telling the truth.

Outreach is the things a church does to walk people through the door once. Evangelism is the one on one sharing of one’s faith in Jesus Christ with another person. If outreach is to be effective, it needs to be intentional and intensive.

Identify a 400 home community near the church. Claim this community for the Lord. Begin by doing a prayer walk through the community. Notice the word “walk.” Pray for the people in those homes. Be observant about what you see. Who is living in those homes? What would the church have to offer to reach some of those people? Do the people inside the church look like the people living in those homes?

Secure the names and addresses of those 400 homes. They may be purchased from InfoUSA by calling 1-800-284-8353.

Recruit 16 volunteers to help. Their job will be to hand address the envelopes of 25 homes, sign the prepared letters, and place a stamp on the envelope. They will do this for 12 months.

A letter will be sent to each home once a month for 12 months. The letter will include a specific invitation to something happening at the church. Remember, as a general rule, each invitation to the church should be date sensitive. It should be an invitation to something happening at the church on a specific date.

Be prepared. There will be several calls from some people in that block protesting the sending of the letters. Simply apologize for any inconvenience and take their name off the list.

In addition, there are several other ways to intensify the farming of this community.

Do two servant evangelism projects of 200 homes each so that each home receives a gift from the church. One could be in the spring. It could have some spring gifts such as seeds, a card with emergency phone numbers for the community, etc. The second could be approaching Christmas with some wrapping paper, a bow or two, some scotch tape and some info about the church.

If your church does Daily Vacation Bible School then be sure to hand deliver invitations to these 400 homes.

Conduct a block party. Have the church prepare the meat and drinks and invite the families of those homes to come and bring a covered dish. Maybe there could be a concert that evening.

Have a couple of people watching that area. Should there be a moving van, purchase a bucket of chicken and a couple of bottles of soda and deliver to them on that day.

Is there a special ministry that the church could offer that would be attractive to the major demographic make up of the area?

This is intensive farming. The 400 letters times 12 is 4,800 touches. Add to that the 400 servant evangelism contacts, and the 400 invitations to DVBS and the total has risen to 5,600. My hope is that it would generate 3-5 new families for the church.

After the first year, farm another 400 homes, and the third year another 400 homes. The fourth year, you can go back and start over again. The people who respond will be those who are in a teachable moment in life. Happy farming.