

The Royal Oak Vineyard:
A Two-Year Proposal
By Jim Pool

TARGET

Geographic Region:

Center: Royal Oak

Primary Focus: Royal Oak, Ferndale, Oak Park, Madison Heights, Birmingham (S: Eight Mile Rd; E: Dequindre Ave; W: Southfield Rd; N: Big Beaver Rd)

Larger Focus: Gratiot Ave (from downtown) to Utica Rd (northwest) to M59 (west) to Orchard Lake/Pontiac Trail (southwest) to Haggerty Rd (south) to I-96 The Jeffries (east) to the Southfield (south) to Michigan Ave (east) to meet Gratiot downtown

Characteristic People:

Detroit Dave:

Early 30s, married, likely to have a child or two. Middle class; some connection to industrial sector and auto industry. Most likely grew up in Detroit; parents probably own property in southeast US. Most likely owns a major recreational toy, and travels west or north in Michigan for holidays. A big fan of the Red Wings, roots for state alma mater basketball or football team. Rarely travels into the city except for sporting events; Royal Oak or Novi more likely. Probably has a Christian background, either fundamentalist or Catholic, some Word of Faith especially if African-American. His dream would be to strike it rich, retire early in a nice home away from the city. Would likely never admit it, but probably at least a little scared of the city or of people of a different ethnicity.

Royal Oak Renee:

Late 20s, less likely to be married but might be living with her boyfriend. More likely to have a gray collar job connected to intellectual jobs. Likely to have at least one gay friend, and friends of other ethnicities or races; comfortable in social settings outside of her own ethnicity. More likely to be open to or have experienced a non-Christian religion, or have friends who have done so. Less likely to travel to other areas of the city for culture.

Specific Target People:

1. Those in their twenties and early thirties (realizing that, at first, this is the group we are most likely to attract), likely to have no kids.
2. Those who are young and young-at-heart, sharing a similar attitude and way of thinking about life and the present cultural situation (generally more postmodern in outlook, although not the hard-core philosopher types, and not necessarily GenX in generation).
3. Those who are fairly educated (college or equivalent) with professional jobs, who are interested in life and its questions and stopping to reflect, and who live with some form of intentionality.

4. Those who are broken and with questions and who have been shut out by the Church in the past; those inside and outside the Church who see God as dead; those who see the Church and Christian life as boring; those who see the Church as full of hypocrites; those who look for hope in other things (like the liberal social agenda, Buddhism, Islam, the Cult of Mammon, or radical skepticism).

TEAM

Committed:

Jim Pool – vision, leadership, encouragement (teaching, evangelism, mercy/healing, prophecy)

Megan Pool – hospitality, mercy (worship, pastoring, evangelism)

Eric Wooten – pastoring, administration, leadership, teaching.

Desired:

1. Those who are self-feeding, reproducing, passionate servant leaders
2. They should be possessed of solid character, a vital spiritual life, a track record with meaningful use of gifts and skills, and an ability to implement vision and follow my leadership (and the team as a whole)
3. They set an example of the Kingdom life that we are calling others into

PLAN

How do we plan to gather a core (leadership) team?

1. This step is not implemented first, with the gather of “the first 50” after; rather, they are done simultaneously.
2. Look for Christians with no “home” (or who are appropriately dissatisfied with their “home”) to train and impart vision to.
3. “Go where the leaders are”. Look for those who lead volunteers in civic groups or other types of organizations, like sports clubs, and work with them (maybe save them first!).
4. Find leaders at student groups (at Wayne State, etc.) and work with them, especially those who are not being mentored already.
5. Spend some extra time with potential leaders (team members), imparting vision to them and modeling values to them through shared life.

How do we plan on gathering our first 50 people?

1. Through personal relational contacts on my part, from my prior church, high school, college and family. I hope to develop these relationships prior to moving and after moving. I plan on attending my 10 year high school reunion to meet people in September 2000.
2. By sending out a letter (once we’ve moved) to area Vineyards (Milan, Lansing, Grand Rapids North, Lakeshore, Toledo, Cleveland) letting them know who we are and that we are starting a church in the Royal Oak area, and

that they can send any contacts our way should they feel comfortable doing so.

3. Through regular, weekly involvement by my wife and I in the community among non-Christians. We hope to start a once-a-month book club together in our apartment building/complex, and I hope to be involved in community sporting events like pick-up ice hockey or softball probably on a bi-weekly basis. Megan hopes to get involved in some form of community class like gardening or cooking at a community center or the local branch of the community college. We also hope to spend time going out to coffee shops, etc. in hopes of meeting people there (at least once a week fairly specifically for this purpose).
4. Through other members of the team also regularly getting involved in these types of activities as well (preferably not joining in on all of our activities, but engaging in some of their own).
5. Through relational contacts of people we know in Chicago, either from Evanston or other local Vineyards, and those from other MI Vineyards.
6. By multiplying our housegroup(s) at the appropriate number (roughly 20) so that we can continue to grow in these groups and maintain intimacy and the kind of community that is attractive.
7. By having some involvement as a community of Jesus-followers in the Royal Oak community, as a witness to the Kingdom and a demonstration of what we are about (and to participate with God in his mission). One way is through community-based service/clean-up projects in the parks, etc. Another way is through working with the poor, mainly through joining with others who are doing this regularly and well, rather than starting something of our own. Two possibilities would be the Detroit Rescue Mission (serving food, clothing, etc. and other things) and the Genesis House (a home for battered women).
8. Through monthly (at least) potluck gatherings designed to be fun, bring people together, and open up possibilities for new people to visit. These will be before and after the start of our first housegroup, perhaps once a month during core team development time, then every other week through spring, and perhaps weekly in summer.
9. Through hosting parties on holidays like Valentine's Day, 4th of July, etc.
10. By getting involved somehow at Wayne State University through relational contacts who attend there. Maybe I could be invited to speak at one of their campus ministries.
11. By engaging in service projects/servant evangelism to specific people we know or come in contact with who are in need (like single moms needing babysitting, older people needing work around the home, etc.). These are not broad, blanketing events, but fairly targeted and specific. We will need to be intentionally looking for these opportunities. Possibly do something like this as often as each month; to this end we could use some creative "promotional" materials, so that we have little cards to give out detailing who we are.
12. NOTE: One thing to be aware of is the idea of "network of relationships" – that most people know about 30-40 people, so when we run with one relational vein, don't be surprised when it eventually runs dry. Keep eyes and

ears open for new relational networks while working with the first, and keep room in schedule and activities to establish new networks. This will prevent lag time in growth and momentum.

(Aside: Small Group Thoughts)

1. We would like the Housegroups to meet each week, taking off one month a year (not all the same month) and probably some time at the holidays, and something like one week a quarter have them take a Sabbath.
2. It is imperative that we be involved in training and equipping, and not merely teaching (or even discussion). We must be involved in training people to be authentic Christian disciples (people who grown and change, pray, give, serve, love, engage, etc.) all in accord with our understanding of what constitutes a mature Christian disciple.
3. Our small groups must continually seek to embody the life of the Kingdom, the gospel community, so that we can invite others into it. This begins with the core team.
4. Begin our first housegroup with an introduction and then spend the next ten weeks going through the Alpha Course; this gets everyone on the same page, introduces people to the course, lays out many core values, and helps embody/reinforce the evangelistic priority/value.
5. Then we'd spend the next several months topically going through emphasizing different elements in our vision and values, like the Person of God, the Kingdom, the Church, and the Christian life (worship, discipleship, evangelism, service, prayer, giving, gifting, etc.); this format would be discussion and training as appropriate.
6. We would hold that it is vital for housegroups to periodically focus outside of themselves to remain healthy, and doing this is critical for the members' discipleship, so we would encourage, as a regular practice, for all groups to take any fifth week of the month as a time for a servant evangelism or service project, and to take an opportunity at least once a quarter to do something which is primarily other-focused (service project, intercession, watching a missions video and praying, servant evangelism, hosting a dinner for strangers, etc.)
7. We believe that small groups are an important and critical vehicle for gathering and connecting people and helping them enter into mid-level discipleship. As our church plant grows, we would like to create structures and opportunities for more mature disciples; this would not happen until after we have gone to a weekly service, but ideally not too long after that. One experimental route would be the "missional discipleship group" (MDG), a small group of 4-10 people who gather around a common sense of passion and calling for a particular mission (primarily outside of, but possibly inside of, the church), activity (in which they would join God as He works to renew and recreate all humanity and the whole world); then, in the midst of being involved with this mission, they would agree to hold each other accountable to certain disciplines and practices of the Christian life (like prayer, solitude,

meditation, celebration, etc.). Thus, there is an outward and an inward focus to these groups. These groups could even then become spearheads of ministries in which others in the church could join to serve and experiment.

How do we plan on gathering our second 50 people?

I am expecting we will begin to gather our second 50 people after we have already gone to a weekly public service. The activities below are not done in place of activities that were done in arriving at our “first 50”, but rather, are seen as additional possibilities that come with extra resources. The discipleship and community building which characterized the gathering of the “first 50” will not now disappear in lieu of a growth-centered attitude.

1. By intentionally cutting in half the time I am spending now with people that are already involved, and continuing to intentionally spend that time to meet new people (in coffee shops, community sports, etc.).
2. By identifying 4-6 men (at least two of which are not on the core team) and doing a men’s leadership development discipleship group with them, pouring into them vision and mentoring them. I want to continue to build into core team members and also expand the leadership outside of that circle. This might be too much to do though, on top of everything else (service, leading a MDG, and possibly teaching classes), so I might have to see how much people want it, possibly wait until the late end of this process, and/or make it short and sweet.
3. Engage in various servant evangelism events: seat warmer give-away at Liddel Arena in Royal Oak (or Joe Louis downtown), Easter egg giveaway at Easter, community Easter Egg Hunt in the part for kids, insulated “beverage holder” give-away on a hot summer day at the parks, etc.

Definitely we can have various creative promotional items for people in the church (esp. key leaders) to give away to friends and acquaintances.

How do we plan on going to a public service?

1. Do a sneak-preview once-a-month service for a few months, starting either September 2001 or January 2002. This introduces people to the idea of a service, helps us get used to administrative details, and gives us a chance to invite people in to see us.
2. Plan on going to a public weekly service either in January 2002 or at Easter time 2002. It would depend on when we started the sneak-preview services and how well they went. I would not want to start any later than Easter for fear of burning out my core team.
3. Location: There are several open storefronts available right downtown in Royal Oak, or along other major streets, that we could rent for space; also, there are several elementary schools, two YMCAs and a community center/ice rink that could work, not to mention the local branch of the community college that might have space.
4. Advertising: word of mouth through friends for sneak preview services. For the weekly service we would continue that, plus post notices at coffee shops

and such (if possible), maybe run an ad in the local paper, run a radio spot (?) and get ourselves in the Yellow Pages. Also, we could engage in some servant evangelism events (for others, see above): do a cider giveaway around Halloween for the sneak preview service, do a present wrapping event at a local mall (like Oakland) in December, give away Thanksgiving type foodstuffs (especially to poorer people).

5. Childcare: probably we would not have any childcare available at our sneak preview services and would see if that were a problem. For the weekly service, we will find a place where childcare is possible and will have some qualified worker(s) available.

(Aside: Service Thoughts)

- a. The sneak-preview service would be very much like Contact, though a bit better rehearsed and organized, and with communion each time. We would see what type of reaction this type of service elicited, and how well it worked with the attendees.
- b. We would want to keep most of these same elements for when we went to a weekly service. The ability to do this will likely limit where we decide to meet.
- c. For the first several months (winter/spring), we will go through the Gospel of Luke (key portions) and use this as an opportunity to tell the story of Jesus and highlight key elements of our vision and core values. We will try to get a few guest speakers during this time to speak on other topics. Then during the summer, we could speak on “Cries of the Heart” from the Psalms, which brings out emotion, human dilemmas, and artistry. Starting in the Fall, we will go through the Christian story (the biblical narrative) from creation forward, which gets everyone on the same page, highlights key values, and will help people find their place (and our church’s place) in God’s mission to renew and recreate the world and all humanity.

(Aside: post-service thoughts)

- a. Around the time of the weekly service (start mid-January or beginning February), start an Alpha course, run by Meg and I (with apprentices) to catch newcomers. Then we could do another Alpha Course in the summer with new leaders.
- b. Concurrent with the winter Alpha, run a “discovering your calling and gifting class” for 4-5 weeks, for people who are already Christians. I could run this again after winter Alpha Course is finished.
- c. Once the second class is over, I could then start experimenting with leading an MDG. Hopefully by this time we will have enough people familiar with their calling to participate.
- d. Once we go to a weekly service, we can do more regular servant evangelism events, since we will have something to invite people to. We could even do one to help promote the Alpha Course that we run in the winter.

Finances and Prayer

Sources:

1. Both Megan and I intend on working.
2. We intend that others on the team work, and that we and they tithe to the church plant.
3. We will seek to raise support from people outside the Evanston and Royal Oak Vineyards. We hope to raise \$500 in one-time gifts and \$500 in monthly gifts over the first year.
4. We intend to find at least 31 people who will pray for us one day a month for the first year.

Plans for spending the money:

1. The first year's priorities for money are developing leaders and the core team, outreach oriented materials, and then facilities costs for the sneak preview service (and any costs for gathering our several HGs together for vision, celebration, etc. as well as any equipment costs for these events).
2. The second year priorities are facilities costs, outreach-related materials, developing leaders, and then compensation for lead church-planter.
3. At the end of the first year, we expect to have roughly 40 adults, about 20 of which we consider regulars and who give to our church (roughly \$20/week/head). At the end of the second year we hope to have roughly 90-100 people who consider this their church, and about 50 of who regularly give.
4. Rough division of spending by year:
 - a. First year: 3% to AVC, 2% to future church plants, 5% to the poor, 3% to overseas missions, 10% to savings, 12% to leader development, 5% to facilities rental, 10% equipment purchases (worship, sound, etc.) 50% outreach and ministry costs.
 - b. Second year: 3% to AVC, 2% to future church plants, 5% to the poor, 3% to overseas missions, 10% to savings, 15% for facilities rental, 27% to pastor compensation, 5% for equipment purchases, and 30% to outreach and ministry costs.