



SOMA
CHURCH
INDY

“The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for the numerical growth of the body of Christ in any city, and the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.”
 – Tim Keller



Brandon Shields Bio

Brandon is a native son of Kentucky. For the last decade, he has had the privilege of preaching Jesus and equipping families to make Jesus the central focus of their homes. Brandon is the happy husband to Emily and proud daddy of four children - James, Cooper, Lilly Claire, and Hadley. Brandon is author of Perspectives on Family Ministry, and has published several articles relating to the family. Brandon earned a B.B.A. in Marketing from the University of Kentucky, M.Div & Ph.D in Leadership from Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY.

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Why Indy?

Indianapolis has always served as a hub city for the Midwest. Currently, Indianapolis is the 12th largest city in the country, with a combined metro area population of more than 1.7 million people. Over the last decade, the greater Indianapolis metro area has experienced significant growth, economic prosperity, and cultural development.

According to Forbes magazine, Indy's population has increased at a rate of 50% higher than the national average, specifically in the demographic of young, educated families. Despite the population surge, the number of evangelicals remains small: only 10-15% of Indy residents claim evangelical status, and more than 1 million people are unaffiliated with a church of any kind.

Target Area: Our vision is to plant a church in the city-center area of Carmel. This strategy makes sense for 3 primary reasons: rapid growth, city influence, and low evangelical presence.



Growth

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, Carmel (a northern suburb of Indianapolis) is the fastest-growing area in the state of Indiana. The population of Carmel exploded 109% during the last ten years, more than doubling from 39,000 to 79,000 residents. CNN Money magazine rated Carmel as the #14 “Best Places to Live” in 2010 for its high quality of life, exceptional parks and trails system, and innovative development efforts including the Carmel Arts & Design District.

Influence

Carmel is located in the heart of the “Meridian Corridor,” which has the second largest concentration of office workers in the state of Indiana. Carmel is within a short distance of the national headquarters for companies like Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals and CNO Financial Group. Consequently, Carmel is an affluent area with a high concentration of young, educated families. The median household income for this target area is \$90,321, and the median age is 37.

Low Evangelical Presence

The number of evangelical churches in Carmel has not kept pace with the rapid population growth. More than 57% of Carmelites are not affiliated with a religious group of any kind, and nearly half of the religious population is Catholic.

Vision and Values

The vision of Soma Church Indy is “renewing the city spiritually, socially, and culturally with the gospel of Jesus.” Soma will seek to embody the following values:

Gospel Centrality

We believe that the good news of Jesus death, burial, and resurrection is the greatest and most powerful story ever told. Therefore, we will strive to make the gospel story the center of all we believe, teach, and practice.

Intentional Community

The Bible is the story of God forming a new humanity that lives distinctively as a “city within a city.” Therefore, we will intentionally seek to reorient the rhythms of our lives around others in the body so that we might experience authentic community and growth in grace.

Holistic Mission

We desire to be a missional people that reflect the purposes of a missional God. As transformed people whose lives have been deeply impacted by the gospel, we will live as missionaries who extend the message and mercy of Christ in our workplaces, neighborhoods, families, and the nations.

Sacrificial Service

We will leverage our gifts, resources, and “social capital” to generously serve and bless our city through deeds of mercy and justice, especially to the poor.

City Movement

We will promote the peace, prosperity, and welfare of our city by making disciples of Jesus, multiplying gospel communities across the city, and networking with other like-minded churches to plant more gospel-centered churches in Indianapolis and throughout the world.

Confessional Statements

We swim in the stream of the historic Christian faith. We will be guided by the Apostles’ Creed, Nicene Creed, and the Baptist Faith & Message.

Partnership

Soma Church gladly invites individuals and churches to invest and partner with us as we seek to catalyze a gospel movement in the great city of Indianapolis.

We are estimating the following startup costs for our first year:

Living in the City (Personnel)	\$75,000
Meeting in the City (Operations)	\$40,000
Going to the City (Mission & Training)	\$15,000
Year One Partnership Goal	\$130,000

3 ways you can partner with Soma Church:

Pray

We need your prayer support. Church planting is a Holy Spirit empowered endeavor, and without the favor and blessing of God this effort will fail. Join us in pleading with God for the transformation of people and the city.

Go

Church planting involvement can be a great catalyst for spiritual growth and missional refocusing for sending churches. We gladly invite short-term mission teams or people who are interested in relocating to Indianapolis to help us plant a gospel flag in the city.

Give

We are asking for potential partners either to commit to an ongoing partnership for 3-5 years, or to give a one-time gift to help offset some of our startup costs. That could come in the form of monthly support (\$1,000 a month), or larger gifts that decrease annually (Year 1 - \$50,000; Year 2 - \$40,000; etc) as our church grows and moves toward self-sustainability.

Checks can be mailed and made payable to:

Highview Baptist Church
Attn: Chip Evans
7711 Fegenbush Ln.
Louisville, KY 40228
(Write "Soma Church Indy" in the memo line)

Financial Accountability

In order to comply with the highest standards of financial integrity, Soma Church Indy has invited Highview Baptist Church to handle and review donated funds, budgets, disbursements, and financial reports. Highview has a business administration team and voluntarily submits its finances to an annual audit.

Proposed Launch Timeline

Our simple goal for Soma Church is to be good missionaries to the city of Indianapolis. We want to plant a healthy church, not just launch a worship service. Working toward that goal requires patience, perseverance, and a healthy process. While we certainly will be held accountable for our strategy and vision by an external group of pastors, we have intentionally avoided the unnecessary pressure of deadlines, launch dates, or unrealistic goals.

Our strategic plan entails a four-stage methodology:

Phase 1 - Move to the city

In December 2011, the Shields family will relocate to Carmel.

Phase 2 – Learn the city

For the first several months, we will work hard to establish healthy rhythms of living, working, and playing in our community. During this time, we will build relationships with neighbors, familiarize ourselves with the local culture, and begin inviting people into our home for meals and informal bible studies. Other core families will begin relocating to the city with us in the spring.

Phase 3 – Gather & multiply in the city

As we share the gospel and begin to serve our community, we hope to begin seeing conversions and a growing interest for planting a new church in the community. At some point in the spring, our goal is to establish a regular gathering for a core team. This group will form the foundation for what will eventually become neighborhood groups/missional communities.

Phase 4 – Worship in the city

As this core group grows, we will train up and multiply more neighborhood groups. Once we are able to obtain a committed core of 40-50 people, we will look to formalize our group and launch a public worship service in city-center Carmel.

Contact Information

Website

www.somaindy.com

Email

brandon@somaindy.com

Phone

(317) 931-8225

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