

Dynamics Common to Missional Church Planting Movements ¹

Embed = root in context and relational networks as an enriching presence

Initiate = establish a coordinated gospel-sowing response across an area and/or group

Practice = express the identity and Jesus life you're inviting others into

Mature = develop as a unique, local expression of the body of Christ

Hub = cultivate local environments to multiply missional initiatives and churches

Extend = help fuel trans-local movements for church planting beyond the city

Embedding happens when all members of a team or group engage in a missionary lifestyle that is easy to pass on to others. They reach beyond their cultural subset into the complex diversity common to any city. They work to become cultural insiders by absorbing as much as they can about their target area/population, while also relating to local people and serving alongside them where possible. This rooting in context and relational networks as an enriching presence is continually cultivated throughout the life of a church plant, since faith communities over time almost invariably turn their focus inward.

Initiating is really about discerning or deciding what to do with all the insider knowledge, relationships and service opportunities discovered through a team or core group's initial and ongoing missionary activity. This discernment leads to a healthy narrowing and focusing of a team's gospel-sowing, so that the team applies itself to engaging context in ways that are life-giving and sustainable. It also enables them to be more focused and intentional in both their Individual and community evangelism efforts.

Practicing occurs as teams begin to live into a common group identity (vision, values, name, theology, etc.). It also involves experimenting with a discipleship rhythm together to see what practices help the team and core group grow spiritually. This rehearsing of identity and discipleship allows the missioning group to invite people into a communal identity and way of life that they themselves have found transformative. The rallying around an identity and Jesus way of life also protects the forming community from the whims of disgruntled newcomers who at times come in with a desire to create their own version of church.

Maturing happens when the team and core group intentionally project their communal identity and way of life in the wider sphere of their context. They move into a more public phase, where the church community is more visible and accessible. They become more seasoned in their capacity both to respond to the needs of their city and to make more and better disciples. As they tangibly sow the gospel and goodness of God, the new church also gives attention to developing the processes and structures that allow the group to cohere into a sustainable community that also discerns its own goals for maturing to the next level.

Hubbing is about participating in environments locally that foster the multiplication of new missional initiatives and church plants. It happens more significantly as a newly forming church gains momentum and establishes key partnerships across the city. New pioneers and planters are recruited and trained from within the church and/or from within various missional or apostolic networks in the city. Depending on its own energy, gift-mix and resources, the church may be able to actually *create* wider apostolic networks or training opportunities to seed new expressions of church. But for many, participating along with other apostolic groups, churches or networks may be the most feasible way to hub.

Extending is closely related to hubbing but involves intentionally developing wider learning communities that reach beyond a church's host city. These communities work together and share resources across cities, regions (even globally) to seed new missional initiatives and church plants in existing and unreached areas.

¹ These dynamics are unpacked in very practical detail in the book, *Dynamic Adventure: A Guide to Starting and Shaping Missional Churches*, by Steigerwald, Loyd, Crull & Kuder (Centennial, CO: Communitas, 2017).