

The Missionary Journey

As we've journeyed with microchurches and their leaders, we've found common themes among their stories. We've compiled those findings in the graphic printed below. The x-axis charts the maturation of missionary (from forming a missional identity to being a mature missionary) while y-axis, on the other hand, charts the emotional state of the missionary. Although it's mapped out here in a linear fashion, it's important to note that it doesn't always happen that way. It is possible to be in multiple places at once. The point here is to give language to what you might be experiencing. Use this to diagnose where you are in your missionary journey and what will help you progress. As leaders grow and progress, their needs change (see Types of Leader handout). The Underground exists to serve and resource leaders in their various stages of development.

Jesus is Lord

This is the beginning of the journey and a highpoint in a missionary's life. It's the recognition of Jesus not only as Savior but as Lord over all. There's a real encounter with The Resurrected King and a desire for the whole world to surrender to his leadership.

What's your "Jesus is Lord" story?

Liminality

As the missionary journeys with Jesus, there's an inevitable encounter with pain. It can be theirs or someone else's. Either way, they encounter real world pain that can raise questions about Jesus' Lordship. "How can this exist in light of what I know to be true about the kingdom?"

In liminal spaces, the way forward is unclear but the world once known is no longer an option. Sometimes described as a haunting. At this point, leaders need permission.

What are some liminal experiences that you've had? What are places/points of pain in your city?

Calling

From this encounter with pain often arises the purpose for which God has called them. Rather than just sitting in the pain of liminality, God has called them to respond and engage that evil. This is where dreaming and participation in pre-existing work takes place.

To whom have you been called? (The more specific the better. What are their names?)

Start Something

As they missionaries start to dream in response to this calling, they enlist others to starting something (a mentoring program, a bible study, a food pantry). Typically, this is small. What's important is that they've started.

What have you done in response to that calling?

Experiment & Practice

Now that things have started, the microchurch leader and their team might be experimenting with different strategies and tactics to accomplish vision and see microchurch develop healthily. At this point, a coach might be necessary.

What is going well from your current experimenting? Where have you seen God show up? What things aren't working as well? What's the next step?

Crossroads

As a result of experimentation and practice, you uncover the complexities of mission. What started as simple is anything but. As you encounter barrier after barrier, you might be tempted to quit. Some do. However, the crossroads could also lead to a pivot. The only thing that gets you through this is Jesus and missionary peers. At this point, leaders need perseverance.

Who are your missionary peers? If currently missing those people, how can you find them? (The Underground can also be a good place for you)

Pivot

You're not giving up, but at the same time you recognize your strategy isn't working. As a result, you adjust your strategy and tactics to push past this barrier. This can loop you back to experiment and practice.

How is God calling you and your microchurch to pivot? What resistance do you have to those changes?

