

# CHURCH PLANTING MODELS

The church is a community of Jesus followers who gather regularly for worship, learning, and multiplication. As society changes, new models must be utilized to reach people from diverse settings. Church multiplication is not a 'one model fits all.' We have identified a series of Church models for new churches to reach new people.

There are two buckets of models:

**STARTUP CHURCHES & MULTIPLYING CHURCHES.**

## BUCKET #1

**STARTUP CHURCH:** A church starting alone, from nothing with unique DNA.

### CHURCH:

A community of Jesus followers who gather regularly for worship, learning, and multiplication.

### PIONEERING/PARACHUTE LAUNCH MODEL

A small team (maybe as small as a married couple) start a work in a new town or unreached population. This model typically is relationally based, starts small, grows slow, and is often funded through denominational support, network support, or fundraising efforts from outside the community being reached. This model requires enormous stamina and requires hard work to reach critical mass and become self-sustaining. We know statistically that churches who are not self-sustaining within 36 months will likely never be. It is also difficult to find younger leaders outside specific ethnic groups willing to do this model. This used to be the primary U.S. model for starting churches but is not as fruitful any more. Currently this model is mostly being done successfully through various Latin American and ethnic church plants. This is typically a high cost model.

### DISCIPLE (FOLLOWER OF JESUS):

A person committed to following the leadership of Jesus Christ as evidenced by growing trust and obedience to His commands and expressed in increasingly generous love for others.

### MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES MODEL

Missional communities are a 'groups-first approach.' Usually launched by lay leaders or bi-vocational pastors, missional communities rely on established congregations for encouragement and accountability.



They shoot for regular gatherings of 20 to 50 people (critical mass) who want to reach a specific neighborhood or network of relationships, then multiply into related groups in other neighborhoods. If the community worships together the service is usually less frequent (monthly/quarterly) and a celebration style. This model takes longer to gather enough people to support full-time staff and is popular with millennials and disenfranchised church people. It is different than a "house church" model as it is outward focused and growth oriented. This model is a low-cost model and often starts in a home or 3rd space, rarely with vocational staff. *Currently Sheryl Colter is utilizing this model to launch the Journey of Faith Community.*

### **LARGE LAUNCH CHURCH MODEL**

A small team (usually at least three pastors) start a work in a new town or unreached population. This model typically has a 3-6-month ramp of building excitement through community outreach and building of a core group, followed typically by a 1 to 3-month preview service or a soft launch period where the team and core group "practice" the culture and new model of church. During that time, they typically host outreach events and conduct marketing campaigns, depending on their budget, in preparation for a "big" launch. The goal is to burst through social dynamic barriers common in smaller settings and launch with critical mass of 140-250 in average attendance. The retention in the first 4-6 Sundays following the "big" launch really signals the trajectory of this new church. Most practitioners using this model would consider average attendance under 100 to be a failed launch.

This kind of church should be self-sufficient within the first two years. The resources and effort needed to launch (\$200-300K) is not sustainable for a small congregation. Critical mass is essential in this model (200+). This is a very popular model and used throughout the country despite its high cost.

## **BUCKET #2**

**MULTIPLYING CHURCH:** A church that is reproducing itself. There are two different approaches a church can take when multiplying; either remain 'One Church with Many Expressions' or start a new 'Parent Affiliated Church.' The 'One Church, Many Expressions' path has many forms.

### **MULTIPLICATION:**

The natural outcome of faithful and intentional obedience to Jesus, through which the Holy Spirit multiplies disciples, leaders, and churches.



## ONE CHURCH, MANY EXPRESSIONS MODEL

These churches multiply by creating churches that stay within the DNA, leadership structure, and organization of the parent church. They may or may not become self-supporting, depending on the missional goal of the parent church. The leaders of these churches are subordinate to the parent.

**Multi-Venues** – These are churches that share the DNA of the parent but have varied expressions. They reach different groups within the same community as the parent and are often housed in the same facility. These can be targeted at different sub-groups in the culture. The cost for venues is relatively low.

**Multi-site Campuses** – These are churches that share the DNA and expression of the parent church but bring the location closer to the neighborhood where people live. In its current expression, many growing churches are choosing to keep campuses and services smaller (under 500, often under 250) in order to put less cost into facility and more money into mission. This way the church can grow bigger without the staggering costs of mega facilities. The most effective of which become regional churches. The geographical limits to this model seem to limit campuses to a 45-mile radius. *Currently three SMC churches are working towards starting multi-site campuses; Jackson FMC, Portage FMC, and CrossRoads.*

## HUB CHURCHES:

Churches that feel called to have an impact in a wider geographic area by starting new apostolic initiatives and partnering with the community and other churches around a strategic vision of multiplication and mission.

**Micro-site Campuses** – These are smaller churches that share the DNA of the parent but have varied expressions. By design, they are intended to be under 100 with the ideal being 60-80 in average attendance. They are often held in coffee houses or settings that allow more engagement, community and less “show.” They often meet at alternate times to Sunday mornings. Often use a conversational approach to learning and often utilize non-vocational pastors to lead sites.



## APOSTOLIC INITIATIVES:

New ministries/ church starts that focus on reaching people who are now far from God and currently unreached.

**Missional Outposts/Fresh Expressions** – These churches that are designed to reach a marginalized population and are not intended to become self-sustaining. They are often smaller gatherings with very different expressions.

Examples would be missional churches to sore communities that are impoverished, homeless, etc. These are valuable churches but necessitate being tethered to an existing church. Resources and training for Fresh Expressions are available here: [www.freshexpressionsus.org](http://www.freshexpressionsus.org). *Dearborn FMC, Spring Arbor FMC, Journey of Hope-Taylor, Coldwater FMC, Westland FMC, and Kalamazoo FMC are starting Fresh Expressions.*

**Dinner Churches** - Dinner Churches are a specific model of a Fresh Expression Church. Dinner Churches require strong ongoing support of one or more churches. Dinner Church gatherings consist of a weekly meal with a bible story and discussion. Discipleship takes place both around the dinner table as well as through other midweek gatherings and one on one sessions. For more information and resources: [www.dinnerchurchcollective.net](http://www.dinnerchurchcollective.net). *Mark and Mary Cryderman are now trainers for the Dinner Church Collective and have pioneered the movement for SMC in Detroit where we now have 3 Dinner Church sites. Westland FMC, Dearborn FMC, Deerfield FMC, and Kalamazoo FMC have begun or are working towards starting Dinner Churches.*

## MISSION:

the primary directive given by Jesus to His followers in *Matthew 28:18-20* is to make disciples of people now far from God by helping them discover their identity in restored relationship with God and help them become followers of Jesus.

### PARENT AFFILIATED CHURCHES MODEL

These are churches that are launched from a parent church with divergent DNA as a separate organization. They often have the goal of becoming autonomously led within a set time constraint – usually 24 months. They typically start with some shared vision and culture that diverges over time. The parent church often sends a group of people to help found the church. They start very connected to the parent church and gradually grow into their own entity. If they cannot become self-sustaining with 24 months, they are at higher risk of quick decline than some other models, because often the majority of the people who originally came from the parent church to plant this one, drift back to the parent church as the new church develops its own culture.