

A (BENEFICIAL, VISIONARY, NON-BORING, GOSPEL-SATURATION-MINDED)

INTRODUCTION TO MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

[#1 IN THE MC HANDOUT SERIES]

1. WHAT IS A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY?

A mid-sized (12+ people) spiritual family, led by ordinary people, who are committed to multiplying disciples and joining Jesus in his mission within a specific relational context.

Read. That. Again.

- A MC are joining Jesus in gospel saturation to see Gospel Lights, Everywhere. They are shining bright together.
- Think “family” and think “missionaries.” It’s a community participating in Up-In-Out rhythms that express our identity and are united around a common sent/mission focus.
- MC’s are interconnected with d-groups (discipleship/discovery). MC’s in correlation w/ d-groups is our central vehicle.
- Is mid-sized (15-30 in the relational orbit) and growing with people of peace.
- One doesn’t “go” to Missional Community, one is a part of a Missional Community.

2. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY?

The goal is to multiply disciples who make Jesus known in everyday life (and have fun together on the journey).

One of our values is multiplying disciples in communities on mission. We believe discipleship happens in a community (a spiritual family) who are on mission together. Missional Community is a primary vehicle for discipleship and for us to BE the church (live out our identity) and shine bright in our region.

Multiplying disciples of Jesus involves maturing in Jesus. It may sound funny, but the goal of an MC is for leaders to become like spiritual parents and grandparents. The goal is to see people mature towards where they want to step into responsibility themselves (think young adult), and then become like spiritual parents who are apprenticing others towards maturity.

3. HOW IS A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY DIFFERENT THAN A SMALL GROUP?

Great question! Four initial responses:

3.1 What unites you and brings you together.

Form around mission. A common mission is the organizing and unifying principle.

3.2 The Goal

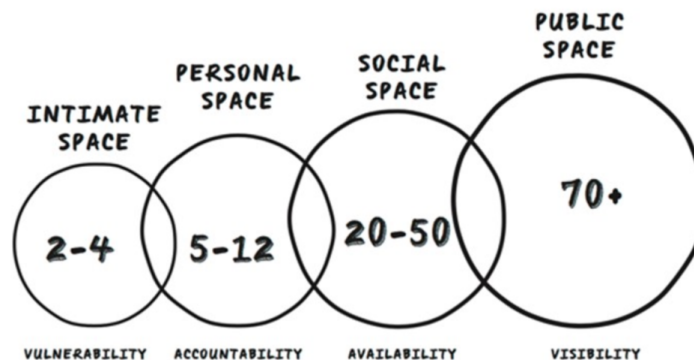
Often in church subcultures we focus on “small groups” or “community groups.” The name speaks to the goal. It is a small circle of people, grouped together, for the purpose of community and connection. That’s not bad, it’s good. But it’s also lacking. When we form community for community’s sake, it can lack depth and purpose beyond the comfort of each other. We want to help others mature in Christ as his apprentices and this involves a formation in love. Love is others focused. Jesus loves the world and his plan for the world to know his love is for his disciples to make disciples (Mt. 28:18-20; Jn. 13:34-35).

The goal is to be a family of missionaries multiplying disciples who make Jesus known in everyday life. We are aiming to participate in Gospel Saturation.

To grow as a disciple and help others apprentice in the ways of Jesus involves being on mission and helping others do the same. In fact, one of the most fruitful and fulfilling aspects of discipleship is to engage in evangelism and the service of others together. *Evangelism isn’t separate or after discipleship. It is a part of discipleship.* We see this in Jesus’ approach to forming community. “Come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” The invitation to join his kingdom family involves joining his mission. He “makes us” while we participate in his mission.

3.3 Size is a difference.

The size and environment impact social expectations and how we relate. Think of an extended family vs a nuclear one.



A M.C aims to have a minimum of 12-15 adults because the aim, for the purpose of mission, hospitality, and including people of peace is social space rather than personal space.

Personal space is personal, it’s not easy to bring new people in. There are times for personal space and intimate space (d-groups are a part of that). But a M.C aims to be a community of hospitality that is open and invitational - social space. Small enough to care - big enough to dare.

3.4 A few shifts in thinking to note:

- *From content to commission:* we are growing in loving the world together and **have a sent focus**.
 - *From leader to leaders:* MC's are led by a team.
 - *From circle to circles:* it is not about one closed circle but concentric circles of the relational network.
 - *From knowledge-based discipleship to obedience-based discipleship.* The focus isn't on discussion content but on growing in obeying Jesus in everyday life and apprenticing in his ways together.
 - *From affinity based to mission based:* I join because of the people I am called with and called to. I want to align with the sent/mission focus of the community.
 - *From going to being:* I don't go to Missional Community, I am a part of a Missional Community.
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4. STARTING A MC AND THE ROLES INVOLVED

4.1 Starting a MC:

- i. A MC within the CityLights Church Collective starts with an affirmed leadership team comprised of those who have finished the Step Two Learning Cohort, are personally sent, and are CityLights Partners.
- ii. The leaders identify a mission focus and sent opportunities and pray together seeking out people of peace.
- iii. The M.C is commissioned and then others can be invited to join in the mission.

As a MC forms, there is likely a leader or leadership couple that initiates and/or has a passion or vision for how to serve people and make disciples.

4.2 Roles Involved

Initial leadership roles:

1. **Missional Catalyst:** a natural desire to reach out and has a vision for multiplying disciples and owning the mission of Jesus within a specific context. **This role is best for people with evangelism or apostolic gifting.**
2. **Shepherd and Discipleship group catalyst.** Find at least one person who is attune to the emotional and spiritual needs of the community. This person is a catalyst for identifying who needs specific gospel shepherding and who could be in a Discipleship group. **This role is best for people with a shepherding gift.**
3. **Logistics Catalyst:** this person helps make a schedule for food and clean-up, sends out calendar updates, and ensures attendance is done. **This role is best for people with an administrative or leadership gift.**

Additional roles (food, kids, prayer, training) can develop as the community grows:

5. WHY MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES FAIL?¹

1. The MC Leader doesn't know how to disciple others within the MC.

Maybe they are inexperienced in relational based discipleship or maybe they lack christian character and spiritual depth and authority. Or it's possible they simply create religious spaces but don't know how to share everyday life and go into the world.

2. The MC lacks a clear mission focus to rally around.

If a MC forms around connection or discussing christian content without a clear mission vision then it's very difficult for the MC to flourish.

3. The MC is not launched with enough people connected

Different social spaces have different expectations of how they function. If you start with fewer than 12-15 people connected and invited (including people of peace), then the drift is to operate as a small group of Christians (6-12 people) where you sit in a circle. This naturally leans to be inward focused and it's not normal for non-christians to join in. It's incredible difficult to grow beyond the inward community focus when starting this way.

4. The MC isn't a part of a larger worshipping body.

It's encouraging to gather with a larger collective to worship and experience God.

5. The MC leaders aren't accountable.

There is a lack of coaching and accountability.

6. There is too little mission, particularly at the start of the journey.

Mike Breen states: *"If mission doesn't get into the DNA of your community early on, it is nearly impossible to include later."*² Start by joining Jesus in fishing for people and looking for people of peace.

7. One MC leader does everything.

8. The MC mimics a small group or worship Gathering.

We aren't planning an event, we are building a spiritual family. Worship Gatherings and small groups run like events and it's important for one to approach developing an MC differently.

9. The MC doesn't do evangelism.

Planting the gospel can happen in winsome, gentle, non-anxious ways but it should explicitly occur. We aren't simply doing service projects, hosting hangouts, or participating in social justice.

10. The MC doesn't engage the supernatural.

We need the power of God. We need to listen and be led by the Spirit. We need to pray for healing and miracles as we encounter pain and brokenness. We want to hear and obey.

¹ From Mike Breen's book *Leading Missional Communities*.

² Breen, *Leading Missional Communities*, p.83

6. GOSPEL IDENTITY: LIVING IN LIGHT OF WHO WE ARE

Identity is central because we want to examine who we are as a church not just what we do as a church. Who we are impacts what we do and how we do it. **Who we are is based on who God is.**

When someone becomes a Jesus-follower (disciple) they are **baptized into a new identity in Christ.**

“And Jesus came and said to them, **“All authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” – Matthew 28:18–20

We are intentional about forming missional communities because we are a sent family. This is because God is a sent community within himself. A sent and sending triune being.

WHO IS GOD?	“All authority”	“Father”	“Son”	“Spirit”
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
WHAT GOD DOES?	God reveals himself in Jesus.	God sends Jesus as our substitute so he can adopt us.	Jesus is the king who serves us humbly in his life and	The spirit is sent to empower the son and his church.
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
WHO WE ARE?	We are a Jesus-centered people. The gospel is central to our lives.	We are a loved family of God.	We are humble servants of the king.	We are a sent and empowered people.
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
WHAT WE DO?	We place Jesus in the center and submit to his	We connect with a community, becoming a spiritual	We serve consistently as we posture ourselves	We live as disciple-multiplying missionaries in our
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
OUR IDENTITY?	Jesus-centered.	Family.	Servants.	Sent.

We are a Jesus-centered family of sent servants.

We believe MC's are a great vehicle for helping us BE the church and live out our identity as we join Jesus in the Great and True Story of God.

GOSPEL LIGHTS, EVERYWHERE:

Ordinary people joining Jesus in saturating Greater Vancouver
because Jesus loves everyone, everywhere.

