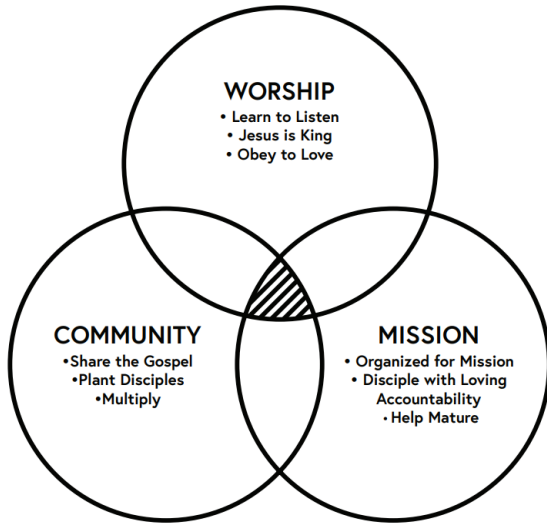




Types of Microchurches

Jeremy Stephens

ECCLESIAL MINIMUM IN THE MICROCHURCH



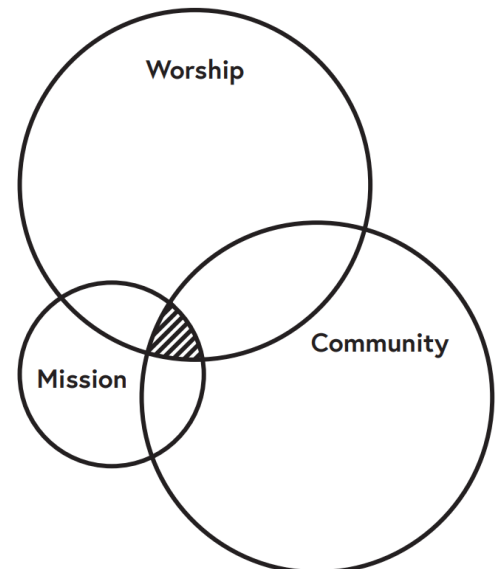
Wherever we are seeing worship, community, and mission overlap, we are seeing the church of Jesus. The centerpiece to a microchurch is "calling." To whom are you sent? Any one microchurch can't reach "everyone". So every microchurch must define a people, or a place, but ultimately the calling comes from God. As the microchurch walks towards their calling they must clarify and contextualize how to manifest worship, community and mission. This implies missional creativity and diverse methodology for microchurches.

EXISTING IN TWO SPACES

According to Ralph Winter a sodalic space is one of adventure, risk, and apostolic impulse. A modalic space is filled with belonging, safety and healing concerns. Worship, Community and Mission happen in both spaces but in distinctly different ways.

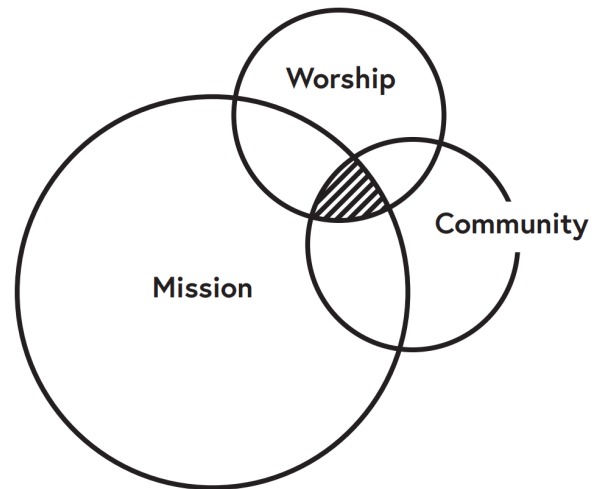
MODALIC SPACE

Microchurches need a space that's primarily Modalic (often seen as worship/community) where the mission looks smaller. For example a prayer time for each other and the poor might not be the most open environment for our nonbelieving friends. They are still welcome but mission is not the primary purpose of that prayer time.



SODALIC SPACE

We also need a space that's primarily Sodalic (often seen as mission) where worship and community look smaller. Operating as the church in both spaces generates sustainable health. For example, doing an outreach in the strip club dressing room is powerful but hard to focus on healing prayer for your members. Obviously there is intense bonding but community is not the primary focus on that missional space. Both spaces are needed.



Where microchurches attempt to force all three ecclesial minimums (worship, community, mission) into a single space there is a diminishing of one or two ecclesial minimums. These microchurches will feel anemic.

TWO TYPES: SPECIFIC VS DISTRIBUTIVE

*This is an attempt to describe microchurches, yet they are all dynamic and organic and don't fit entirely in any diagram. There are two ways to organize a microchurch in how they operate within the sodalic and modalic spaces: a specific/focused mode and a distributive/incubator model.

SPECIFIC MISSION MICROCHURCHES

Specific mission microchurches focus on one mission and engage that mission together.

- Everyone engages the same missional space or people group
- The microchurch is organized around a specific missional space
- The access to the community is to join the mission

INCUBATOR MICROCHURCH MODEL

The incubator microchurch model equips multiple mission field engagement.

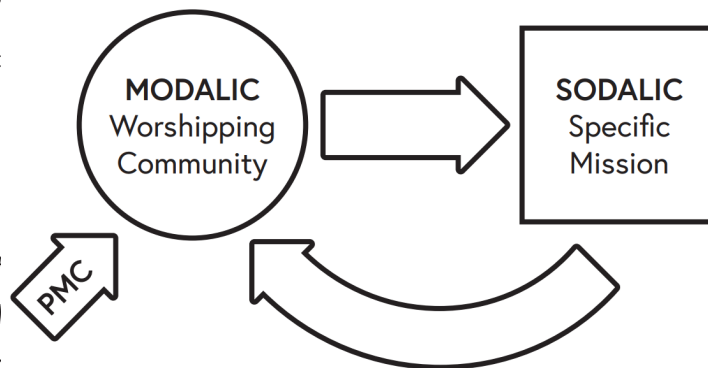
- Everyone has different missional spaces they are engaging
- The microchurch is organized around equipping the community into any mission
- The access to the community is activation into any mission

SPECIFIC MISSION MICROCHURCHES

SODALIC & MODALIC *What is the rhythm of the sodalic and modalic spaces?*

The Sodalic space is clear. These microchurches tend to be more effective at engaging a specific evil, problem, or demographic by leveraging all their attention, creativity, and problem solving skills for deep impact in one area.

Ex. Mama Africana has the specific mission of mentoring black girls. It's focused, specific, and anyone who joins MA, must join their specific mission.



The Modalic space tends to prepare for the mission through training, prayer and planning. It's exciting, but this space sometimes can be overwhelmed by the needs of the Sodalic space, causing drift.

Ex. The needs of men in addiction can be intense and chaotic, resulting in deep communal bonding - but also the temptation to neglect healing prayer for those members not in crisis.

MICROCHURCH GROWTH *How do these microchurches grow?*

Activation of Potential Missional Christians (PMCs)

Recruiting potential missional christians, internal or external to the Underground, to join you in the specific mission. The more difficult the mission the lower recruitment of PMC's. The front door is small. For example many folks want to affirm serving vulnerable women but very few want to join in that suffering work.

Conversion from mission

Those you reach while on mission join the worshipping community and in turn join you back into mission. Given the difficulty of the mission, specific mission microchurches can expect lower conversion rates. The difficulty of the mission demographic reduces how many will convert and join your worshipping community as it takes time to build trust, relationships and see disciples birthed in Christ.

Scaling the mission

These microchurches tend to multiply through identical reproduction or scaling of the program and ethos of the microchurch.

SPECIFIC MISSION MICROCHURCHES

BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- Burnout due to the deep needs of their mission.
- Discouragement from slower growth rates
- Forgetting to recruit and develop potential missional christians to join you in mission.

BIGGEST QUESTIONS

- Who are the specific people you're called to?
- What is your method of mission to engage your sodalic space?
- How will you recruit and equip PMC's to join you in this specific mission and method?
- How will you have deep worship and community spaces while maintaining your focused?

INCUBATOR MICROCHURCH MODEL

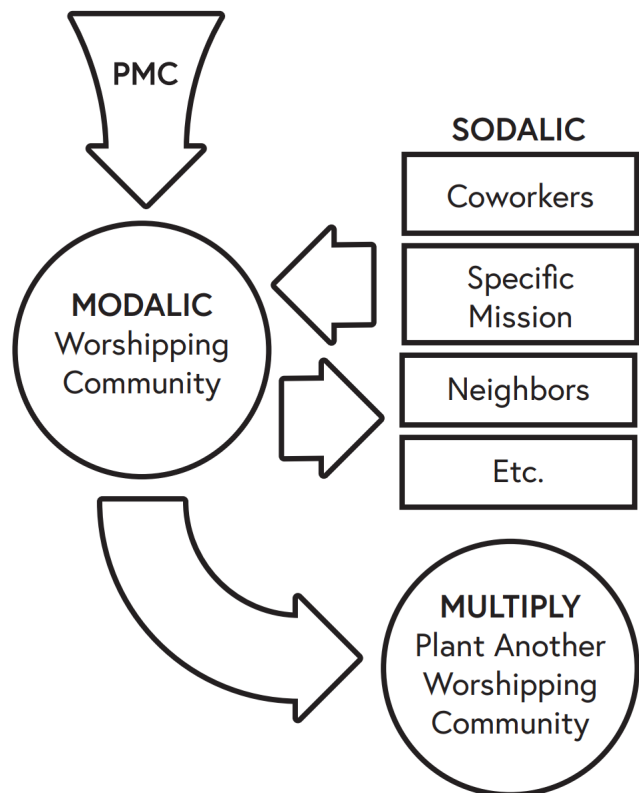
SODALIC & MODALIC *What is the rhythm of the sodalic and modalic spaces?*

The Sodalic space is organized around everyone identifying unique missional spaces and individuals engaging the missional spheres they feel called to reach, thus having a broader, yet shallower impact. Tends to require more accountability to avoid missional drift.

Ex. Everyone has a different answer to "Who are your called to reach". It might span from neighbors, coworkers, family, homeless and sports groups.

The Modalic space centers on creating a wide door to activate Potential Missional Christians (PMCs) and equip members to actively engage their missional spheres. Tends to rest more on relational connection than strategic planning.

Ex. The community sharing can be deep and peer coaching can activate each other to try to reach someone but can lack the accountability of everyone doing the same work.



INCUBATOR MICROCHURCH MODEL

MICROCHURCH GROWTH How do these microchurches grow?

Activation of Potential Missional Christians (PMCs)

Recruiting potential missional christians to join you in the specific mission. The more general (less specific) the mission field increases how many PMCs can join you in mission. The front door is wide.

Conversion from Mission

Those you reach while on mission join the worshipping community and in turn join you back into mission. The easier the mission demographic increases the likelihood of how many will join your worshipping community.

Incubating Other Microchurches

Multiply through launching successful outreaches to become independent microchurches. As the core community grows, there can be replication or identical multiplication.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES

- Accountable missional steps that equip people to reach a real person
- Equipping diverse mission fields
- Slipping into another gathering of believers who intend to do mission but never do

BIGGEST QUESTIONS

- How can you help each person identify specific missional spaces?
- How will you equip people to engage their sodalic spaces with faithfulness?
- How will you recruit and equip PMC's to be activated in mission and method?
- How will you prevent the modalic space from only caring about each other and forgetting the lost and poor?

EQUIP FOR MISSION

Regardless of your microchurch type, equipping for mission is critical.

THE LEADER'S ROLE

Each microchurch leader must play their role in...

- Giving members the "permission to try"
- Helping members persevere when mission is hard

IDENTIFY YOUR TYPE OF MICROCHURCH MISSION

Each individual needs to pinpoint what type of mission they are engaged in. This will influence how you prep and how they lean into being equipped for mission.

Specific Mission

Specific group of people with a specific need.

Ex. strip club bouncers

Incubator Mission

Variety of fields with a variety of needs.

Ex. friends, co-workers, the homeless

UNIVERSAL STRATEGY

Regardless of the people group or need, every missional christian will build upon the foundational strategy of...

- Saturating your own life with Jesus
- Intentional movement from Stranger to Acquaintance to Relationship

UNIVERSAL MISSIONAL QUESTIONS

As an equipping space, a microchurch can always unpack, inspire or train on how each person can saturate their life with Jesus or intentionally go deeper in relationship with the people they are reaching.

- Who are you trying to love for the sake of the gospel? What are their names?
- Do you know them as people? What do you know of their stories?
- What are their real needs? Deep needs?
- What ideas do you have to engage these people and deepen relationship?
- What is the frequency or timeline for you to try your ideas?
- If you don't have answers for any of the above questions, what can you do to discover solutions?