

4 Approaches to enhance Growth and Mission and Multiplication

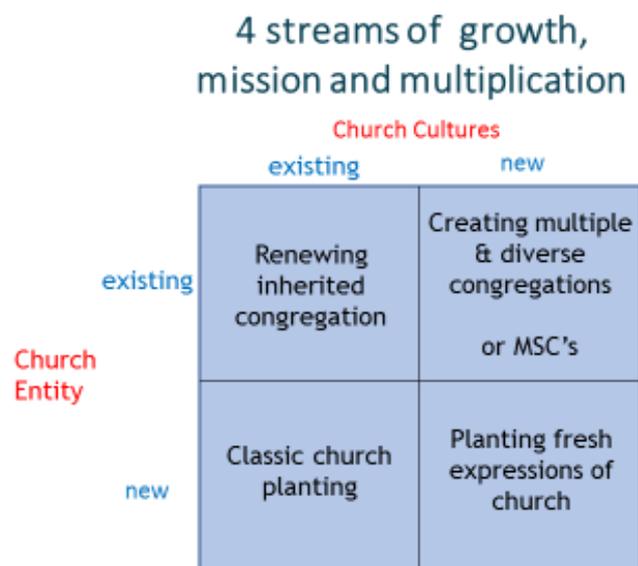
Church leaders are offered a range of approaches or strategies with the promise of enhancing growth and/or increasing missional penetration of their context(s). Often one such will be promoted as “the way forward” or preferred option. Since our overall aim is to help leaders become “missional master-craft persons” you will understand that we seek to provide a comparative analysis that helps assess what may suit where and when. Here we also identify where there are greater challenges and danger.

This analytical tool adapts a framework used in secular marketing called “The Ansoft Matrix”. This identifies options to enhance an organisations business by one of four approaches.

- a) To improve the marketing of the existing product to its existing market
- b) To rebrand the existing product to break into a different market.
- c) To create a new product to extend the share of existing market.
- d) To create a new product to break into a different market.

Phil Potter shared an application of this to understand better four areas into which much of the Church Growth and Missional literature can be analysed. We have adapted this a little further in the following matrix diagram. This separates four categories of enhancements currently being explored and encouraged.

- a) Renewing the life of an existing congregation for growth and mission
- b) To replicate the existing church by classic church planting into a new area
- c) To significantly change the exiting church entity, the structure and culture; transitioning and reimagining for new demographic context(s)
- d) To create a new church entity with significantly changed structure and culture for new demographic context(s).



In talking of new church 'entities' (bottom two squares of matrix) we are identifying where a separation comes from the 'parent' church. This usually will involve some new constitution/charity as well as a new stand-alone leadership team.

In contrast the two options of developing the existing church 'entity' (top two squares) is likely to involve developing new leaders but all under one umbrella organisation.

Perhaps most straightforward to recognise are the two squares in the left-hand column. Renewing the life of the existing congregation or sending to plant a largely similar congregation elsewhere.

So, in summary...

Top left of Matrix: Renewing inherited congregation

This identifies the important options that involve maintaining the existing church organism, organisation and existing culture and demographic, but renewing its life. Clearly this can involve updating its liturgical forms and programs. It may also involve renewing its resources and facilities. And most importantly should flow from a renewed spiritual life.

Top right of Matrix: Creating multiple and diverse congregations

These options are likely to also be based on renewal but also involve organisational and structural changes in how members live their discipleship. As indicated in the diagram, examples involve developing new and intentionally diverse congregations each with their own style, leadership and community but under the single combined oversight and organisation. Such multiple congregations are distinct from a church that multiplies SERVICES simply as a device to process more through a single building but each service is a duplicate with the same demographic; members floating between according to convenience rather than a place of belonging and distinct mission focus. This more properly fits in the top left square.

Bottom left of Matrix: Classic church plant

The idea of 'classic' church planting describes the process of releasing leaders, usually plus teams, to start an independent new congregation focussed on a distinct mission field and meeting in a new location. We are locating this in this quadrant, identifying that we are narrowing the understanding of classic church planting to so many initiatives that move and engage in a new place but largely replicate church in the style and ordering of the parent that sent them out.

Bottom right of Matrix: Planting fresh expressions of church

This last quadrant, like the bottom left, involves creating new 'stand-alone' church entities, with their own organisation. However, unlike the bottom left, they intentionally set out to reimagine church to fit either the preference of the sent team and/or the host culture into which they plant. Such mission initiatives are typical of what have been described as 'fresh expressions of church'.

Some Analysis of these Four Options

Now, having analysed the different dynamics and outcomes we can pinpoint particular contributions, challenges and provisos that we don't see being cautioned in the literature.

Before going into more detailed analysis, we should start by recognising that one of the hardest challenges for humans is a journey involving CHANGE. And all four quadrants involve change for at least some members, and some of the changes significantly more challenging than others,

Perhaps surprisingly, the top left option of renewing inherited congregations is the only one that necessarily involves change for all. The challenges of these changes compared to those involved for only some members in the other three squares depends on what sort of change individuals find

most disruptive. Renewing an existing congregation's life does not mean moving location of the gathering let alone moving where you live and work, which can be involved in some planting options. However, spiritual renewal and increasing discipleship expectations, can be most challenging. By contrast, top left of congregational renewal, is the only one of the four that does not involve change in the area of disturbing existing relationships. And for some these are the most challenging changes. Classic church planting and planting fresh expressions are closest as the existing congregational relationships are disrupted only by the loss of the sent out team(s).

By contrast, the top right square may represent most relational disruption as multiplying congregations in the same building can involve subdividing the existing in two. And transitioning to missional communities is likely to disrupt with closer more intimate relational groups (house groups) being re-engineered.

On the other hand, from the perspective of structural/institutional change, where most challenges fall is different again. The two top square options involve internal reimagining (left) and reorganising (right). Whereas the two bottom square options create new structures/institutions.

Lastly, from the perspective of cross-cultural adaptation and change the two left hand square options are the most challenging. And these challenge our inherent cultural blindness as well as our culture being another focus of 'comfort'. There is much evidence that the challenges here can be as strong as those involved in Spiritual Renewal, which as some level can be involved in all four journeys.