

24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (70 months)

The Church Involvement Continuum

BY **CHRIS GALANOS**

website: www.experiencelifenow.com

Chris Galanos is the Founding and Lead Pastor of Experience Life Church in Lubbock, Texas. *Outreach Magazine* named Chris the Youngest Megachurch Pastor in America several years in a row and named Experience Life one of the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in the country five different times. Chris lives in Lubbock with his wife, Emilie, and daughters, McKinley and Charis.

Since the release of our book, *From Megachurch to Multiplication*, we've had the privilege of training hundreds of pastors from across the country, and even some from around the world. Through the process, I constantly see pastors wrestling with how to implement DMM in their churches.

Do they leave the church alone and just do this DMM thing on the side? Do they implement some of the principles in their church? Do they take their church through a major transition? Do they just move on from their church and do this somewhere else?

Very early in the training I usually start to get these questions from the pastors. I've found myself responding in a similar way each time, so I put together a Google Doc called "Church Involvement Continuum" to present some various ways the Spirit might lead a pastor and church to implement DMM.

« Let me say first:
The absolute most important thing for you to do is listen to the Spirit and do whatever he tells you to do. »

Let me say first: *The absolute most important thing for you to do is listen to the Spirit and do whatever he tells you to do.* We shouldn't look at a continuum like this and pick the commitment level we like best. We shouldn't bring our team together and take a vote. We shouldn't pick a

commitment level because it seems easiest. The Spirit still speaks to churches! He'll show you what to do!

« As you begin to process what DMM might look like in your church, you need to **listen** to the Spirit! The involvement continuum is not exhaustive. It represents just *some* of the ways that other churches have responded to the DMM vision. »

In Revelation 2-3, Jesus says one thing to all seven churches: "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches" (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22, NLT).

How might this apply to us? We must *listen* to the Spirit and *understand* and *obey* what he is saying to the church. The Spirit still speaks! Do you know what the Spirit is saying to your church?

As you begin to process what DMM might look like in your church, you need to **listen** to the Spirit! The involvement continuum is not exhaustive. It represents just *some* of the ways that other churches have responded to the DMM vision.

Be encouraged that the Spirit will speak to you and your leadership if you have ears to hear what He wants to tell you. To be honest, though, when I look at many of the churches in movements overseas, they make the American church look prayerless and lukewarm. No wonder they hear so clearly from the Spirit about what they're supposed to do. They spend a *ton* of time listening to Him!

Do you and the leadership of your church spend a lot of time listening to the Spirit? If you do, He'll speak to you and you'll know just what you should do. I find that so encouraging!

Start praying today, *"Lord, what do you want us to do? We are listening! And when we hear you, we will obey!"*

My guess is that what the Holy Spirit will tell you to do with DMM may not be what you would've picked. It probably won't be the safe, easy, comfortable option. But the Lord's plans for your life and your church are better than yours.

Way #1—Bless

The first way the Holy Spirit might lead a church to be involved with DMM is to pray for it and **Bless** it when it begins to make an impact in your city or area. This path doesn't require any church-wide commitment to embrace DMM. This is simply understanding and supporting DMM in your area and not resisting it.

« The first way the Holy Spirit might lead a church to be involved with DMM is to pray for it and **Bless** it when it begins to make an impact in your city or area. »

This is a very important step. As I've talked to people connected to movements overseas or read some of their writings, I continue to hear something very surprising. They often say that their greatest resistance in making more disciples comes from "traditional Christians." By traditional Christian, I think they just mean Christians who go to traditional churches and think everyone should do things the way they do things. The truth is that traditional Christians often resist what they don't understand or don't like.



« The first way a church might be involved in DMM is to bless the movement and pray for it! For a traditional church to bless and pray for a movement, even if they aren't a part of it, is a great contribution to movement work in an area. »

The first way a church might be involved in DMM is to bless the movement and pray for it! For a traditional church to bless and pray for a movement, even if they aren't a part of it, is a great contribution to movement work in an area. It keeps movement workers from being burdened by opposition from traditional churches. And it encourages movement workers to know the churches are praying for them.

Almost any pastor can lead their church to bless DMM work in their area, without pushback from the church. Nothing changes within the church. No one has to get on board. The proverbial "boat" isn't being rocked at all. It's simply a pastor leading his/her church to bless, not curse, DMM work in their area by supporting the workers and praying for the work.

My prayer is that every church would at least engage in DMM at this level. It requires no commitment and no cost. And it makes a significant contribution to DMM work in an area because it creates less opposition and more partnerships.

Way #2—Release

The second way the Holy Spirit might lead a church to be involved with DMM is to **Release** some of the “radicals” in the church. Release them to be trained by a DMM trainer/catalyst and sent out from your church to your city or area.

This builds on the first way of blessing and praying for movement work in your area. Like the first way, this doesn’t change the direction of the church. The vision stays the same and the programming stays the same. This is more of an underground, behind-the-scenes strategy that mainly affects the few radicals you send out.

The way this works is that a pastor or leadership team first identifies some people in the church who are “radicals.” These are the people so fired up that we have trouble containing them in our churches. They are like caged lions ready to break out and take the world by storm for King Jesus. They know there must be more than just the activities of the church and they would be excited to be trained and released to make disciples *outside* the church.

Many churches have a few people like this, but usually not a lot. They’re not antagonistic toward the church. They’re just discontent, but in a good way. They love their church but they know there’s got to be more.

After you identify the radicals, you cast vision to those radicals and release them to be trained by a DMM trainer/catalyst. That trainer would show them how to multiply disciples and churches among the lost of your city or area: those who would probably never attend a traditional church like yours. According to statistics, that’s probably 90% or more of the people around you. We’ve got to open our eyes and see that most people aren’t coming to our churches. Most aren’t even interested in coming. We’ve got to release some people to “go” and pursue the lost, much like Jesus instructed in the Great Commission.

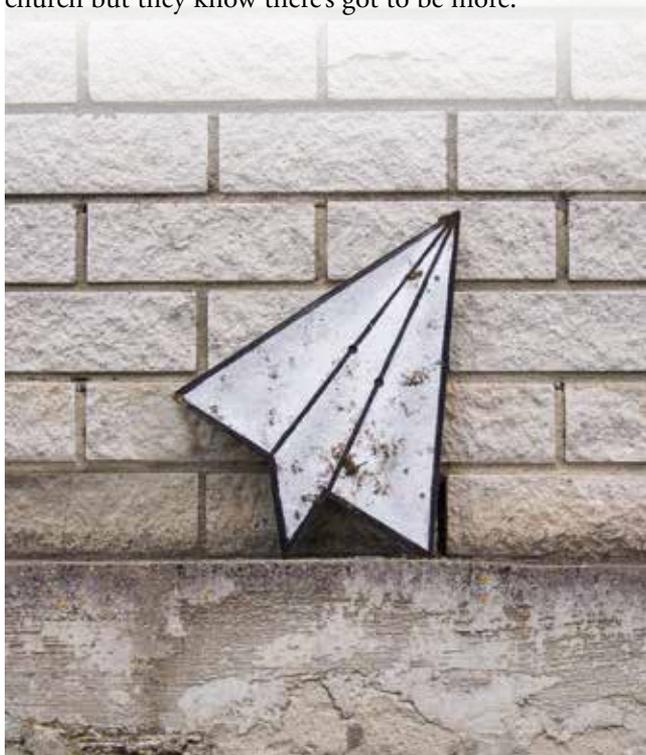
After training with a DMM trainer, the radicals might want to form a “DMM team” with other radicals to start “going and making disciples” in the most difficult parts of your city or area. If so, you and the leadership team would gladly bless and send them to do so. They would be analogous in some ways to missionaries sent out by the church – in this case to reach nearby people who would likely never go to a traditional church.

This doesn’t change much at the mother church. It just encourages some of the “radicals” in the church to chase the Romans 15:20 ambition (preaching where Christ is not known) God has put on their heart: to see your whole city or county reached.

I expect most pastors would need leadership approval (elders, deacons, or whoever governs the church) to implement this approach, since some of the radicals you send out might well be among your best givers or volunteers. This requires a little more commitment and risk on the part of the leadership than just blessing and praying for movement work in your area.

Some might ask: Can we release the radicals and still have them come to our church, so they can keep volunteering and giving? You could, but I wouldn’t recommend it – for the same reason you don’t recommend that people attend two different churches. It’s too difficult to get deeply involved in more than one church.

If these radicals stay involved in your church, they likely won’t get very involved in their DMM team (often formed into a DMM church seeking to start DMM churches among the lost). Do you continue to expect the same level of involvement from the missionaries your church sends overseas? Of course not. Besides the fact that they don’t live in your area and couldn’t attend



anyway, you wouldn't want them to come because you want them focused on their mission — reaching people who haven't yet heard or responded to the gospel. The same applies here.

« This approach clearly requires a higher level of commitment than the first way, because you could lose some of your best givers and volunteers. But isn't that a small sacrifice for your church, in order to potentially be a part of a movement of God that impacts the lost in your city or area? »

Would these radicals still be connected to your church? Absolutely! Would they still come on occasion to give reports of what God is doing? Absolutely! Would they be sent and supported by your church? Absolutely! There would still be a strong partnership and they would remain a part of your church family. You would be sending them out similarly to the way you send missionaries. In this case their focus would be the lost people in your city or area, who would never come to a traditional church.

This approach clearly requires a higher level of commitment than the first way, because you could lose some of your best givers and volunteers. But isn't that a small sacrifice for your church, in order to potentially be a part of a movement of God that impacts the lost in your city or area?

We at Experience Life certainly thought so. On our 10-year anniversary, we laid hands on and commissioned our first 50+ “radicals” to be sent from our church to form DMM teams (which became DMM churches) to go and reach our city. It was very exciting and our whole church was involved. You don't have to send them out as publicly as we did, but we definitely wanted to free up our radicals to go and reach the people in our city who our church would never reach — the 90% who need Jesus!

It's been two years since we sent them out, and we're so glad we did. They haven't had to pass out bulletins at the door, watch kiddos, usher people to their seats or anything else like that at the mother church. We removed every potential distraction from them and told them we supported them and were cheering for them as we sent them out. I think they would all say it's been much better being fully involved with their DMM church than being partially involved in their DMM church and partially involved in our traditional church.

Since we released our radicals two years ago, they've prayed for hundreds of hours, shared with thousands of people, and seen over 150 Discovery Groups started in multiple streams to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and even 5th generation. They share totally amazing stories of God's work in advancing his kingdom! We're so glad we released them! God has used them to bring more gospel light into the great darkness around us.

Way #3—Hybrid

The third way the Holy Spirit might lead a church to be involved with DMM is through a *Hybrid* approach. One of my friends and mentors, Roy Moran, wrote a whole book on this topic called *Spent Matches*. I highly recommend you buy and read it. It's fantastic!

He borrows the hybrid analogy from the car industry where some cars have both an electric motor and a gas engine. He compares DMM to the electric motor and the traditional church model to the gas engine. Both run under the same hood and work together to boost performance and create better fuel economy.

The hybrid approach to DMM allows you to keep doing what you've been doing and add an additional DMM track in your church that you publicly promote and invite people to join. Whereas the previous two ways talked more about a private approach to DMM, things become more public with the hybrid model.



According to Roy, the hybrid approach can take different forms. In his book he talks about how his church has different small group tracks: one for those inside the church, and one geared for those outside the church (using DMM principles). He recently told me about another church that used a hybrid approach by implementing DMM in their college ministry but not with everyone else.

Hybrid simply means you publicly integrate DMM principles into some part of your church while everything else remains the same. It's like adding an electric motor to a car already running on a gas engine.

In *Spent Matches*, Roy writes, "The hybrid car became a metaphor for Shoal Creek [Community Church]. On one side is the old *attraction model*—gas engine—inviting people each week to come discover a life they've always wanted. On the other side a gospel planting model—electric engine—that equips people to move into their neighborhoods, workplaces, and relational networks with the life-changing truth of Jesus."

While a hybrid strategy may initially sound preferable to some because it sounds like the best of both worlds, it's not for the faint of heart. Roy acknowledges that there will almost assuredly be a cost to implement it. But, for some, this may be how the Holy Spirit leads your church to be involved in DMM. As I said at the outset, make sure you let the Holy Spirit choose for you rather than deciding what's most convenient or what you or your church may like the best.

When I explain to pastors these various ways a church can be involved in DMM, I tell them that with the hybrid approach and the remaining two ways (mentioned below), you'll have to count a cost. These approaches require sacrifice, courage, and faith to implement. Don't let that dissuade you. Often what the Lord calls us to do requires sacrifice, courage, and faith. Perhaps the Holy Spirit will lead you and your church to implement a hybrid approach like Roy's church did and ours did as well.

With the hybrid model, the church becomes publicly committed to DMM and more people can get involved. DMM is now officially inside the church and positively affecting certain areas and ministries of the church. And most likely those areas will become more outwardly focused and more intent on making disciples among lost people, which is awesome!

Pursuing the hybrid builds on the other two ways to get involved. It allows you to bless and pray for movement work in your area. It allows you to release radicals who want to be sent from the church to do this exclusively. And it involves the entire church in the process by implementing DMM principles into various ministries in the church.

I encourage you to begin praying for the Lord's best, with these three ways in mind. God's Spirit may lead you to something even more radical, with even greater potential to reach the lost around you. If you're interested to explore further, I invite you to read about two more possibilities on my blog.

Way #4 - Transition

A fourth way the Holy Spirit might lead a church to be involved with DMM is through a "*transition*" to a singular DMM focus. Instead of having two visions you're running alongside one another, like with "hybrid," you decide to make DMM the primary vision. While you may continue to do many of the things you've done before, like weekend services, you leverage everything in the church to help accomplish the primary vision of catalyzing a movement in your city/region. Read more at wigtakedmm.com/transition.

Way #5 - Relaunch

One more way that the Holy Spirit might lead a church to be involved with DMM is through *relaunching* as a network of DMM churches. Honestly, one year ago, I probably wouldn't have even included "relaunch" in the list. Not because it didn't belong in the list but because I wouldn't have even known it existed until I got to witness what the Holy Spirit has done in our church over the last six months. It's been remarkable! Read more at wigtakedmm.com/relaunch and read the articles in the Jan-Feb 2020 issue of *Mission Frontiers*.

May the Lord lead you into his best as you listen to and follow the voice of his Spirit. 

