



**A process and
conversation guide
for sending pastors,
church planters, and
teams**

GETTING REAL ABOUT LIFE AFTER LAUNCH



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You must think of a new church as a missional outpost, perched on the edge of occupied territory.

-Jim Griffith

Phase 4 - Post-Launch

In modern times, as many church planters work to launch large and to leverage a launch day strategy we must admit that this has a tendency to put a lot of emphasis on "getting to launch" and *not enough* emphasis on sustaining the work after launch and beyond. Leading up to launch day, it's natural to communicate themes such as:

- Authentic community and relationship building.
- Personal evangelism and witnessing.
- Values-driven leadership.
- Community service and group outreach.
- Outward-focused prayer.
- Spiritual growth and a life of discipleship.

After the launch is over and the church begins to settle into a regular rhythm, there will be a great temptation to satisfy the church instead of evangelizing the lost. Therefore, be intentional to *consistently* point the church outside of its walls.

- The spiritual focus of the post-launch phase is **vision sustainment**.

This means that, after launch, your team must work hard to *sustain* the vision over time. As the church begins to grow, you will notice the development of a unique **culture**. In this context, your culture refers to the identity, values, and overall focus of your church. This culture is revealed by what you celebrate, practice, and communicate on a regular basis.

The hard truth about "life after launch" is that it takes a lot of work to sustain momentum. Just as a couple arrives home after the honeymoon and must adjust to make life work together, a launch team must adjust in time and learn how to effectively work together.

In his book, *Growing a Church*, David Bernard makes note of two essential ingredients of a growing church: personal care and personal involvement.* Bernard suggests that pastors must authentically care for people and actively work to get people involved in life and ministry in the church. These two tasks become all the more important *after* a church is launched.

As you consider what life will be like for you post-launch, gather your team and discuss the following questions:

What culture do we hope to develop as a church?

What is our plan to assimilate new members into the church?

As a team, what should we celebrate, practice, and communicate on a regular basis?

As a team, how can we continue to create a church culture that is focused on evangelizing the unchurched?

As a team, what can we do to make it easy for outsiders to enter our church community, find a place to belong, and get involved?

*David K. Bernard, *Growing a Church* (Word Aflame Press: St. Louis, MO, 2001) pgs 149-220.