Liberty University
John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

**Pastoral Leadership Strategies for a Multisite Church in a
Small Church Setting in the African American Community**

A Thesis Project submitted to
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by
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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT
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There are many mega churches that are moving to multisite facilities. This project focuses on the small church that wishes to establish multisite facilities to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. The project will provide a guide for small churches who may desire to embrace multi worship sites for their congregations. It will identify strengths of small churches and the challenges they face when they seek to found multisite churches, and ultimately demonstrate that small church multisite facilities are possible and feasible. This project will also validate the importance of teamwork in recruiting, enlisting and training volunteers for multisite responsibilities. It will examine the methods of large and small churches to reflect the effectiveness and relevance of multisite churches in the small church for the African American community.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In his book, *Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable*, Seth Godin argues that the key to success is to find a way to stand out.[1] Multisite church is a relatively new phrase in the church community, and there are relatively few small church multisite locations. While the burden on small churches becoming multisites is greater due to financial and volunteer restrictions, the reward is greater. The goal of building multisites is not to stand out, but to be true to the call and assignment of God for your local church. And yet, obedience to God in this instance indeed renders the multisite small church into a purple cow. Multisite churches take the proven leadership and resources of an established Church and multiply it. "A multisite church is one church meeting in multiple locations."[2] Multisite churches report significant growth, much of it consisting of new believers. Multisite churches reach millions of people weekly through congregations of all sizes. In the United States alone, 5 million people worshipped at one of 8,000 multisite churches, according to the National Congregations Study sponsored by Duke University.[3]

There are various ways to operate a multisite church. Some sites use videos at multiple sites, or even on the same campus, where a large screen displays the same sermon from the same preacher to all parishioners. Some churches branch out across a single city, while others spread across a state or even multiple states . Some even operate on the internet.

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[1] Seth Godin, *Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable* (New York, NY: Penguin Publishing Group, 2003).

[2] Geoff Surrat, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird, *The Multisite Revolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 18.

[3] The National Congregations Study is hosted at www.soc.duke.edu/natcong/.

The multisite model typically propels a dramatic increase in numbers of attendees, and with it, an increase of people wishing to serve at the various sites of the congregation. Each site probably requires its own pastoral, worship, and welcome teams, children's workers, etc. A multisite church can take advantage of times of growth.

The concept of satellite church campuses is not a new one. One many consider that The New Testament reveals early multisite churches. The Apostle Paul wrote to all the Christians in Rome because they met in multiple houses. Multisite locations today have centralized headquarters. In order for a church to multiply freely, it must be self-perpetuating and self-propagating. A healthy church can reproduce healthy disciples.

Often people perceive small churches in America as feeders for medium and large churches. A small church that sustains multisite locations seems contradictory and almost unimaginable. Cathy Lynn Grossman shares that up to 37% of US Protestant churches in 2008 are megachurches, with two or more locations under the same leadership is. This percentage is a substantial increase from 22% in 2000, according to a study by the Leadership Network and Hartford Institute for Religion Research in Hartford, Connecticut.[4] This project will address the biblical mandate required for expansion, the vision required for expansion, what necessitates multiple locations, the ministerial challenges of multisite locations, as well as the process of selecting the locations for multisite churches.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to identify and demonstrate the benefits of multisite locations of the small church for the African American community. The project will also provide

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[4] Cathy L. Grossman, "New Face of Evangelism: 1 Church, Multiple sites," *USA Today*, December 17, 2009.

a model for how small churches may establish multisite locations. The basis of this research is to discover principles and strategies for founding multisite small churches in the African American community. The goal of this project is to provide a resource for pastors who are actively seeking to find new ways to fulfill the Great Commission.

Background

The candidate researched the Logos Christian Fellowship, Inc., D/B/A Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia as an example of establishing a multisite church. The Logos Christian Fellowship originated in New Orleans, Louisiana, on July 3, 1999. In 2000, it had 300 members and averaged 110 attendees on a weekly basis. It served its parishioners and community via weekly sessions of Bible studies, child and youth studies and activities, a health and nutrition program, and a Summer Enrichment Program for ages 5 to 17.

In 2000, the city of New Orleans in 2000 was comprised predominantly of lower income, middle class African Americans.[5] New Orleans has a rich tapestry of many nationalities, blending French, Spanish, Creole, and African American cultures. The Area Connect 2000 census showed that there were 40,677 people living in 14,487 homes within a five-mile radius of the Logos Christian Fellowship church. Seventy-two percent of the population resided in single family homes, and 28% of families in single family residences.[6] Fifty-seven percent of these homes were owner-occupied, and 43% rented. The services provided by Logos Christian Fellowship mentioned above clearly matched the needs of the community.

Logos Christian Fellowship decided to plant a second location in Bogalusa, Louisiana, 65 miles south of New Orleans. Both locations were thriving until Hurricane Katrina destroyed

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[5] Area Connect, http://neworleans.areaconnect.com/2000.

[6] Area Connect.

them on August 29, 2005. In September of the same year, following the devastation of the church buildings, the church relocated to the Atlanta area in Georgia.

Logos Christian Fellowship d/b/a Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church presently has two locations: Fayetteville, Georgia and East Point, Georgia. The Fayetteville location is the main one, while East Point services a senior adult living community. Fayetteville has 100 members on roster and the average weekly attendance is 45 congregants. East Point has 50 members on roster, with an average of 30 members attending weekly services. Each location is productively servicing the needs of its community.

Statement of Limitations

This project will not discuss the specifics of any particular small church but will serve as a model for all small churches. As a model, this project serves as a guideline and not as an absolute. Every church has its own characteristics and culture, and founders must consider these deviations when referring to the guide and preparing for multiple locations.

This research stems from and addresses the African American Baptist church experience. The culture of the African American Baptist Church is unique to the United States. The sampling strategy for building multisite small churches therefore takes into consideration cultural, economic, and psychological challenges that are particularly relevant to the African American community. The data will show how founders may meet these challenges in various demographics to establish strong church communities.

The other challenge of this study is the relatively small amount of data available on multisite church design for small church communities. For this reason, founders ought not to generalize this study's findings to the broader community. There are many variables that can

impact the outcome of successful multisite locations for a small church in the African American community.

Limitations of time and resources also prevent an exhaustive search into this study. These limitations mainly arise out of the amount of time required to plant viable multisite churches and to study their efficacy of ministering within the community. Other research challenges include travel constraints, limited finances, and the paucity of examples of small church multisite planning in the African American community.

Theoretical Basis

The idea of multisite churches is relatively but not completely new in the African American community. In Galatians, Paul addresses "the obedience in Galatia,"[7] signifying more than one location. Paul addresses his second letter to the church at Corinth "to the church of God that is at Corinth, with all saints who are in the whole of Achaia."[8] In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he addresses "all saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi."[9] The apostle wrote his letters to multiple church gatherings within a region, and not one specific location. The struggle of today is how to manage multiple locations under one pastor, versus each location having its own pastor. The New Testament does not give clear information about structuring a church: "If you start looking in the New Testament for how to organize as a church, you won't find a straightforward manual of church government; there is no ideal constitution for a church."[10]

The nature of the church, the Great Commission, the historical foundations of the church, and the role and authority of the pastor are essential elements of the church in establishing a

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[7] Gal 1:2, English Standard Version (ESV). Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this thesis project will be from the English Standard Version of the Bible (ESV).

[8] 2 Cor 1:1 (ESV).

[9] Phil 1:1 (ESV).

[10] Mark Dever, 9 *Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 221.

multisite model. Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird write, "The Book of Acts shows that evangelism and church planting are the normal practice of starting normal churches."[11]

Statement of Methodology

The purpose of this project is to research multisite churches and church planting in order to find the guiding principles and best practices for planting small churches in the African American community. Additionally, this project seeks to establish the biblical and theological foundations for multisite church planting.

Review of Literature

The amount of literature pertaining to multisite church planting is expansive and growing, but sources are still limited. Pastors author a number of these sources, or church growth experts who are supportive of the multisite church model. The review of the literature will also include definitions of key terms for this project.

Books

The Multisite Church Revolution sets the standard for literature on multisite movement. Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird write this as a how-to manual for establishing multisite churches, sharing benefits and challenges.

Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird also wrote *Multisite Church Road Trip* which gives more detail on how to implement multisite locations in various settings. Jim Tomberlin authored "125 Tips for Multisite Churches". Its intention is to help churches build or expand multisite churches. The book provides many principles and concepts that would aid

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[11] Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 182.

successfully launching and operating a multisite church. It also offers leaders ways to conduct decision making and other procedures of implementing a multisite church.

Church Locality: New Rules for Church Buildings in a Multisite, Church Planting, and Giga-Church World, by Tim Cool and Jim Tomberlin, delineates locations where multisite churches may thrive. This book addresses the question of where congregations may meet. It also addresses the type of facilities and the implications of each venue, and it emphasizes the importance of the location and type of building that would be most beneficial to the congregation.

The Go-To Church: Post Mega Church Growth by Brian Collier shares approaches on how to proactively locate the lost instead of passively waiting for them to attend a weekly church service. Collier discusses how to use multisite locations to bring the gospel to where people are, as opposed to waiting for people to arrive on the front doorsteps. This project will also suggest strategies on how to customize the mission and ministry of a church to reach people where they are.

Multisite Churches: Guidance for the Movement's Next Generation, by Scott McConnell, points toward the next generation of believers who are interested in multisite churches. McConnell offers a firsthand perspective on routes to avoid when building solid multisite locations. He mines his research from 40 congregations that have grown through multisite locations.

A Practical Guide for Successful Church Change by Ramsey Coutta shares guidelines and principles on how to lead a church through change as efficiently as possible. The multisite church concept brings a change to the culture of every congregation that embraces the idea. This book helps pastors, church leaders and churches welcome these changes as they expand the

ministry. This book proposes principles for planning, implementing, and sustaining change in a practical approach that will be useful in transforming and transitioning a local church.

The Healthy Small Church: Diagnosis and Treatment for the Big Issues by Dennis Bickers identifies crucial issues that can threaten the life of a small church and suggests solutions for problems that plague congregations. Bickers shares that a healthy church identifies the pitfalls of planting multisite locations early in the process and works to eradicate the symptoms. The focus of this project is multisite church locations for small churches in the African American community, and Bicker's instructions will assist in analyzing conditions of a church to assess its suitability for a multisite congregation.

Staff Your Church for Growth by Gary L. McIntosh focuses on how to build team ministry for the 21st century. McIntosh delineates how to effectively operate a multisite church, insisting that staffing is critical. This book proposes the proper time to add staff members, gives guidance for how to search for and nurture a healthy staff, and suggests keys to productive team ministry. Most importantly, McIntosh guides how to select staff for retention and growth rather than fulfilling immediate needs. This book helps the multisite researcher determine how to find the appropriate people to sustain church growth.

Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration by Norma Cook Everest contends that all churches will experience conflict and proposes ways for how ministries may navigate that terrain that can make the difference between the life and death of a church. When a church increases its staff, the possibility of conflict automatically rises. This book gives various approaches to resolving conflict. The writer also teaches how to co-exist with conflict. The ultimate goal of this book is sharing methods for ways to reach collaboration. It will aid the

multisite leadership team in completing the task at hand without becoming overwhelmed by conflict.

In *Developing the Leaders Around You*, John C. Maxwell teaches how to help others reach their full potential. The multisite church depends on a team of overachievers to successfully provide this type of ministry. This book instructs the pastor how to pull the leader out of every individual so they may carry part of the load of the vision of a multisite church. Maxwell teaches that an organization will only grow as large as the commitment of the people who are working for it, and therefore, it is imperative to raise up generations of leaders who may maintain the vision and to lift it to higher levels.

Aubrey Malphurs is the author of *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, which shares that strategic planning is key to the long-term survival of any local church. An effective multisite church cannot operate without a strategic plan. Malphurs addresses questions about how to develop an effective plan to propel a church to complete its objectives. Malphurs offers a step-by-step approach to how a church may share its vision, mission, and identity, and describes the qualities necessary to implement each component.

Basic Budgeting for Churches: A Complete Guide by Jack A. Henry focuses on how to develop and manage a church budget and offers simple computer budgeting procedures. The book covers everything from developing a proposal to making budget projections. It even gives sample forms with instructions to help the local church finance team maintain accurate records. The book aims at new pastors, making it valuable to learning the multisite church financial system.

Basic Accounting for Churches: A Turnkey Manual, by Jack A. Henry gives instructions on such money management issues as how to receive, record, and track offerings in local churches. The book's intent is to help local pastors obtain a basic working knowledge of accounting and bookkeeping and their jargon and practices. Multisite pastors must be able to understand and implement a spending plan.

William Flippin and James McWhorter's *All Rise: Church Administration*'s primary focus is the African American audience. Many African American churches are typically unincorporated with poor administrative and financial procedure structures. Any leader may employ this book to help their ministries operate legally and with great integrity.

<div style="text-align:center">Scriptures</div>

Gal 1:1–4 3

"Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

Eph 1:1–2

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Phil 1:1–2

"Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Rom 1:7

"To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:"

2 Cor 1:1–2

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

These five scriptures show how there were multiple churches in every city or region and to establish that the first churches were multisite locations. Paul founded these churches in particular areas so they could spread the gospel in their respective regions. While they did not operate like todays' multisite locations, these churches were fulfilling the great commandment of Jesus Christ by spreading the gospel. The project employs these scriptures to validate multisite locations for the 21st century. These scriptures prove that God's plan was always for the establishment of places of worship, and that multisite locations are a testament to His glory.

Rom 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This verse articulates the need of Jesus Christ as our savior. In alignment, the depravity of lost souls justifies the need for multisite locations. There are billions of people who have never heard

the gospel message of Jesus Christ. We are commissioned to evangelize the world, and multisite churches is one avenue of accomplishing that goal.

Matt 28:16–20

> "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Mark 16:14–18

> "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

The Great Commission is the evangelistic marching order of the Church of Jesus Christ. This passage mandates that the people of God add to the kingdom of God by witnessing to lost souls.

These verses are the foundation of the mission of the Body of Christ and function in like manner for this thesis.

Rom 10:16–17

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The Apostle Paul tells us that hearing the word of God will cause people to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The preaching and teaching of the gospel is essential for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. When disciples execute the Great Commission, it perpetuates the need for more Christian assemblies. Multisite locations offer multiple opportunities to minister to more souls.

Matt 4:19

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples go with him to receive instruction on how to bring lost people into the kingdom. Jesus' teachings give individuals the wisdom to be effective in evangelism efforts. Multisite locations must depend on sound doctrine to be effective.

2 Co 5:18–21

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The Christian mission is to compel others to reconcile with God through faith in Jesus. We have received the authority to reconcile by the word of God and the ability to reconcile by the power of the Holy Spirit. When the creator restores sinners to him, they will need a local assembly to fulfill this ministry.

Matt 9:37–38

"Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

This passage compares lost souls to a crop in need of harvesting. The believer must pray to God to send more workers to the field to glean for souls. Prayer is an essential component of all multisite churches

Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

This particular passage indicates the direction of the church. In this scripture Jesus shares the goal and destination of evangelism. This verse reinforces kingdom growth and local church growth. The initial phase of the multisite model derives in part from this passage. Jesus tells the disciples to start by witnessing at home and not to stop until they have reached the entire world.

Acts 4:31

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

The Holy Spirit will give unto us a confidence to carry out God's assignment for our lives. There must be fervent prayer for assistance and guidance to fulfill the Great Commission. It is the grace of God that enables Christians to partake in the saving work of Christ Jesus."

Acts 2:43–47

> "And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

This passage scripture demonstrates how during the first century, witnesses went from house to house to spread the gospel, break bread, and partake in fellowship. This is also the model for multisite locations. This method helped propel the advancement of the kingdom, reaching souls that would have never received the word by any other method.

Outline of Project

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter One introduces the concept, focus, rationale, and purpose of this thesis. It outlines the problem, purpose, and background of the thesis, and the statement of limitations, theoretical basis, statement of methodology, and finally concludes with the review of literature.

Chapter One also discloses and defines the key terms of the project to enable readers to understand the discussion. Multisite churches use particular wording due to the nature of their ministry. Just as the Bible has unique jargon, so too do the multisite churches.

The theoretical basis relies on scripture in outlining this project. Throughout, the book of Acts and the Pauline epistles mention multisite churches in the ministry of faith, even while the concept is relatively new to the 21st century church. The 1st century church was accustomed to worshipping at various locations throughout the provinces.

Chapter 2: Biblical Mandate

Chapter Two uses scripture to examine the effects of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment on multisite churches. The basis of this thesis is Jesus' mandate in Matt 28:19–20. This chapter will identify the kingdom, the kingdom's message, and the kingdom's agenda.

This project is based solely on the teachings of Jesus regarding the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of God. From the vision of the kingdom, this chapter outlines the church vision for multisite locations. This chapter offers the mission of the multisite church and its broader implications. Every church profits from a vision specifically tailored to its location's needs, skills, resources, and visions. In turn, this vision emerges organically out of the local church's mission. The mission statement of a church therefore develops over time. A clear vision constructs the statement using specific objectives. Multisite locations cannot be successful if the

local church is divided on its missions and objectives. The church membership must learn the statement and vision and agree with the commitment of moving forward with establishing a multisite church.

Meetings, group forums, and social media allow the membership to gather the thoughts and opinions of the local church and to transform its thinking and perception. This chapter thus focuses on intentional planning and evangelism to move the local church toward multisite locations in a healthy way. Success is on purpose and never on accident. This chapter concludes by discussing the requirements of multisite locations.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter Three focuses on operating a successful multisite ministry for the small church of the African American community. It also looks intently into the infrastructure of administrating a multisite location and considers such aspects as staffing, centralized management, and communication strategies that go towards maintaining a successful multisite church.

Each location must conduct business in consort with every other location. Administrative policies must be identical at each location. There must also be similarity in sermon messages, announcements, and music ministry. This chapter gives special attention to staffing churches for growth, and it proposes strategies for organizing compensation, evangelistic preaching, development of leaders, and church budgeting. It also discusses ministry challenges of facilitating multisite locations.

There are many challenges in governing a multisite church. How to maintain the family connection with one church in multiple locations, versus two churches in two locations, or one church in two locations: multisite churches face all these issues. This chapter will also address

the needs of volunteers and how to enlist workers for multisite locations. Timing is essential in presenting the need for and benefit of a multiple location to the current congregation in order to obtain its approval. When to start operating a multisite location is also a crucial aspect to consider for the success of that location. This chapter will conclude with a focus on practical operational procedures for multisite church locations.

Chapter 4: Research

Every multisite church is different, and small multisite churches even more so. This chapter focuses on various governmental systems for multisite locations. It presents a detailed structure of the Logos Christian Fellowship D/B/A Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church of Atlanta as the model for successfully founding a multisite church. The chapter examines the format that Logos has used over the last 13 years as a multisite for the small church in the African American community, and it identifies successes and challenges that the ministry of this successful multisite church encountered along the journey. The chapter also discusses job descriptions, bylaws, and other necessary details that go into managing multiple locations. Next it addresses multisite trends, multisite mistakes, and multisite myths, and concludes by summarizing how the Logos Christian Fellowship established its multisite locations, and offers the tips that its church leadership learned along the way.

Definition of Terms

Church

A church is a local body of baptized believers who gather to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. The church is not a building, it is a body, and it is not an organization. It is an organism.[12]

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[12] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 16.

The Great Commission

The Great Commission of Jesus Christ is that all who believe in him shall not perish but will have eternal life. It commissions all believers to share this message with all peoples.

Multisite Church

A multisite church is one church meeting in multiple locations. This format may take place in different ways, for example different rooms on the same campus; different locations in the same region; or different cities, states, or nations. A multisite church shares a common vision, budget, leadership, and board.[13] Some sites use a live presenter/preacher, and some use a prerecorded or zoom video presentation. Terms like term campuses, services, satellite churches, polysites, house churches, or missional communities refer to multisite churches.

Campus

Any location where a complete church ministry takes place. A multisite church may have several campuses.

Satellite

A satellite church is a church located in a different physical location from the original church. The term off-site church also refers to satellite churches.

Venue

A location in which a worship service takes place.

Campus Pastor

The person in charge of a church campus. They are typically the primary communicator for a multisite location.

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[13] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *Multisite Church Revolution*, 18.

Worship Service

A meeting of which the primary purpose is to worship God. It may include singing, praying, and

preaching.

Autonomy

The understanding that "each local church under the authority of Christ governs itself. For

Congregationalists, no ecclesiastical authority exits outside or above the local assembly of

believers."[14]

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[14] Peter L. Toon, Ron Taylor, Paige Patterson, and Samuel Waldron, *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 14.

Chapter 2

The Biblical Mandate

Jesus commissioned and commanded his disciples to expand the kingdom mission in Matt 16:16–20; 28:19–20, Mark 16:14-18 and Acts 1:8. It is clear that Jesus expected his disciples to evangelize and to compel others into the Kingdom of Heaven. This commission to expand the kingdom is a blueprint for developing the motif of multisite churches. The primary focus of this chapter is to examine biblical and theological truths which validate the need for multisite locations.

In *The Multisite Church Revolution*, Surrat, Ligon, and Bird argue that the Jerusalem and Corinth church could both be considered multisite: the concept of having churches in more than one location is therefore neither new nor revolutionary; the roots of multisites go back to the church of Acts, which had to scatter due to persecution.[15] Elmer Towns points out that the original Jerusalem church "was one large group (celebration), and many smaller groups (cells)…The norm for the New Testament church included both small cell groups and larger celebration groups." Likewise, Aubrey Malphurs observes that Corinth and other first-century churches were multisite, as a number of multisite house churches were considered to be part of one citywide church. These authors also note that the church at Antioch was a site of the Jerusalem church.

The concept of "one church, many locations" therefore arguably began with the persecution of the first Christ-followers in Jerusalem. When Stephen was put to death and the believers scattered, a new congregation formed in Antioch. The early Christians did not perceive

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[15] Surratt, Ligon, and Warren, *Multisite Church Revolution*, 22–26.

the Antioch group a separate body but as an extension of the Jerusalem church, and it functioned

under the authority of Peter and the apostles in Jerusalem. Barnabas effectively became the first

campus pastor when he went to Antioch to care for the new congregation. "As the good news

spread throughout Asia and into Europe, new congregations were formed, but they were all

connected back to the church at Jerusalem as evidenced by the council that was held in Acts

15."[16] According to these authors, New Testament churches such as the one at Jerusalem are

strikingly similar to contemporary multisite churches: the church at Jerusalem comprised

multiple congregations, such as those physically located at meeting space in Antioch.

It is interesting to note that this interpretation of Acts 15 is the classic Presbyterian

argument to justify the practice of connecting multiple congregations under one umbrella of

church government (e.g., Robert L. Reymond's "The Presbytery-Led Church: Presbyterian

Church Government").[17] Scott McConnell cites a well-known proponent of multisite churches:

"There is definitely a multilocation dynamic to the church in Acts, and I don't see anything in

Scripture that forbids it."[18] McConnell supports his claim that multisite church locations have a

biblical basis with this statement.

In *Perspectives on Church Government*, J. D. Greear, pastor of Summit Church in

Durham, North Carolina, also argues that the Jerusalem and Corinth churches were both

multisite. He states that the New Testament nowhere demands that a local church meet all

together each week. Nor is a single-service assembly the only model given in Acts."

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[16] Surratt, Ligon, and Warren, *Multisite Church Revolution*, 92.

[17] Robert L. Reymond, "The Presbytery-Led Church: Presbyterian Church Government," in *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity*, eds. Chad Owen Brand and R. Stanton Norman (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 95–116.

[18] Scott McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movement's Next Generation,* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2009) page.

In addition to local churches assembling together (1 Cor 11), there is also evidence of single local churches meeting in multiple locations. The ESV Bible often refers to the new congregation in Jerusalem in the singular tense, as in one "church" (e.g., Acts 8:1; 11:22; 15:4). Historians note that there was insufficient space in Jerusalem available to the disciples where three thousand or more of them could meet on a weekly basis. It also appears that many first-century congregations came together to celebrate the Lord's supper as one citywide church (1 Cor 11:17–20; Romans 16:5).

The Great Commission

Prior to the birth of the church, Jesus commissioned his disciples to go into the entire world and make disciples. His Great Commission exhorts and instructs, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Citation). In this charge, Jesus explains what to do and where to go. His followers are to make disciples, i.e., enact the process of evangelism with discipleship. He commissioned them to go to the ends of the earth. At the time of his command, it was physically impossible to carry out this commission, but geographic boundaries cannot limit modern disciples.[19]

Christians believe they are blessed to have heard the message of Jesus and blessed to be able to share how the knowledge of Jesus has changed their lives.[20] All Christians share the story

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[19] Mary Hinkle Shore, "Preaching Mission: Call and Promise in Matthew 28:16-20," *Word and World*, 26, no. 3 (2006): 322–328.

[20] Francisco Perez Henero, "Mission Following the Missionary Mandate of the Risen Christ," *International Review of Mission*, 95. no. 378/379 (2006): 308.

of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and they believe that the greatest gift they can give anyone is the good news that Jesus died for them, was buried, and was resurrected so that they may live forever in the Kingdom of God.[21]

Jesus instructs His disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19–20 NIV).[22] This biblical mandate, known commonly as the Great Commission, instructs Christians to move outward and make disciples, teaching them in faith, and initiating them into fellowship.

In the Commission, understanding the main verb, i.e., "make disciples," is critical to understanding the language of the commission itself. It means "much more than simply to proclaim." "It does not mean to present or offer only a message, but rather to lead to a close personal relationship, modelled on the relationship between the earthly Jesus and his own disciples."

Conclusion

Jesus calls every Christian—leader or follower—to discipleship through the voice of Matthew.

The Prayer of the Church

"Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest'" (Matt 9:37-38, KJV). The Lord Jesus shares three ways to reach the lost: through praying, sending disciples, or personal evangelism. All Christians have the responsibility to petition for unbelievers, and to

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[21] Henero, "Mission Following," 310.

[22] Matt 28:19–20, New International Version (NIV).

pray that the Lord sends workers to harvest their lost souls. Jesus had compassion for lost souls. He called for the disciples to unite as they petitioned him for more workers. When they pray for the Lord to send workers, the Lord uses the faithful to fulfill the request. Jesus instructed the disciples to become his tools in the gathering of lost souls.

The Calling of the Church

The New Testament church began with great power and authority on the day of Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Acts 1: 8 is a summary of how the early Christians began their task in Jerusalem and then spread out into Judea and Samaria and ultimately the entire world. The command to "testify to what they had seen, heard, and known of Him…is the principal task of every Christian."

Just before he returned to heaven, Jesus explained to his disciples what he expected them to accomplish. He said that he would not send angels to evangelize; instead, he would use people to convince other people to believe in him. The book of Acts uses the word witness at least 38 times, emphasizing the enormity of the assignment. When Jesus gave the apostles his instructions, they might have taken them to mean they should witness to the Jews of the Diaspora scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Further reading of the book of Acts clarifies that Jesus intended the disciples to witness not only also to the Gentiles, but to the entire world. The assignment was to create disciples everywhere, so that the whole world would know the salvation of Jesus.

Biblical and Theological Foundations

The research for this thesis concludes that there is a biblical foundation for multisite church planting. The idea of multisite churches is not new. Planting multiple sites is a viable

option for growing churches. Jesus charged his followers with the Great Commission, creating evangelizing disciples to spread the word of Jesus life, death, and resurrection.

The New Testament illustrates that Paul and John modeled multisite church plants in Asia-Minor and Europe. Church history indicates that the early church fathers continued the work of Christ, spreading the gospel in new locations despite enduring hardship and persecution.

The idea of plural leadership is evident and expressed in the choosing of the twelve apostles, the selection of the first seven deacons, and even the Jerusalem counsel. The other governmental structure was congregational governance. Supplicants brought their grievances before the church; the church voted and kept rolls.

The Nature of the Church

This project is based on a biblical understanding of the Christian church and understanding the nature of this church is necessary to appreciation the focus and development of this project. The concept of church refers to two categories: the church local and the church universal. The universal church includes all believers everywhere as part of the body of Christ. The local church is the visible church within any given community. This visible church is not comprised of brick and mortar, but people often describe their physical place of worship as their church.

Most people associate the word church with a building structure, but the English word church refers to the Lord's house.[23] Although the word focuses on the structure, the Greek word for church focuses on people. An *ekklesia* was a meeting or assembly. Its commonest use was to denote the public assembly of citizens duly summoned, which was a feature of all the cities

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[23] D. R. W. Wood & I. H. Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary, 1st ed.,* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), 199-200. Logos Bible Software

outside Judea where the gospel was planted (e.g., Acts 19:39). Jews also used the word *ekklesia* (LXX) to denote the congregation of Israel. This congregation came into being in the Sinai when its representative males assembled before the Lord at the annual feasts (Acts 7:38).[24]

Lewis Sperry Chafer shares that in Greek, there are two words for "church." One means, "out" and the other, "to call or summon."[25] The church is an assembly of people who are "called out" to a higher purpose from God to do His work and will.[26]

The term *ekklesia* became popular among Christians in the early church "in Greek speaking areas for two chief reasons: to affirm continuity with Israel through the use of a term found in Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to allay suspicions, especially in political circles, that Christians were a disorderly group."[27] The church is a group that is "called out" from the world in order to do the will of God. The local church is a representation of the universal church.

Acts 2:42-47 gives the characteristics of the existence of the Jerusalem church:

> "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat

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[24] Wood and Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary*.

[25] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Chafer Systematic Theology Vol. IV* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1983), 39.

[26] Chafer, *Chafer Systematic*, page.

[27] Frederick William Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 303.

with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favor with all the

people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

The Historical Foundations of the Early Church

The Expansion of the Church

The church of Acts spread across the region and met in several locations. Examining the history of this early church gives insights into important growth principles for today's church. Gene Getz and Joe Wall place emphasis on understanding the history of the early church to aid developing church growth principles:

> Church history is filled with lessons for Christians today. This lens enables us to turn the spotlight on the church in the latter part of the first century and throughout the centuries that followed. This gives insights that enable us to accentuate what Christians have done correctly, and hopefully will help us eliminate what we've done wrong and correct what we have done poorly. This process, like the study of the church in scripture, should be an ongoing open-ended activity- enabling us to learn from the past, including our personal history.[28]

Peter, James, John, and Paul were the apostolic leaders of the first-century churches. The first church met in Jerusalem and eventually spread throughout the regions in fulfillment of Acts 1:8. Acts 8:1 shares how the gospel spread and how the church expanded. "There was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad

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[28] Gene Getz and Joe Wall, *Effective Church Growth Strategies* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000), 29.

throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."

The scattering of disciples in Acts 8 brought those followers of Christ into various ethnic groups. Robert Saucy notes that "everywhere they went, they preached the word."[29] Saucy pays particular attention to the spread of the church to Samaria (Acts 8). Preaching there was surprising, for the Jews normally avoided Samaritans due to their mixture with Gentile blood.

Although the disciples were transplants by persecution, they continued their mission to evangelize the world. Acts 17 states, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also." Through Paul's missionary journeys and writings, the church reached as far East as Asia-Minor, and in Europe, as far South as Rome. The Lord used Paul to expand churches in Asia-Minor as, "Tot the seven churches of Asia Minor and unto Laodicea." John later names these churches, "unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia." In the book of Timothy, the Apostle Paul shares a plan for multiplication and expansion.

More churches automatically mean more required leaders. Getz and Wall stated,

> "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." This passage is usually applied to person-to-person evangelism and follow-up. However, the primary thrust in the context relates to the multiplication of local church leadership and, by implication, the multiplication of churches.[30]

[29] Robert L. Saucy, *The Church in God's Program* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1972), 67.

[30] Getz and Wall, *Effective Church* Strategies, 120.

The Universal church originated with supernatural growth. Church growth is not a new phenomenon. Many church growth strategies emerge from the practices of the early church. "Even contemporary Church Growth thought had a precursor, in the thought of the Dutch missiologist Gisbtus Voetius (1589-1676). Voetius believed that the first goal of mission is the conversion of the heathen; the second, the planting of churches; and the highest, the glory of God."[31]

The Persecution of the Early Church

The early church suffered great persecution from leaders like Nero, but many Christians were committed to the cause of Christ. Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, was a great example of a Christian's commitment to the work of Christ.

> "Simply swear by Ceasar," the governor pleaded. "I am a Christian," said Polycarp. "If you want to know what that is, set a day, and listen." "Persuade the people," answered the governor. Polycarp said, "I would explain to you, but not to them." "Then I'll throw you to the beasts." "Bring on your beasts," said Polycarp. "If you scorn the beasts, I'll have you burned." "You try to frighten me with the fire that burns for an hour and you forget the fire of hell that never goes out."[32]

Polycarp was burned at the stake for his faith, and he is a shining example of standing firm in faith.

Early church disciples faced great persecutions and immense cruelty from leaders and

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[31] Elmer Towns, Craig Van Gelder, Charles Van Engen, Gailyn Van Rheenan, and Howard Snyder, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 9.

[32] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 56.

governments. The early church also faced erroneous teachings, such as Donatism, Docetism, Gnosticism, and Arianism. God guided the early disciples and fathers through those perilous times.

Autonomy of the Local Church

In the African American Baptist Church, there are two foundational pillars: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the autonomy of the local Baptist church. Autonomy teaches that, "each local church, under the authority of Christ, governs itself. For Congregationalists, no ecclesiastical authority exists outside or above the local assembly of believers."[33]

Multisite church locations bring a unique challenge to the autonomy of the local church, and that is that multisite churches tend to lead more through the actions of the pastor than by the actions of the congregation. Not all multisite churches operate the same way, however, and therefore not all multisite churches face this challenge. It is imperative for each local church to develop bylaws that protect its autonomy. If the local church uses congregational voting to make key decisions, for example, it may protect against the loss of autonomy. Sugden and Wiersbe share that the size of the church should determine the amount of required organization.[34] Bobby Jamieson offers a critique of multisite churches through unanswered questions:

> What does the New Testament word for church mean? How is it used? Does it ever refer to multiple gatherings in different locations? Does the Bible provide a pattern for church government and church structure today? If so, what does it look like? Who has authority in the church? Can a body outside of a local congregation exercise authority over it? What makes the church different from any other

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[33] Toon, Taylor, Patterson, and Waldon, *Who Runs the Church?*, 14.

[34] Howard F. Sugden and Waiwn W. Wiersbe, *Answers to Pastors' Frequently Asked Questions* (Colorado Springs, CO: Next Gen, 2005), 46.

gathering of Christians? This conversation is both important and neglected.[35]

In most Baptist church plants, the new church comes under the guidance of an established church. The multisite church is one pastor and leadership team managing multiple church locations. A stable multisite church should ensure policies in their bylaws that protect autonomy.

Pastoral Authority

The role of the pastor in the multisite church is critical to the success of the operation. As Paige Patterson states, "Discussion of ecclesiastical government is doomed from the onset unless it begins with Christ, the head of the church." Furthermore,

> Our understanding of the government of Christ's church must begin with the Lord himself and his kingdom authority. He is the head of the church; his rule is unique and incomparable. A second principle derives from the first. The church shows the organic life of Christ's body; it lives as an organism, not like the kingdoms of this world, for it is organized for service, not dominion. All government in the church is stewardship, i.e., its leaders are servant managers, who use their authority only to advance the interests of those that they represent and serve.[36]

Jesus Christ is the head of the church. The word of God does not give a crystal clear structure for governing the New Testament church. Dever contends, "We can understand the confusion. If you start looking in the New Testament for how we should organize as a church, you won't find a straightforward manual of church government; there is no ideal constitution for a church."[37] The

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[35] Bobby Jamieson, Book Review: *Multisite Churches,* (May/June 2009), http://www.9marks.org/books/book-review-multisitechurches#print-preview

[36] Add the information for fn here. It was not in your document.

[37] Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of A Healthy Church* (Wheaton, : Crossway Books, 2004), 221.

Bible, however, gives many examples through those whom God chose to lead. In each local church there were elders who were called pastors or overseers. God chose these leaders with detailed functions and responsibilities.

According to Thomas Oden, the best understanding of pastoral authority depends on "the paradox of qualities."[38] From the Bible we see God become a human being, the suffering Savior, Lord of Lords, a servant; the well of water yet thirsty. We can summon that no single person has unwavering authority over the church. The authority of the pastor is rooted in service. God gives the pastoral authority to the Pastor who edifies the flock and brings them into the unity of the faith. The pastor must build a collection and understanding between the pulpit and the pews.

The New Testament reveals a clearly apostolic authority over the local churches, and each pastor governed their church. In Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas lay hands on men and "appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed." New Testament pastors governed their local churches but under the guidance of the apostles. This type of structure is also evident in Paul's instruction to the Church at Corinth. Paul's writings emphasize that he served as an overseer of pastors, and indeed he guided local pastors through various controversies.

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[38] Thomas 0. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1983), page.

Conclusions of Biblical and Theological Foundations

This project thus concludes that there are biblical foundations for multisite churches. The results of obeying the Great Commission have demanded creative ideas to meet the challenges of church growth. Multisite churches are therefore not a new concept, but they are a new phenomenon at this time in world civilization. We can see through the lives of the apostles how they spread the gospel and planted new churches. The cost of successfully fulfilling Christ's command was rooted in hardship and persecution. God tasks the pastor to lead the local church with love and not a stern hand. The purpose of the pastor is to present Christ with a unified local church through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The History of Multisite Church Planting

The modern origin of the multisite church revolution traces back to the mid-1980s. Initially, Elmer Town's idea was the option employed to expand the reach of the local church. The central motif of the multisite is one church meeting in many locations. Towns describes this concept in his book, *Ten of Today's Most Innovative Churches*.[39] Jim Tomberlin notes that in 2011, there were 3,000 churches in North America using some portion of the multisite strategy.[40] In 2012, Warren Bird stated that there were at least 5,000 churches in North America operating as multisite churches.[41]

The new official number is that there are more than 5,000 multisite churches in North America, each of which has two or more geographic campuses or one church in two or more locations. This data comes from a national survey of churches, and the Leadership Network's

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[39] Towns, *Ten of Today's Most Innovative Churches,* Regal, 1990.

[40] Jim Tomberlin, *125 Tips for MultiSite Churches and Those Who Want To Be, (MultiSiteSolutions.com,* 2011) Kindle.

[41] Add the source

constantly growing database of multisite churches validates it. What grew in popularity initially among mega churches only has now expanded to churches of all sizes, but especially those with attendances of 500 and larger.

In 2001, the Leadership Network found fewer than 200 documented examples of multisite churches, likely all that existed in North America. By 2006, Leadership Network's database had grown to 1,500 specific examples. The research of this growing movement, and the Leadership Network's peer networks of these pace-setting churches in this embryo movement, both uncover a significant level of interest in it. Church planters, large churches, and many other types of churches are interested in the concept of a multisite existence.[42]

Many growing congregations are viewing multisite locations as an option, especially in the African American community. There are many methods and styles of worship that effectively operate within multisite locations.

Evolution of Multisite Church in North America

This section examines the introduction of multisite locations in North America. There was no terminology of multisite churches or locations during the time period discussed in this section, however, the groundwork for multisite locations was in full effect. Abraham was not a Jew, and yet many consider him the father of the Jews. This discussion is considering the development of multisite locations from its embryotic stage.

Historic Examples of Multisite Church Features

There is no proof of the existence of multisite churches before the end of the twentieth century. Surratt, Ligon, and Bird contend that the multisite church concept more than likely

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[42] Warren Bird, "Multisite Churches Number More than 5,000," Last Modified August 22, 2012), http://leadnet.org/bloglpost/big news multisite churches now number more than 5000 .

started with the early church, and that over time, the movement developed into a new vision of how we currently operate churches today. The authors state, "In some ways, the multisite approach is not new. Some argue that the church of the New Testament era was multisite in many cities."[43] Scholars have even suggested that as church history transpired, the church had several multisite expressions, from mission statements, to Methodist circuit riders, to bus ministry Sunday schools. This following section considers some key moments in history that lay foundations for multisite planting.

Methodist Circuit Riders

The Methodist circuit riders had their greatest impact in America from 1766–1844. The Methodist Episcopal Church was the prominent religious denomination during much of this time period. These circuit riders spurred on the Methodist movement mainly.

The concept of the Methodist circuit-riding preacher first began under John Wesley's leadership in Bristol, England.[44] Mark Terry points out that

> Wesley began preaching outdoors at Bristol in 1739. Thereafter, he traveled widely throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland. He preached whenever and wherever he could, often from horseback. He traveled five thousand miles a year and preached fifteen sermons each week. Normally, he asked permission to preach from the local Anglican priest. When refused permission, Wesley preached anyway.[45]

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[43] Bird, "Multisite Churches," 25.

[44] John Mark Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History* (Nashville TN: B & H, 1994), 104.

[45] Terry, *Evangelism*, page.

John Wesley introduced the circuit preacher innovation in an attempt to increase the supply of lay preachers for his rising Methodist movement.[46] Wesley focused on spiritual disciplines or methods. The small group gatherings grew in popularity and size. John Wesley used lay preachers to help him meet the growing needs of ministry:

Wesley organized his followers into territory called circuits. They established a systematic plan for regularly visiting his followers by communities and cities. The circuits were composed of large groups called societies. There were general gatherings whose only membership requirements was a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins. The society in Bristol had 1100 members.[47]

John Wesley's methods gained great momentum in the emerging colonies of America, with Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury introducing his circuit riding pastors and chapels with much success. J.D. Payne states,

> Shortly after Francis Asbury's arrival in America in 1771, he began to use the same circuit-riding methodology pioneered by Wesley in England. Riders were sent on preaching circuits, organizing new believers into classes in a particular geographical region.[48]

Francis Asbury capitalized on America's new religious landscape. He was committed to reaching the untouched population of North America and recruited many young Methodist circuit-riding

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[46] Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity, Vol.* 2. *The Reformation to the Present Day* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1985), 217.

[47] John Vaughn, *The Large Church: A Twentieth-Century Expression of the First Century Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985), 45–46.

[48] J.D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009), 266-67.

preachers.

The traveling ministers of the Methodist Church were reputed to have self-sacrificing spirits. Richard Hofstadter noted, "The bulwark and the pride of the early American Methodists were the famous circuit-riding preachers who made up in mobility, flexibility courage, hard work and dedication what they might lack in ministerial training or dignity. They were justly proud of the strenuous sacrifices they made to bring the gospel to the people."[49]

The Key Church Strategy

Lyle Schaller's foreword to *One Church, Many Congregations: The Key Church Strategy* states that "this book has been written to share what I believe is one of the most innovative, practical, and effective approaches to outreach ministry I have encountered in nearly four decades of working with congregations. In simple terms, it boils down to the discovery that one congregation can meet in two different locations."[50]

Schaller also states that "the Key Church strategy calls for a commitment from a single key church to reach its neighboring community through developing a series of congregations."[51] The Southern Baptist church embraced this Key Church Strategy, which is not a model for multisites, but which entertains some of its main concepts.

Factors that Influence the Multisite Church Development

Civilization has advanced so much over the last one hundred years. Globalization has significantly impacted the way the word of God is ministered. Economics, politics, and technology have all converged to make the world smaller and more connected than ever before.

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[49] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in America Life* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1963), 96.

[50] Lyle Schaller, *One Church, Many Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999).

[51] Lyle Schaller, *Innovations in Ministry: Models for the 21st century* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994).

Thomas L. Friedman describes ten "flatteners" that he credits with making the world more accessible.[52] This researcher perceives these flatteners as foundational to the multisite church movement.

Surratt, Ligon, and Bird state that "Digital technologies combined with growing social acceptance of branch-church ideas, have made a new movement possible today."[53] Towns, Stetzer, and Bird share that there are "two explosive factors... that have shaped our society in the past 40 years…1) the interstate freeway, and 2) the computerized television screen."[54] The primary factors that advanced multisite churches are economics, advanced mobility of the population, and technological breakthroughs. The last century allowed the United States to reach financial heights via wars, various industries, and small business growth. In terms of transportation, people have transitioned from horse and buggy to airplanes that can span the globe. One hundred years ago, people listened to the radio. Today we can stream movies on cellular telephones. Each of these factors majorly impacted the culture, and church culture in particular. We are able to access and communicate in ways beyond Abraham Lincoln's scope of cognitive prowess. The impact of these factors on the lives of people has influenced worship styles, the quality of building, and the efficiency of forming a ministry. The multisite movement is viable, primarily, because the universal church has embraced television, the computer, and other similar devices.

Following World War II, America experienced a major financial crisis, even while it was

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[52] Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Picador, 2007), 50– 199.

[53] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *Multisite Church Revolution,* 91.

[54] Elmer Towns, *Ten of Today's Most Innovative Churches* (Ventura: Regal, 1990), 204.

still reeling from the Great Depression. The country was searching for ways to bolster its

economy and prevent a return to the great financial despair of the 1920s. John Maynard Keynes

discusses the failures of the Great Depression and their long-term effect on the country through

the macro-perspective of economics.[55] Keynes theory is that supply and demand control inflation

and depression. John Steele Gordon explains, "If there is too much supply, depression results;

too much demand and inflation breaks out."[56] The solution is to find a balance between supply

and demand. It took many years for America to adopt Keynes' theory and to integrate it within

the governmental economic system.

Keynes' theory was not the sole catalyst for American economic growth, but had a strong

influence. When John F. Kennedy became president in 1961, "Keynesianism was in full blown

effect."[57] Keynesianism focused on consumerism. Industries transitioned from fabricating

warfare items to domestic goods, and American families began having the fiscal confidence to

buy new products, rather than saving as they had done since the Great Depression.[58] Roosevelt

signed The Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill of Rights) into law on June 22, 1944. This

legislation aided the troops of World War II with housing and education. The GI Bill of Rights

helped to spur economic growth throughout the country. Construction workers and teachers were

in demand. Veterans were becoming homeowners and rebuilding distressed communities.

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[55] John Maynard Keynes, *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (London, England: Macmillan and Co., 1936).

[56] John Steele Gordon, *An Empire of Wealth: The Epic History of American Economic Power* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 2004), 379.

[57] Gordon, *An Empire*.

[58] Gary R. Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television* (New York, NY: The Columbia University Press, 2007), 80.

The religious community also expressed the economic boom of the country. Churches had money to purchase new buildings and beautify the buildings they occupied. "Church construction rose from 76 million dollars in 1946 to 409 million dollars in 1950, to more than 1 billion dollars by the end of the decade."[59]

There is a great connection between consumerism and the multi-site church theory. One of the principal components of multi-site churches is options. Parishioners have choice of gathering locations, times, and styles of worship. Multisite locations focus on satisfying the parishioner. The marketing strategy of reaching many has infiltrated into the church community.

The economic boom enhanced the automobile industry too. Car manufacturers transitioned from making war vehicles to consumer ones. Transportation allowed people to travel with ease. In the church community, parishioners became able to attend church more often and to travel farther to do so. Commuting became a way of life for many Americans.

Technology is the latest industry that has impacted the world and the way churches minister to the needs of parishioners. In 2006, Surratt, Ligon, and Bird acclaimed the growth of digital technology as one of several key impetuses of the multisite church movement.[60] Technology has played a major role in the success of multisite churches. The church community has been able to use standard communication tools as modes of communication that meet the needs of their parishioners.

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[59] Thomas C. Reeves, *Twentieth Century America: A Brief History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 158.

[60] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multisite Church Revolution,* 91–92.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The Logos Christian Fellowship held its first official meeting on Saturday July 3, 1999 on the campus of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. This church emerged from a need for a place of healing and restoration. There were 18 people (13 adults and 5 children) at the original meeting.

The name derived from our mission, which is to be a word-centered church. *Logos* is Greek for the word of God. "Logos. noun. the word of God, or principle of divine version and creative order, identified in the Gospel of John with the second person of the Trinity incarnate in Jesus Christ."[61] The term Christian means "one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ."[62] The term Fellowship means, "Community of interest, activity, feeling, or experience."[63] We combined those three words into Logos Christian Fellowship to become a community of Christ-like people living God's word.

The first service for Logos Christian Fellowship took place on Sunday July 4, 1999 at 11:00 am at the Gaza Missionary Baptist Church located at 7258 Ransom Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, 70:26. The Rev. Willie Bridges, Jr., the pastor of the Gaza Missionary Baptist Church, allowed Logos Christian Fellowship to hold church service and bible study free of charge on these premises. Logos Christian Fellowship held church services at Gaza for 14 months. Forty-five people attended the first service of Logos Christian Fellowship, and they

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[61] "Logos," Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed. (Oxford: United Kingdom: Oxford University Press 1989).

[62] "Christian," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011, https://www.merriam-webster.com.

[63] "Fellowship," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011, https://www.merriam-webster.com.

united with the Church. The demand for ministry forced Logos to put a leadership style and structure in use immediately.

The first organizational structure was the pastor and the church council. The team held meetings weekly to create synergy, strategy, and harmony for a new church. The church council consisted of seven people—the pastor, church administrator, financial secretary, minister of music, Christian education director, director of Deacons, and a consultant. The church council gathered every Monday evening from 7:00–8:00, and it established a church charter and bylaws.

The church council was the official governing body of Logos Christian Fellowship. Each person who served had experience in their field of operation. The church council served in this setting like the Board of Trustees in most churches. The church council oversaw church operation according to the bylaws. The church adopted and ratified these bylaws on July 14, 1999, during a bible study and business meeting.

Logos grew from its original eighteen members in July 1999 to lighting members by December 31, 1999. This growth was fast and unexpected, and it allowed the church to start a statewide broadcast on Le Sea Broadcasting network, channel 20, in New Orleans. The television ministry provided us the outreach to perform evangelism to a greater audience. Our broadcast aired on Sunday afternoons at 5:00. This researcher's vision for multisite locations came into being in 1991 when he encountered Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, pastored by Elder Paul S. Morton, Sr.

Elder Morton's Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church and Prophet Robert Charles Blakes, Sr.'s New Home Ministers were the first two churches in New Orleans, Louisiana that operated with multisite locations. Elder Morton's Greater St. Stephen operated within two locations: one in Uptown New Orleans at 2308 South Liberty Street, and the other in

East New Orleans at 5400 Read Boulevard. Prophet Blake's New Home Ministries operated two multisite locations: one in Uptown New Orleans at 1616 Carondelet Street, and one in the Broadmoor area of Uptown New Orleans at 3720 Broad Street.

Elder Morton's Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church, and Prophet Blake's New Home Ministries were the first two churches of African American descent that had television broadcasts. New Home Ministries broadcasted at 7:00 on Saturday mornings and Greater St. Stephen's aired their broadcast immediately after, at 8:00 on Saturday mornings. This researcher had the privilege of being cultivated in an environment that embraced moving beyond traditional boundaries.

There was a burning desire to pastor a multisite church to reach people for Jesus to expand the Kingdom of God. Elder Morton's Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Baptist Church and Prophet Blake's New Home Ministries were role models that exemplified that multisite locations in the African American church community were possible. As this researcher pastored Logos Christian Fellowship and recognized its capacity for growth, he re-experienced the desire to operate multisite locations. The problem was that he was unaware of prior examples of a small African American church managing to execute multisite locations.

The path forward, without a credible model of a church or churches of similar size, was daunting. Logos Christian Fellowship was going to have to rely on large African American churches models to accomplish its task.

Logos Christian Fellowship "Fast Facts"

Church Vision:

Year founded:	1999
Original Location:	New Orleans, Louisiana
Teaching modality for off-sites:	Conference Calls
Year became multisite:	2001
Number of Campuses:	2
Number of Weekly services:	7
Worship attendance (all physical sites):	150
Largest room seating capacity:	150
Internet campuses:	Yes
International Campus:	No
Internet address:	(2001)[64]

In August 2000, the church council and the parishioners of Logos Christian Fellowship embraced the concept of multisite ministry. By then, Logos had a membership of 100 members and a revenue of 78,000.00 per year. There were several questions that had to be answered first, however. What leadership style would the church implement? Where to place the second location? What is the feasibility of operating a second location? How to start this new work?

Select a Style

Clarity is critical in the success of any venture. Our church council wanted to protect the integrity of the vision of the church and the governance of our main campus. It was vital to our

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[64] Logos Christian Fellowship, www.christtemplefabc.org. (Complete the citation for the website here.)

church council that we had a clear plan of execution that would solidity our call to leadership and not change the dynamics of our vision or morals.

There were several organizational styles from which to choose, for example, one pastor over all locations, or one pastor of main campus with co-pastors for the other campuses. The church council selected the senior pastor with campus co-pastor model. Surrat, Ligon, and Bird propose five models:

> 1. The Video—Venue model: creating one on more on-campus environments that use videocast sermons, live or recorded, often varying the worship style.
>
> 2. Regional—Campus model: Replicating the experience of the original campus at additional campuses in order to make church more accessible to other geographic communities.
>
> 3. Leading—Team model: Leveraging a strong teaching team across multiple locations at the original campus or an off-site campus.
>
> 4. Partnership Model: Partnering with a local business or nonprofit organization to use its facility beyond a mere "routes" arrangement.
>
> 5. Low-Risk model: Experimenting with new locations that have a low level of risk because of the simplicity of programming and low financial investment involved but that have the potential for high returns in terms of evangelism and growth.[65]

Logos Christian Fellowship chose the second of these proposals, i.e., the regional campus model. This approach allowed bringing the church to the community as opposed to asking the

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[65] Surratt, Ligon, Bird, *The Multisite Church Revolution*, 488.

community to come to the church. There was a time when families were loyal to the church in their neighborhood. As children grew up and moved into new communities, they did not return to the church they grew up in, while yet they desired the community sensibility of their old church in their new neighborhoods. The goal of Logos Christian Fellowship was to duplicate the familiar church experience in new and unfamiliar areas. Logos originally relied on the regional campus model, but it chose the senior pastor—campus pastor model to execute the operation of the multisite location of Logos Christian Fellowship.

The intention of the senior pastor—campus pastor model at Logos Christian Fellowship was to promote leadership and guidance from the main campus while allowing the campus pastor to operate the day-to-day operations of the satellite or second location. The senior pastor would be responsible for the vision of all locations, and the campus pastor is their extension. The campus pastor could not operate in autonomy at the campus location.

The campus pastor oversees the ministry leaders of the satellite campus, visits the sick, performs weddings, burial services, counseling, and acts as the primary preacher of the multisite location. The senior pastor is responsible for training, mentoring, and leading the evaluation of the campus pastor and has the right to perform all pastoral duties. John Maxwell states that everything rises and falls in leadership,"[66] which is the primary reason Logos chose to start its *modus operandi* by defining the roles of the leaders. For the nature of these roles, the church council relied on Timothy for the benchmark in selecting pastors:

> "This is a true saying. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good
>
> work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober,

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[66] John Maxwell*, The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*; *Becoming the Person Others will want to Follow* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), page.

of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."[67]

The campus pastor had to align with the above doctrine and vision of Logos Christian Fellowship to be viable.

The job description of the campus pastor is the same as the job description of the 1st Assessment to the pastor in the church manual approved by the church council and ratified by the parishioners of Logos Christian Fellowship.

The senior pastor recommended DeSean Toler to serve as the pastor of the satellite location. Toler was a student of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, a member of Logos Christian Fellowship, and a member of the pastoral staff. The church council approved the recommendation on January 7, 2001. The next phase was to establish the location of the satellite church building. The council sought a location related to the area of our second largest television viewership. Our television broadcast afforded us the opportunity to appeal evangelistically to people in their homes. Gated communities impacted door to door evangelism, hindering the ability to share the gospel of Jesus the Christ in person. The television broadcast brought the gospel of Jesus Christ into the living rooms of citizens of the world. Analytics and demographics

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[67] 1 Tim 3:1-7, KJV.

are excellent tools in determining optimal locations and personnel needs, even while prayer must accompany and drive these decisions.

The church council engaged in prayer for seven days to ask God for clear direction on our second location. The council decided that the multisite location would be in Bogalusa, Louisiana 74 miles from New Orleans. The 2000 census yielded the following data for Bogalusa:

Total Population 13,365

Population by Race

American Indian and Alaska native alone	43
Asian alone	52
Black or African American alone	5,508
Other race	22
Two or more races	98
White only	7,642

Population by Gender

Female	7,316
Male	6,049

Population by age

Persons 0 to 4 years	1,094
Persons 5 to 17 years	2,564
Persons 18 to 64 years	7, 271
Persons 65 years and over	2,436[68]

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[68] "Bogalusa Demographics," Census Viewer, date, www.censusviewer.com/city/LA/Bogalusa.com

The selected campus pastor, DeSean Toler, was also a citizen of Bogalusa, Louisiana, and at the time, a student of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Bogalusa was a city that operated five to ten years in arrears of New Orleans in terms of sociological development, income earnings, and skilled workers. Bogalusa citizens were known for high family values and moral standards but were comfortable living within their circumscribed way of life. The Bogalusa mill remained the number one employer of the city.

The council approved Logos Christian Fellowship as the name of the second location, and $10,000 start-up capital and a monthly budget of 5,000 to fund the new location for two years:

The Budget

5,000.00 monthly

Rent	1,000.00
Utilities	800.00
Salaries	
Pastor	1,200.00
Part-Time Secretary	500.00
Musician	<u>800.00</u>
Total Encumbered	4,300.00
Reserve	<u>700.00</u>
	+5,000.00

The council's next phase was to seek a location inside Bogalusa and to assess its suitability for a multisite partner by performing a feasibility study. Logos tasked a team of five to find a location within Bogalusa for the multisite location. The church council agreed that a rental property was the proper kind of location to start, with and 18-month lease initially, and an option to extend an additional 12 months. The goal was that after three years, the location would move from being a plant church to a fully functional one.

The church council of Logos Christian Fellowship approved the following objectives to qualify the Bogalusa location as a fully functional church:

1. Ability to self-sustain financially

2. Fifty members

- Minimum of thirty adults

3. A leadership team consisting of

- Church Administrator/s

- Financial Secretary

- Lead Deacon

- (2) Church Consultant (Consultants)

The council authorized Senior Pastor Lionel R. Catchings, and Assistant Pastor Onassis F. Jones, DeSean Toler, and Edward Falls to locate a building from which the church plant could operate ministry. There found a building at 637 Avenue E. that was 1200 square feet with two built-in bathrooms. The building needed paint and new carpet, and the construction of an office and two classrooms within it.

The lease was for two years with a one-year option, with rent established as $1,200 monthly in year one; $1300 year two; and $1,400 year three. The building became available to Logos in April 2001. The immediate goal was two-fold: 1) renovate the building for ministry; and 2) evangelize the community.

Logos Christian Fellowships of New Orleans sent twenty members for two weeks to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the community. The results of these efforts were well beyond expectations. The evangelism teams witnessed to 187 people: 69 accepted Christ as Lord and Savior; 93 people requested prayer; 41 re-dedicated their lives to Christ; and 23 committed to attending the first church service at the Bogalusa location.

The first service of Logos Christian Fellowship of Bogalusa took place on Sunday, May 6, 2001 at the above location at 6:00 p.m. The building seated 80 people but there was no standing room that first evening. The initial commitment of eight people, with thirteen who joined that evening, brought the number of members up to 21 (14 adults and 7 children.) The next phase was to maintain and build on this momentum of the (first) worship experience.

The three primary components identified by the church council of Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans to exact sustainability and growth were 1) Infrastructure; 2) Worship; 3) location accommodation.

Infrastructure

A key element of the success of the Logos Christian Fellowship multisite location was centralizing all assets. The church council agreed that henceforth, all multisites would be named 'Logos Christian Fellowship of [the city of the multisite location].' Applying the same name allows for cohesion and identification. The name Logos Christian Fellowship was already familiar to south east Louisiana due to the telecasts. The church council & Logos Christian Fellowship wanted to capitalize on this name recognition.

The key to any organization is a good system and excellent execution of this system's principles. The parishioners of Logos Christian Fellowship approved Pastor Lionel Catching's recommendation that the New Orleans, Louisiana location would remain the head quarter of all future multisite locations. A centralized system enabled quality of the brand name, the product, and the moral fabric of Logos Christian Fellowship Church.

The church council of Logos Christian Fellowship is the governing board of the church, but the Pastor. The church council provides pastoral leadership for the main campus, the Bogalusa location, and all future multisites. Every campus pastor leads the elders (ordained ministers) of each campus, and the senior pastor of the main campus oversees the campus pastors. The pastoral council's duty was to develop theme(s), provide counseling, coordinate funerals, but remain ex-officio at each campus. The pastoral council is under the guidance of the church council of Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Church Council of the Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans, Louisiana voted that the Finance Committee of the main campus would be central hub of finances for all present and future sites. Each multisite location will also have a financial team that reported to the main campus's Finance Committee. Each multisite location finance team manages the finances of their specific site and provides weekly updates to the main campus. Logos Christian Fellowship manages databases and finances through the Servant Keeper software.

Servant Keeper is a church management software system. "Servant PC Resources is a church software company founded in 1994 by Ed Newman."[69] This software stores names, addresses, helpless numbers, email addresses, family directories, and financial records. Servant Keeper PC allows one universal database for all of the Logos Christian Fellowship multisite locations. It allows Logos administrators to analyze data and exact ministry to our Parishioners in an effective manner. Communication is another important system that Logos implemented meaningfully.

In the exception of Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans and Bogalusa, Louisiana communication was not as advanced as society is now. The servant keeper system Logos originally purchased in 1999–2000 was also not as advanced as the Version 8 in use today.

From 1999–2005, Logos used mail, email, and telephones as the primary ways to communicate. Each multisite its own telephone, email, and mail systems in order to personalize their experience with their particular campus. There was one church logo, but stationary displayed each particular campus' name. The Administration of each location was primarily responsible for the site's communication choices. Each campus administrator is a member of the

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[69] "Servant PC Resources," Servant PC, date, https://www.servantpc.com/about-servantPC/index.php

overall administrative team of Logos Christian Fellowship, and under the guidance of the church administrator of Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans.

Effective and clearly articulated communication strategies are essential requirements of multisite churches. Logos is aware that without these factors, the sites will not succeed. The administrator team interacts with the membership and leadership to operate seamlessly. The church administrative team therefore helps to execute the mission of Logos Christian Fellowship Church.

Plans such as those mentioned above bring clarity as to who, what, when, why, and how, however, they do not prevent problems from arising. Communication problems occur because of distance and culture. The 70 miles between the two locations were difficult in 2001 because technology had not advanced to where it is today. Logos lacked the finances of larger churches to be able to manage the physical gap with excellent but expensive systems. The distance limited how often the two sites could physically interact. And yet, physical interaction allows direct communication, which includes visible but non-verbal messaging. Another issue to overcome was the quite distinct cultures of the two different cities.

The city of Bogalusa was family-oriented. There was one Wal-Mart and no major hotels within the city limits. The Bogalusa mill was the number one employer, which enjoined a certain sociopolitical hegemony. Bogalusa also enjoyed a laid-back environment where living simply was a value, if one may generalize about such things. Bogalusa presented a significant contrast to the city of New Orleans, a carefree, metropolitan, and party city. Its residents are survivors who work to achieve their goals or mission. The clash of culture had a high probability of generating personality conflicts. The church council proposed opportunities of engagement to diminish personality conflicts.

The church designed weekly finance team and administrative meetings via conference calls and quarterly in-person meetings to bring synergy to the day-to-day operations. Logos' administrative and financial teams also attend an annual mandatory seminar or training to remain current with the latest trends, software, and IRS changes. One of the primary components of the African American church culture is the worship experience.

Worship

The African American church experience resides mostly in music sermons and prayers that speak to the ills of the community. The worship experience is traditionally exuberant, with hand clapping, foot stomping, and other emotional expressions. The African American church has been the primary mainstay and a lasting institution of the African American community. The multisite culture of Logos Christian Fellowship used the same order of worship, thematic seminars, and monthly list of song selections to bring harmony and cohesiveness to the multisite experience.

Logos Christian Fellowship resides on four pillars: 1) Evangelism; 2) Discipleship; 3) Stewardship; and 4) Focus on the family. There are four quarters in the year, each with a different focus: the first quarter, January–March, Evangelic; the second quarter, April–June, Discipleship; the third quarter, July–September, Stewardship; and the fourth quarter, October–December, Focus on the family. These four pillars allow the church a system that lays a foundation for our multisites to separate but in a harmonious and effective ways.

Evangelizing is a primary value for Logos. As Matt 28:19 states, "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."[70] Jesus commanded believers to bring people into his kingdom, and the church

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[70] Matt 28:19, KJV.

built its first pillar on this assignment. Evangelism is the first step into God's kingdom and discipleship is the following step upward. A disciple is "one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another: such as a Christianity: one of the twelve in the inner circle of Christ's followers according to the Gospel accounts."[71]

Disciples follow Christ in Christendom. Our second pillar focuses on teaching parishioners how to live like Jesus lived. Jesus was our perfect example for how to live on earth as a representative of God's way. The third pillar, Stewardship helps people to manage their God given talents, gifts, and finances. Rom 12:4-8, Cor 12 and Eph 4:11-13 focus on the gifts that God gives to Christians to execute the kingdom's agenda. The final pillar of Logos Christian Fellowship is Focus on the family. The family is the first institution that God placed in the earthly realm. Logos Christian Fellowship promotes family at a high value or high premium. These four pillars have been a staple of Logos Christian Fellowship from inception. The four pillars remain the foundational standard of all present and future multisite locations.

The sermon of the month and the musical selections are based on the theme of the quarter and the focus of the month. Evangelism, the theme of the first quarter focuses each month on a different aspect: January–Evangelizing the home; February–Evangelizing the community; and March–Evangelizing the Church. Each campus pastor is free to select their own sermon as long as it is directed toward the theme of the quarter and the focus of the month. The council's music ministry determines a list of songs for each quarter, and each campus's music ministry selects songs from this list to sing. Every campus will hear the same song at some point during the quarter.

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[71] "Disciple," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011, https://www.merriam-webster.com.

The combination of the pastoral team, preaching, scholarship, music ministry, under the oversight of their particular administrators provides synergy of message from pulpit/chair stand to the pens. This campaign-style messaging or branding allows multisites to share the commonality of the church regardless of physical location.

Ministry Challenges

Operating a church of any size, age, race or ethnicity, or denomination is a challenge. Operating a multisite church is even more difficult because of the multiple dynamics at work. One of the greatest challenges is helping parishioners accept Logos Christian Fellowship as one church in multiple-sites and not two separate churches sharing the same name. Parishioners are loyal to their campus location and pastor. Members build memories with their church buildings and pastor by sharing weddings, baptisms, funerals, counseling, and various other events. The dilemma is trying to encourage parishioners to accept and participate in the multisite location concept.

Logos Christian Fellowship church faced challenges from its multisite locations due to distance and culture mainly. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated metropolitan New Orleans and surrounding counties, and the buildings of both sites went with them. The membership of the multisite campuses of Logos Christian Fellowship eventually settled in six states: California, Georgia, Texas, Minnesota, Maryland, and Kansas. The challenge of pastoring a multisite location as a small African American church became daunting with the worst storm to hit American soil at that time.

Between October 2005–April 2006, Logos' pastor council temporarily held church service in Houston, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Atlanta and Belington, Georgia, to support the needs of our Parishioners. The New Orleans campus membership was 230 pre-

Hurricane Katrina. After Katrina, our membership by percentage was as follows: 1) Texas 70% (161 Members); Louisiana 15% (34 members); Georgia 10% (23 members); California 2% (4 members); Minnesota 2% (4 members); Maryland 1% (2 members); and Kansas 1% (2 members). Logos Christian Fellowship not only lost the campuses in New Orleans and Bogalusa, but its membership also declined by 70% by April 30, 2006.

Reasserting the Logos Christian Fellowship consisted of convening a new church council while remaining a Multisite church. This time, the locations would be in New Orleans, Louisiana and Atlanta, Georgia. The mission of Logos Christian Fellowship remained the same after Hurricane Katrina, but the main campus moved to Atlanta and New Orleans became the secondary site. The challenge was that the Atlanta campus comprised 37 members, while the New Orleans campus had 24 members as of April 30, 2006, and now the sites were in two different states.

The pastor of the former Bogalusa campus, Toler, was appointed over the New Orleans location, and the erstwhile pastor of New Orleans, Catchings, the senior pastor of Logos Christian Fellowship, became the senior pastor and overseer of the Atlanta site. Toler served as campus pastor of the New Orleans campus for one year, from February 2006 until February 2007, during which the following happened:

Sept 2005–February 2007

Logos Christian Fellowship–New Orleans Campus Camping

	Sept. 05	Feb. 07
Members	27	23
Atlanta	20	18
Church	7	8

Male	5	7
Female	15	20

Income

Sept 2005-December 2005	9,837.57
January 2006-December 2006	28,137.63

There 14% decline in attendance and membership is noteworthy, and the budget remained healthy due only to cost cutting measures.

Sept 2005 – December 2005 Budget

Rent:	500.00
Utilities	(Included in the rent)
Salaries	1,600.00
Income	2,459.39 (avg. monthly income) +359.39

2006 Budget: New Orleans Campus

Annual Income: 28,137.63

Expense:

Profit/Loss:

Average Monthly Income: 2,344.80

Monthly Expense:

Rent	500.00
Utilities:	Included in rest
Salaries:	1,800.00
Profit/Loss	44.80

The New Orleans, Louisiana campus rented from Greater Macedonia Baptist Church of New Orleans, Louisiana for one year and then relocated to the Holiday Inn Expenses and Super 8 Motel, using their small banquet room to hold Sunday worship services. The campus meetings took place inside hotels from February 2006 until Logos Christian Fellowship cut ties with the New Orleans site in April 2013. Michelle Hubbard had succeeded Toler as the campus pastor, and she continues to serve as the Pastor of the Word of Life Teaching Ministries, formerly Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans.

The membership grew from 23 members in February 2007 to 58 in April 2013, with the income for 2012 being $54,787.23. In six years, the New Orleans campus increased attendance by 140% and finances by 99%. The focus of the New Orleans campus was Neh 4:6. "The people had a mind to work."[72]

The City of New Orleans was rebuilding from Hurricane Katrina as the Logos Christian Fellowship was rebuilding from the same devastation. The challenge of operating multisite locations in multiple states was beyond the capacity of a small church in multiple building phases. The New Orleans campus was are-start, and the campus in Atlanta, Georgia was a new church plant. The church council of Logos Christian Fellowship of Atlanta, Georgia voted to allow the New Orleans campus to become independent and operate as a single location with a new name (Word of Life Teaching Ministries).

There were several factors that indicated that a multi-state, multisite combination was too much to overcome. The factors that impacted this decision were 1) Physical distance; 2) Cultural differences; and 3) Unity of Vision.

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[72] Neh 4:6, KJV.

The physical distance between New Orleans, Louisiana and Atlanta, Georgia, 424 miles, did not allow for physical or social interaction. According to Acts 2:42, "and they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."[73] The church of Jesus Christ requires partnership and fellowship, and 424 miles was too far to allow these activities. Heb 10:25 urges "not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more or you see the day approaching."[74] This passage of scripture is often used to encourage parishioners to attend weekly services. Being a multi-state, multisite church did not allow for physical interactions.

When both campuses were within 80 miles of each other, there were quarterly in-person staff meetings, quarterly in-person trainings, 5th Sunday night joint church worship experiences, and other gatherings. The physical gatherings allowed for synergy, inter-personal encounters, and social and spiritual interactions. With the two campuses in different states, the lack of joint gatherings fostered the philosophy of two churches in one location, versus that of one church in two locations.

Cultural differences were the second factor that ended Logos Christian Fellowship's relationship with the New Orleans campus. The multi-state, multisite church must acknowledge the diversity of each state/culture. New Orleans' culture is lively, carefree, party-oriented, rich in family-friendly neighborhoods, and pride in the uniqueness of the city. New Orleans is a tourist town, and the food is acclaimed worldwide. Atlanta, Georgia is a big business city. It is home to several Fortune 500 companies (e.g., Home Depot, Sprint, Corp Communications, and Coca-Cola). Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport has often been recognized as one of the busiest

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[73] Acts 2:42, KJV.

[74] Heb 10:25, Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

in the world. Atlanta citizens operate in a lazy city, corporate atmosphere. Atlanta is furthermore the home of the civil rights movement. The culture of this city is aggressive, progressive, and proficient, in contrast to New Orleans, with its carefree mentality. This distinction impacted the movement and flow of Logos Christian Fellowship's multi-state, multisite church. The cultural differences were too extreme and caused personality conflicts. The third source of conflict was the unity of vision.

The focus of the New Orleans campus was re-building the personal and professional lives of parishioners after Katrina, and the Atlanta campus was a new church plant. Parishioners of the New Orleans campus were battling depression, loss of identity, loss of income, etc. The Atlanta plant was full of excitement as a new start church. The difference of focus justified two different visions that leadership was neither able nor wanted to overcome.

The church council of Logos Christians Fellowship of Atlanta, Georgia presented a resolution to the membership to change the church name to Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church in January 2007. The name change was to give the Atlanta campus its own identity. Each campus was mentally moving into its own, quite distinct identity. The Atlanta campus satisfied the proposal of the church council and became Logos Christian Fellowship D/B/A Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church.

The success of the Atlanta campus spearheaded a second site in the city. The church council of Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church approved an exploratory committee to assess the possibility of a second site. The exploratory committee submitted their recommendation to start a second location inside of an adult living community. This multisite would focus on ministering to serious. Ethel Gibson was appointed pastor of the Christ Temple Lakewood in Atlanta, Georgia. Gibson had been part of the Logos Christian Fellowship New

Orleans since its inception in July 1999. Gibson had served as Director of the Ministries Alliance and Lead Intercessor of the Intercessory Ministry. She had settled in Atlanta, Georgia following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Gibson is a resident of Lakewood Christian Manor located at 2141 SW Springdale Rd, Atlanta, Georgia 30315.

"Lakewood Christian Manor offers an affordable rental community for seniors aged 62+."[75] Lakewood Christian Manor has 250 units. This community center allowed Logos to minister to seniors on a weekly basis. The residents would be able to attend church service, Sunday School, and Bible Studies without having to leave their buildings.

Christ Temple at Lakewood held its first bible study on August 2008. Bible study occurs every Friday at noon. There were 17 people in attendance at this first study. The first worship at the Christ Temple at Lakewood location took place on March 1, 2009, with 23 people in attendance. From March 1, 2009 through April 2013, this church operated as one church in three locations.

The primary goal was to advance the Kingdom of God through evangelism, teaching, and touching lives. The pastor's council included the senior pastor of Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church, and the campus pastors of Christ Temple at Lakewood and Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans.

The pastor's council served as the vision team and the spiritual leaders of the multisite church. The pastor council held weekly conference calls to maintain stability within leadership. Conference call bible study was held weekly, which allowed unity if teaching. The pastor's council was responsible for teaching the weekly conference called Bible study. Logos School of

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[75] http://www.nationalchurchresidences.org/communities

Ministry formed to certify teachers, ministers, and potential ministry workers. Three locations produced a unique challenge, however.

The multisite church now faced the difficulty of three locations with three different needs. Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans was rebuilding, Christ Temple at Lakewood served seniors living simple and convenient lives, and Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church catered to young, vibrant, and creative millennials. The next chapter compares and contrasts these three locations, explains the release of the New Orleans campus, and discusses the present-day multisite church. It also examines several other African American multisite churches to glean from their experience and wisdom.

Chapter 4

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to act as a resource for small churches in the African American community on how to establish and operate multisites. The basis of this research is to discover principles and strategies for a multisite church in the African American community in a small church context.

Research Participants

The researcher interviewed six African American pastors who lead large multisite congregations. The project chose these pastors because they met two of the three categories that validate this project: (1) They pastor African American churches; and (2) Their churches all operate multisite campuses. Each participant signed a consent form to agree to take part in this project.

Research Methodology

Each participant received ten open-ended questions regarding the operations of a multisite church. The participants permitted the researcher to record the interviews. The researcher examined his church as the model for operating a multisite church in the African American community in a small church context.

Research

This chapter analyzes the data from the interviews of the six participants and shares significant factors. The researcher will compare and contrast the six participants to identify correlations and differences among multisite churches. The researcher will also share similar attributes of the participating pastors and churches that are visible in multisites of any size.

The chapter also compares the researcher's congregation with the information obtained from the six participating churches. The project aims to share how a scaled-down approach of the multisite concept may operate in a small church context within a designated ethic group. This project also examines best practice methods for establishing multisite churches.

Key Features and Comparisons

The multisite church concept is not monolithic in its operation. Each local assembly has full autonomy regarding its function. Essentially, there is no-one-size-fits-all operating system for effective multisite campuses. There are, however, similarities between all multisite churches.

Results of Questionnaire

1. What is your vision for the church?

   - 50%—Evangelism

   - 16.333%—Love

   - 16.333%—Discipleship

   - 16.333%—Confidence in God

2. What is your brand?

   - 50%—Relevance

   - 30%—Spirit of Excellence

   - 20%—Love

3. How have you been able to maintain your brand as a multisite church?

   - 60%—Consistent Behavior

   - 40%—Teaching

4. What are the challenges of operating as a multisite church?

   - 63%—Unity

- 37%—Lack of time with congregants

5. What is the organizational structure used to facilitate this multisite church?

   - 50%—One pastor, several sites

   - 50%—Senior Pastor over campus pastors

6. How do you develop and select campus pastors?

A. Develop campus pastors

   - Model the behavior

   - Teach the pattern

   - Trust the campus pastor to execute

B. Select campus pastors

   - 100% —select from within

7. What is your leadership development strategy?

   - 50%—Teaching

   - 28%—Training

   - 22%—Trust to execute

8. What are your formal and informal process for developing lay leaders?

   - 38%—Bible study

   - 33%—Specialized training

   - 29%—Peer learning

9. What is the financial system for funding the multisite concept?

   - 54%—One financial system for all sites

   - 24%—Each location is self-supportive

   - 22%—Each location is fiscally independent, however, support is available

10. How do you keep each site moving in the same vision and same core value?

- 81%—Preach same sermon; teach same lessons; sing the same songs at every location

- 19%—Still trying to find a system

Questionnaire Summary

The responses indicated a consistent focus on evangelism. The researcher saw a theme to where pastors sought to grow their local assemblies to expand the Kingdom of God. Bishop Joseph Walker shared that his vision is "to impact the Nashville community by becoming an oasis of hope by presenting the word of God that is tangible, practical and impacting culture that Mt. Zion remains relevant and is exemplified in salvation via faith, family, fitness and finance."[76] There were some who acknowledged the Great Commission as a foundation for operating a multisite church concept.

Another key area of similarity was how the pastors and their churches developed and trained lay people and religious leaders. The majority had the same style. Bishop Darryl Brister stated, "Teach, train, and Trust."[77] He further explained that he taught via instruction and modeling the desired outcomes.

Likewise, the six participants valued the four pillars discussed in Chapter 3. These factors can be scaled and used to sustain and operate a multisite church, and they are 1) a biblical foundation for multisite ministry; 2) a pastoral vision for multisite ministry; 3) consistency in operations and systems; and 4) a viable support system to execute the vision. The researcher's

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[76] Bishop Joseph Walker, in-person interview by researcher. November 15, 2019.

[77] Bishop Darryl Brister, interviewed by the researcher, November 15, 2019.

church would be able to adopt the principles but not the exact methodology because all variables would have to be equal.

Research Results

How did the researcher's church begin the conversation regarding becoming a multisite church? Who started the initial conversation about operating in a multisite concept? The research showed that the senior pastor of Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans, Louisiana proposed the idea.

Data

The 2000 census conducted by Area Connect divulged the following data. There 40,677 people within a five-mile radius of Logos Christin Fellowship living in 14,187 homes.[78] The researcher's church membership attending Sunday service was averaging around $19,000 per month[79] in contributions. The researcher's church was financially stable, an essential factor to becoming a multisite with minimal expenses.

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[78] "2000 Census," Area Connect, http://neworleans.areaconnect.com12000.

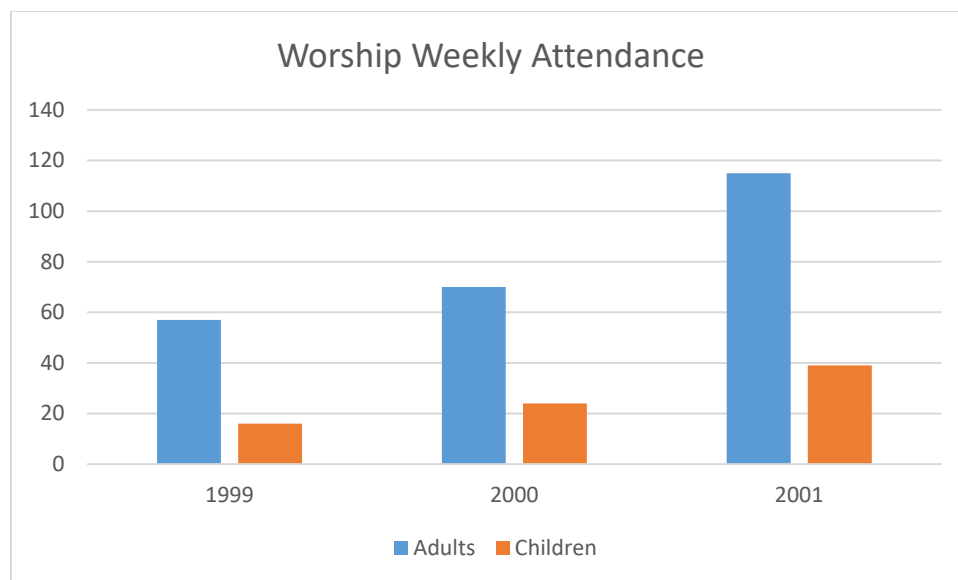[79] Logos Christian Fellowship, Financial Records, January 2001.

Figure 1 Charting Worship Attendance 1999—2001

This chart tracks the growth of the Logos Christian Fellowship membership prior to it becoming

a multisite location, i.e., from inception through April 2001.[80]

Multisite Expansion Budget

The Finance Team of Logos Christian Fellowship approved an initial amount of 10,000

as startup costs for the Bogalusa, Louisiana location. Logos Christian Fellowship of New

Orleans further committed to providing $5,000 per month seed resources for year one; $3,500

per month in year two; and $2,000 in year three to assist the operations of the Bogalusa

Louisiana location.[81]

Location Selection

637 Avenue E was a 1,000 square foot building with an open area, one office, and two

bathrooms. The buildings needed painting and carpeting. The 10,000 seed money provided a

security deposit and first month lease, and paid for painting, new carpeting, 60 chairs, keyboard,

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[80] Attendance Chart numbers from Logos Christian Fellowship weekly attendance, 1999-2005.

[81] Financial numbers from Logos Christian Fellowship Finance Committee minutes, 2001.

drums, and office furniture. There were no labor charges, as the members of Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans, Louisiana provided the person power.

<div align="center">Evangelism</div>

Logos Christian Fellowship of New Orleans witnessed to the citizens of Bogalusa, Louisiana for three consecutive weeks prior to the opening service. This team of 22 was fulfilling Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."[82]

Table 1 Evangelism Data[83]

	Shared the Gospel	Accepted Christ	Prayer Request
Week 1	110	22	45
Week 2	208	61	33
Week 3	265	79	103

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[82] Acts 1:8, KJV.

[83] Evangelism data from Logos Christian Fellowship 2001 Evangelism Data records.
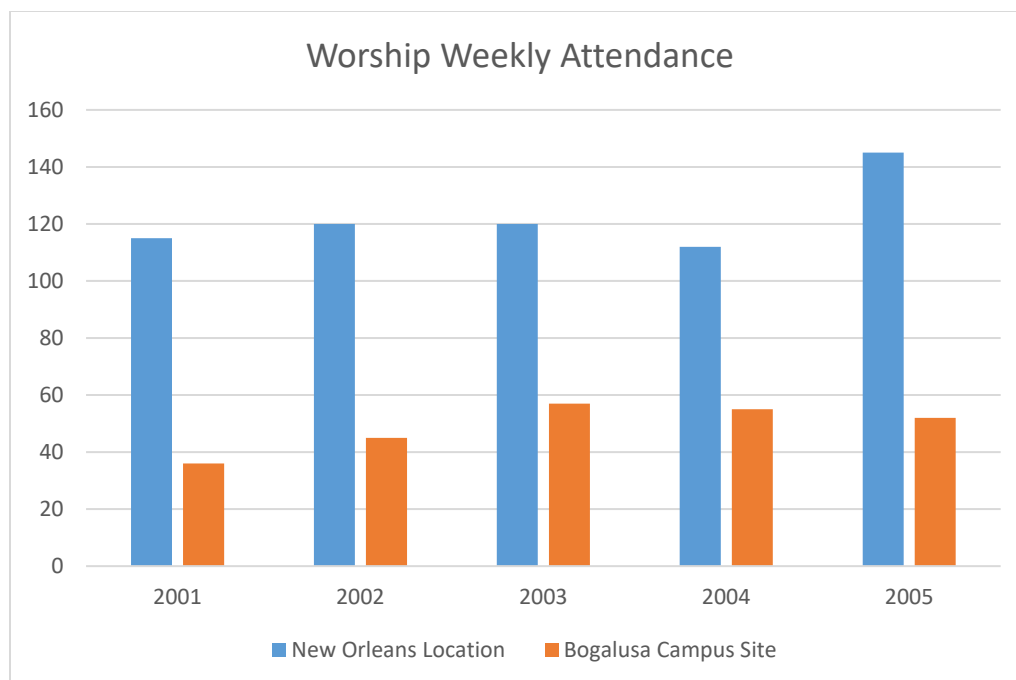
Worship Weekly Attendance

Figure 2 Worship Weekly Attendance

The above attendance chart tracked the attendance at Logos Christian Fellowship after it became a multisite campus.[84] The attendance at the New Orleans location grew by 8% in 2002, remained the same in 2002 and 2003, diminished by 9% in 2004 and increased by 39% in 2005. The Bogalusa campus grew by 21% in 2002 and 41% in 2003, dipped by 11% in 2004, and decreased an additional 11% in 2005. The Bogalusa campus decrease was attributed to improper systems management and members relocating.

The devastation of Hurricane Katrina had major impact upon both campuses. The New Orleans campus and the Bogalusa campuses were both destroyed. Logos Christian Fellowship church temporarily held service in four states to meet the needs of its scattered congregants from October 2005 through March 2007. The four states in which Logos Christian Fellowship held service were Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, and Georgia. Logos restarted the New Orleans campus

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[84] Attendance chart numbers from Logos Christian Fellowship Weekly attendance, 1999-2005.

and added the Atlanta one, but these four campuses did not operate according to effective

multisite ideals.

One Church in Two States

From March 1, 2009 through April 30, 2013, Logos Christian Fellowship operated as one

church in two states, with three sites: New Orleans, LA, Fayetteville, GA, and East Point, GA.

The following data derives from the Logos Christian Fellowship D/B/A Christ Temple Church

2009–2013 annual reports:[85]

Table 2 Logos Christian Fellowship, 2009

Location	Weekly Attendance	Annual Income
Fayetteville, GA	27	$38,883.74
East Point, GA	21	$12,381.49
New Orleans, GA	28	$34,413.22
Total	76	$90,678.45

Table 3 Logos Christian Fellowship, 2010

Location	Weekly Attendance	Annual Income
Fayetteville, GA	23	$29,611.52
East Point, GA	18	$11,147.18
New Orleans, GA	31	$35,406.96
Total	72	$84,343.74

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[85] Logos Christian Fellowship Annual Reports 2009-2013. Financial data derived from Logos Christian Fellowship Annual Reports.

Table 4 Logos Christian Fellowship, 2011

Location	Weekly Attendance	Annual Income
Fayetteville, GA	29	$40,020.11
East Point, GA	20	$14,704.80
New Orleans, GA	31	$37,099.56
Total	80	$91,824.47

Table 5 Logos Christian Fellowship, 2012

Location	Weekly Attendance	Annual Income
Fayetteville, GA	32	$46,798.08
East Point, GA	16	$12,213.12
New Orleans, GA	33	$38,914.92
Total	81	$97,926.12

Table 6 Logos Christian Fellowship, 2013

Location	Weekly Attendance	Annual Income
Fayetteville, GA	34	$52,452.48
East Point, GA	18	$13,126.32
*New Orleans, GA	37	$13,488.72
Total	89	$79,067.52

*New Orleans location ended their multisite tenure

The researcher attributes the continued financial success of the Logos Christian Fellowship multisite to minimalized expenses. The Fayetteville, GA location subleased from another church at $650 per month. The New Orleans location subleased at $500 per month and the East Point, GA location was free.

Each campus had steady attendance and consistent income to sustain and validate the theory that multisite churches in a small church context and in the African American community

are viable. The researcher's church operated as one church in three sites and two states, with success beyond expectations. The values noted by the six participants that Logos Christian Fellowship likewise implemented are responsible for that success, and they are pastoral vision; biblical foundation for multisite ministry; consistency in vision and systems; and a viable support system. The execution of the multisite concept would not have been viable or sustainable without those four factors.

Logos Christian Fellowship was able to maintain synergy in the multisite multistate system by having one weekly conference-call Bible study that all locations attend simultaneously. There were weekly leadership meetings via conference calls to maintain the same brand at each site. There was one finance team consisting of Finance directors from each location and an assistant at each location. To meet the needs of the congregation, Logos Christian Fellowship chose a bank that had operating branches in all three cities. Logos also purchased the Servant Keeper management software to administer the database and house all financial records. "Servant keeper is a church software company founded in 1994 by Ed Newman."[86] This database system allowed Logos Christian Fellowship to have the database and financial reports to operate under one direction. The church stored the information both corporately and at individual locations. These viable support systems were necessary if the multisite multistate churches were going to endure. Each campus had a team that worked tirelessly to maintain the brand.

John Maxwell coined the phrase "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work,"[87] and thus trust was an integral part of the teams identified above. The ability to choose trust over suspicion was

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[86]PC Resources," Servant PC, date, https://www.servantpc.com/about-servantPC/index.php.

[87] John Maxwell, *Team Work Makes the Dream Work*, (Nashville TN: W Publishing, 2002).

a vital component for unity on any team and in congregation, especially in a multisite multistate ministry.

Ministry Challenges

The researcher's church operated in excellence but there were disadvantages to the multisite multistate concept.

Different Cultures

The researcher did not consider the characteristics of operating a multisite church in two different states. First, as noted in Chapter 3, there were significant culture differences. Culture is "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group."[88] Fayetteville, GA and East Point, GA are a part of the metropolis of Atlanta, Georgia. "Atlanta has long been known as a center of black wealth, higher education, political power and culture; a cradle of the Civil Rights Movement,"[89] and the home of Martin Luther King Jr. It is known also as a "black mecca."[90] [91] Atlanta is also home to several large corporations, for example, "The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Airlines, UPS, Cox Enterprises, Georgia-Pacific, NCR Corporation, The Home Depot and Equifax."[92] The culture of the city is progressive, with a business atmosphere.

One of the terms that describes New Orleans's ethos is *Laissez les bons temps rouler*, "a Cajun French phrase [and]…a calque of the English phrase, 'let the good times roll'; that is a

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[88] "Culture," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011, https://www.merriam-webster.com.

[89] "Who's right? Cities lay claim to civil rights 'cradle' mantle." *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, Politifact.com, June 28, 2011.

[90] "Atlanta: The City of the Next Generation," *Black Enterprise*, May 1987.

[91] "African American in Atlanta," Wikipedia, https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_American_in_Atlanta.

[92] https://builtin.com/atlanta/largest-companies-in-atlanta.

word for word translation of the English phrase into Cajun French. This phrase is often mentioned in Louisiana and around the Gulf Coast where Mardi Gras is celebrated."[93] New Orleans' culture is festive, and tourism is one of its primary sources of revenue.

These two cultures also impact governing local churches. Religion is a part of culture. The city of New Orleans was still rebuilding from Hurricane Katrina, and this was also the primary focus of the congregants. The City of Atlanta was 'business as usual,' with a ministry-driven, established, and powerful black community. The clash of cultures became a clash of operations. The multisite context was successful, but the multisite was no longer viable. Therefore, Logos Christian Fellowship New Orleans Location voted to become independent of the Georgia churches and renamed itself the Word of Life Teaching Ministries. 1 Cor 14:33 states, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."[94]

<div align="center">Investigating the Community</div>

The researcher did not investigate the community of New Orleans post-Katrina, but taking time to research areas is critical to the success of multisite church. The lack of community investigation contributed to the lack of success in coordinating between the New Orleans and the Atlanta locations. Gathering data is one point of investigation, and understanding the layout of the community is likewise important.

There are questions that may assist how to understand a community: Are there grocery stores? Is there a Wal-Mart in proximity? How many schools are within a 5-mile radius? Is there a hospital or other urgent care in the community? Are there banks or department stores within the community; are there package stores or strip clubs? Are there recreational parks? Are there

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[93] "Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler," Wikipedia, date, https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laissez_les_bons_temps_rouler.

[94] 1 Cor 14:33, KJV.

walking trails? The answers to these questions reveal the nature and needs of a community and its people. The answers to these questions help to foster the necessary information and to provide insights on the types of ministry that would be most effective in the community of the new site.

<div align="center">Investigating Multisite Models</div>

The researcher investigated mega churches that operated in multisites in the African American community. The limited number of small church multisites, however, limited the data specific to this kind of undertaking in the African American community.

Logos Christian Fellowship followed the pattern that the six participants described for their churches, that is, requiring the same bible study lesson, the same songs, and the same order of worship. Programmatically the flow was the same, but as already described, the cultures were significantly different, nevertheless. Logos' flow and function was more stilted in comparison to those of the other six churches due to their larger membership attendance and resources. The researcher lacked subjects tailored to this project, therefore, which yielded deficiencies in gathering sufficient information from small churches operating multisites in the African American community.

<div align="center">Investigating the Importance of Proximity</div>

A false positive is "a result that shows something is present when it really is not."[95] Logos Christina Fellowship had success with planting a multisite church at Bogalusa, Louisiana location, which was one hour away, and the researcher shared that success with the six participants. He also shared that he had been confident that the multisite multistate church concept could be a permanent model for Logos Christian Fellowship. Bishop Blakes Jr. and

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[95] "False Positive," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary.false_positive.

Bishop Larry Lawrence Brandon, two of the six participants this project interviewed, also operate multisite multistate churches. These churches, however, have resources that Logos Christian Fellowship does not. The multisite multistate model is viable, but not for every church that operates multisites.

This researcher's experience illustrated that physical distance can play a detrimental role in the success of a multisite ministry. There are many reasons, including inability to attend in good time or with ease the deaths, weddings, or high school graduations of the faithful, or to respond to an emergency on-site incident. The lack of proximity also limits how often a shepherd and church members can develop and bond as a church community.

<div align="center">Lack of Transition</div>

Transition requires time. Alcoholics Anonymous list a 12-step program toward recovery. Step one is admission. "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives become unmanageable."[96] The transition begins with accepting that change is necessary. "Foundational to helping people through major change is this seminal idea: change is different from transition. Change is the new circumstances introduced into organizational life. Transition, on the other hand, is the emotional, psychological and spiritual adjustments people go through when change is implemented."[97] The researcher asserts, based on Jeff Iorg's claim, that prior to launching a multisite campus, the church allow transition time for the primary campus to adjust to the change.

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[96] https://www.alcohol.org/alcoholics-anonymous/.

[97] Jeff Iorg, *Leading Major Changes in Your Ministry* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2018), 970, Kindle.

Small Budget

The budget is an integral part of the ministry of the church. Finances may become a great hindrances to launching a multisite campus. Four of the six pastors explained that more resources allows the church to do more for their members and the community. Surrat, Ligon, and Bird, likewise noted, "The first cost to count is the price of not opening a second campus." Their perspective is there are churches that are not growing due to financial restraints. Yet by not growing, "they are still paying a cost: the cost of not gaining ground in obedience to Jesus' command to make disciples."[98] Small churches that operate multisites to fulfill this command must prepare, therefore, to face operational challenges due to limited resources.

Volunteers

The fourth necessary factor for any multisite church is a viable support system. Person power or volunteers allow a ministry to manifest. In Luke 8:4-15, Jesus teaches the parable of the sower. Jesus says, "'And others fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bore fruit in hundredfold.' And when he said these things, he cried, he that hath ears to hear, let him hear."[99] The researcher asserts that if only one of the four kinds of ground was fertile, that means 25% of attempts succeed. Theories abound that only 25% the church membership carry 75% of the workload. Jesus provided the remedy for lack of volunteers in Luke 10:2, "'Therefore,' said he unto them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore that Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.'"[100] Based on the instruction, this researcher asserts that churches must petition God for volunteers.

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[98] Surrat, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multisite Church Revolution*, 97.

[99] Luke 8:4–15, KJV.

[100] Luke 10:2, KJV.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is prayer. A church founder must align their desire with God's call on their lives. After praying to God, allow Him time to speak back to the one who seeks His wisdom.

The second recommendation is to ensure that these four factors are existent or operable before a church attempts to build multisites: 1) a biblical foundation for the multisite church; 2) a pastoral vision for becoming multisite; 3) consistent verbiage and actions; and 4) viable support systems.

The third recommendation is to perform adequate research and investigation before implementing a multisite church. Proper planning and patience are friends to the endeavor of initiating a multisite church. Lack of research and investigation can do harm. Investing time and resources in obtaining information eventually saves money, time, and energy, and it also ensures more success. Jesus had his disciples for three years before he went back to Heaven, and he prepared them for life without him. Researching the inner workings of an operating multisite church will prove especially useful for someone who is planning one.

The fourth recommendation is to count the cost. In Luke 14:28-30, Jesus says, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"[101] Jesus emphasized that extensive thought should go into decision-making. Here, there costs to consider are financial, mental, emotional, psychological, personal time, and limitations of the founder's independence.

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[101] Luke 14:28–30, KJV.

Lessons Learned

1. Each multisite church system is different. Running or building multisites does not depend on a one-size fits-all schema. There are different size churches, theological beliefs, and operating systems. Jesus had twelve disciples, all unique in their own way. There were some who were fishers, one who had been a tax collector, etc. Just as Jesus had various personalities among his group of twelve, so too the multisite church has various traits and personality types. Bishop Walker pastored all three of the Mt. Zion Nashville locations, traveling to preach at the various services. Bishop Brister, however, pastors the main location, Beacon Light Cathedral of New Orleans, and assigns campus pastors to the other locations. Mt. Zion's financial operating system makes all fiscal operations one entity and manages business affairs accordingly. Beacon Light's financial system allows each site to manage its finances individually and to be responsible for the operating budget of its location. Bishop Blakes, Jr., explained that in his case, there are cultural differences between the sites. The landscape of a city and socioeconomic status of each community also impacts how a site will engage its community. The vision of the pastor and the mission of the local assembly will impact the administration of a multisite. There are various models for erecting a multisite church.

2. There are differences difference between change and transition. A pastor ought not assume that everyone who has changed has also transitioned. A change of mind is not necessarily a change in behavior. Transition takes time. Parents watch their children change daily, yet never actually see them transition from children to teenagers or even young men or women. Change can be external while transition is always internal. Transition steps lead to a meaningful destination. Change is inevitable but transition is

not. Transition demands patience. Not everyone processes change in the same way or at the same time. Many schools have advance learning classes for students who learn in different ways. As the secular education system allows for students to develop at various levels, so too must a new multisite church allow congregants time to absorb, process, and become supportive of this new initiative.

3. There must be a clear understanding of roles between the senior pastor and the campus pastor. If there are two visions in operation, the multisite concept will not work. There can only be one leader at a time. Synergy between senior pastor and campus pastor is necessary for the multisite to operate as 'one entity and two churches in two different locations.' There must be a stated and written memorandum of understanding. It is important to write the job descriptions of both senior and campus pastors in precise and unambiguous language. Leadership development from the senior pastor to the campus pastor will allow for mutual understanding and respect.

4. There is a difference between multisite and multistate. A church may be multisite but not multistate. It cannot, however, be multistate but not multisite. Multisite means more than one campus. Multistate means at least one campus in two or more states. A multisite church may have the advantage of proximity, and therefore may share human and resources. The multistate concept limits personal interaction between locations more because of distance. Each state also has various type of banking laws, and therefore the multistate multisite church may be unable to share the same banking institutions. It is also necessary to consider city and state cultural differences before operating a multistate multisite church.

5. Take nothing for granted. The founder must approach establishing a multisite every day as though it were the first. Assumptions will lead to disaster. The primary church leadership team cannot assume they will receive a majority or unanimous vote for decisions regarding multisites. Take note of the volunteer sign-up form, for it is a good predictor of parishioners' minds. Financial commitments to the multisite are another indicator of congregant support. There are financial costs to operating a multisite ministry. People support what they believe in, what they love, and investments with dividends, and these are not just monetary.

6. Consistency is the key. The desired outcome must be modeled. Redundancy may be boring, but it ensures success. Repetition allows time for all to adjust and adapt. Consistency also signals stability, and stability is a key factor in developing influence. A major strategy in maintaining and growing a multisite church, therefore, is consistency in all things. Bishop Walker and Bishop Morton preach the same sermon at each location; they teach the same bible study lessons; and the music ministry sings the same songs. This style allows each location to have the same function and ambiance. Bishop Morton, Bishop Walker, and Bishop Spears use the same order of worship at each location. Consistency does not mean a lack of creativity. The ability to stay relevant demands creativity. In the 1960s, there were party-line telephone operations; today one may make a call via WIFI on a cellular phone. Regardless of type of service or device, what occurs in a call on a telephone. The original purpose of a telephone remains, but the function of this telephone has changed. There are now applications for banking, paying bills, shopping, reading books, and much more. Yet, the function of talking to another person remains. Likewise, the local church has evolved from being house-to-house assemblies to

becoming city to city gatherings, and in some cases, state to state churches. The mission is remains the same, however, and it is to evangelize to those who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Therefore, creativity and consistency are coequal in successful multisite church development.

7. The ability to adjust is also crucially important. The vision will remain the same but the methods must change. Bishop Morton stated, "Date the method but marry the mission," meaning that the leader must be flexible in thought process and ready to change expeditiously. He also stated, "The future belongs to those who are open to positive change." Closing the mind prevents swift transitions. Boxing the self into one particular system or expectation may lock the individual out of excellent opportunities. There are many evangelism methods to witness to those who have not accepted Jesus as their personal savior, for example Pray and Say; the G.O.S.P.E.L. journey; The Romans Road; the One Minute Gospel; the Five Finger Method; the Walkthrough the Bible Method, to name a few. Each method was popular at one point in time, but they changed as cultures did. "Marrying" the method therefore forces a church to be culturally one step behind. It is necessary for a multisite church to be flexible in function and operation.

Qualitative Results Summary

The ten open-ended questions (Appendix C) and the data they solicited provided sufficient information to indicate that multisite small churches can operate successfully in the African American community. A founder may scale down the four factors of mega-church multisites for any size multisite church. Those four factors are 1) a biblical foundation for multisite ministry; 2) a pastoral vision for multisite ministry; 3) consistency in operations and systems; and 4) a viable support system to execute the vision.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Life is a continuous journey, and so is any research project, because it is ever evolving. The continuation of time will always yield new guests, new developments, and new knowledge to answer questions. The focus of this project is operating a small church multisite campus in the African American community. There will always be challenges to this intent. As there is a continuing education program, so too does this project require continuous research into 1) new information, 2) collaboration, and 3) experience.

There are various factors that impact how each multisite church executes its operation. Therefore, as more data becomes available and other small churches embark on multisite campuses, the need for more research is inevitable. Moreover, the African American culture is not one dimensional but a plurality of tribes based on demographics, educations, economics, psychology, and family histories that impact every phase of their personal lives. Chapter 4 introduced six participants who pastor multisite churches in the African American community, and each had a unique approach to operating multisites based on the aforementioned plurality.

Bishop Brister pastors one location and has campus pastors that serve the other locations. Bishop Brandon uses the same style of leadership for his multisite church. Bishop Morton has a different model as his multisite is also multistate. He pastors in Atlanta, GA and co-pastors the New Orleans campus. Bishop Morton's wife pastors the New Orleans campus and co-pastors the Atlanta campus. Bishop Walker and Bishop Spears pastor their multisite locations without a campus pastor. Bishop Blakes, Jr., serves as Senior Pastor, and his brother as his co-pastor; they also have two campus pastors to help manage their seven campuses. There is no specific model

for a mega-site church, but there is an art and science to generating successful multisite churches. Gleaning from other leaders is a wise thing to do.

The African American church has always been the bedrock of the African American community. Pastors of the African American church have at various times acted as family therapists, wise counsels, or savvy businesspeople for their parishioners. Wal-Mart's presence in America perpetuated a downward spiral of many smaller neighborhood stores. These smaller stores could not compete with the resources of a Wal-Mart. In the same vein, future study may inquire what happens to smaller churches serving a particular community when a different church plants a location in their community.

There should be further investigation of African American communities and, more importantly, the various sects of the African American church community to understand how multisite churches have helped, hindered, or depleted the African American community at large. There should also be further research into the effects of collaboration.

Genesis demonstrates collaboration from its opening chapter: Then God said, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the live stack, the whole earth, and the creatures that or awl on the earth.[102] This is a beautiful picture of collaboration at the highest level of life. Further research may determine if there is collaboration between multisite churches in the African American community.

Likewise useful would be intensive investigation of how small churches align and disseminate information to build and grow. The business community shares information to maintain healthy corporations. Sharing data has never been automatic in the African American community. Slavery ended 157 years ago, meaning that it is possible that the grandparents of

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[102] Genesis 1:26, CSB.

some baby boomers (1946–1964), and the great-grandparents or great-great grandparents of Generation Y (1965–1979) experienced slavery. The stench of slavery still impacts the mentality of generations in the African American community. A greater inventory of how slavery still impacts culture, especially in the African American church experience, would be beneficial to this project. African American church music and liberation theology also are results of the historical events of our country. Every ethnicity has internal challenges, but those within the African American community are particular in still carrying the residue of slavery.

Genesis 11 tells that God confounded the languages of the people so they could not reach Heaven. Yet, in Acts 2, people speaking in individual native tongues could understand one another. Communication is critical. Key leaders must share information with each other and congregations if the group is to meet objectives and make visible the vision. Understanding others' ideas and thoughts allows collaboration, and collaboration sows positive movement. A lack of trust between entities hinders advancement, therefore.

Also necessary is research on how churches of less the 100 members in the African American community developed or evaporated over a course of time due to communication. Such data would function like knowledge from experience functions. Research should also focus on how changing demographics have impacted multisite churches, and seek to answer questions such as, "how has church attendance been impacted?" "What is the city 20-year masterplan?" "Did the multisite church have a contingency plan for loss of membership?" "How is the church responding to the change in demographics?"

The value of information shared by entities like Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church with small multisite churches of similar internal demographics is immeasurable. Carpenters use the data and tools of their trade, like hammer, measuring tape, nails, etc., to make

proper decisions. Pastors use data from the Bible, colleagues, and research to enact rightful decisions. When it comes to multisite campuses, however, it is necessary that they also conduct dialogues with pastors who have already engaged in this style of ministry. It will be necessary over time to update consistently the information extracted from this dissertation's interviews, as information is ever changing.

The review of literature selected texts that addressed the primary concern of this project, multisite campuses. The review identified the standard modes of operating multisite churches, and the how-to content of Surrat, Ligon, and Bird's writings proved to be particularly invaluable to this study. Their practical methodology was in line with the ideas implemented by Christ Temple Full Gospel Baptist Church:

> According to surveys we have conducted through leadership network, the most cited reason for launching multiple campuses or multiple venues is a lack of space, ranging from a lack of seats or parking spots at optimal service times, to coning or building restrictions on future growth. The second most-cited reason is a vision to impact through "more" instead of "bigger" a desire to avoid certain down sides of mega churches.[103]

The literature of review material could not cover the uniqueness of the project, for there was lack of content on both small churches and the African American faith community. It did cover the multisite church concept, but due to the aforementioned absences, it could not offer much on such essential aspects as the role of culture in small church multisite planting. The existing literature speaks to a global audience regarding the multisite phenomenon, but it does

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[103] Surrat, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multisite Church Revolution*, 102.

not speak to the specific demographic under consideration here. This dissertation, accompanied as it is by the data retrieved from the six participating pastors, begins to remedy the lack of cultural relevance to the African American community. The literature adequately covered such subjects as programmatic movement and complexities of multisite campuses, but it did not address the objective of the project, thereby excluding certain readers due to their race. The literature, frankly, focused on the white experience almost exclusively and certainly to a fault.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, mega-churches as well as multisite campuses have begun offering online worship experience to parishioners who would normally attend in person. The COVID effect has changed the dynamics of multisite campuses. There were limited gatherings of parishioners in 2020 and in 2021 due to CDC guidelines. Currently, some churches are holding weekly services with limited numbers based on state requirements. Many worshipers have turned to virtual gatherings via Facebook, Instagram, local church websites, and YouTube. The United States Supreme Court has heard cases to allow houses of worship to make their own decision regarding how many people can gather.

The literature of review could not, obviously, cover multisite church building during a global pandemic, and therefore this project had to discover its own way of addressing the impact of COVID-19 on multisite campuses. Churches operated with in-person services and virtual worship experiences. Christ Temple airs via a social media platform at 9:11 and 10:30 each morning to catch multiple audiences. The pandemic changed the way church presented itself to parishioners and to the world. Technology is the medium by which the church communicates to the world. The literature review provided much practical information for multiple site locations, but no one could have anticipated that a pandemic would oblige a small African American

church to move to this type of ministry. The project was timely, therefore, in yielding new and useful lessons.

The researcher learned nine valuable lessons from his experiences and his research: 1) Each multisite system is different; 2) There must be complete and widespread commitment for a multisite church to succeed; 3) There must be clear understandings of job duties and operational processes between the senior pastor and the campus pastors; 4) There are differences between multisites and multistate campuses; 5) Pastors and congregations alike should not take anything for granted and must prepare to be responsive; 6) Consistency is the key to success; 7) One successful method of operation will not suit all projects of this nature; 8) Racial approaches to building multisites differ drastically; and 9) The ability to adjust is imperative to success.

Examining multisites yielded various results, but there was one clear similarity, and ironically, it is that each planting system is different. There are no identical multisite church operations. Each multisite church operation is unique to its community, vision, and mission. Some of the factors that impact building these churches have to do with vision, volunteers, geographic locations, and finances. And yet, the vision at heart is singular: Jesus' vision of the church declared in Matt 28:19–20 and Acts: 1:8 is for the Body of Christ to evangelize the lost and to make disciples.

Each pastor leads their local assembly to accomplish this goal in different ways, however, based on particular skill sets, direction from God, and parishioner demographics. These attributes alone will yield different results in terms of finances and new knowledge, but the vision of the church regarding the multisite planting must remain clear and concise. The stakeholders must ensure that the congregation is aware of its duties of participation as soon as the idea a multisite church begins. The pastor and the governing church council alone cannot achieve a fully

functional multisite church concept. The church and an adequate number of volunteers must undergird the mission if it is to be successful.

A physical church building requires maintenance workers, i.e., Sunday morning volunteers for logistical and ministry operations. Recruiting volunteers is essential for the successful programmatic movement of a multisite campus. Volunteers should understand their duties and the duration of their commitment. A clearly articulated request is key to securing volunteers. The more information provided in this request, the easier it will be for potential volunteers to make the positive choice of supporting the venture. Staffed properly, the multisite church concept will work well. Lack of support is often quite detrimental to a satellite church's success.

Likewise, builders would do well to consider how various climates impact building design, ministry, etc. Careful planners should also consider the culture of each city and state to design and execute a successful multisite campus. Proper planning and timing are therefore essential to multisite expansion. There is a season when farmers plant seed and a season when they reap the harvest. Bishop Walker explained that only when a church is at least at 70% capacity for two consecutive months is it time to consider expansion. This researcher also asserts that the multisite church must know the zip code in which most of its potential congregants reside, meaning, it must understand the demographics and needs of its future attendees.

The researcher also asserts the importance of building commitment with congregants prior to launching a multisite church. There must be a series of meetings with the laity addressing their questions to gain collaboration. The expansion plan must factor in the toll of human and financial resources.

The collaborators should evaluate the demographics and the city's masterplan to ensure that the new site befits the expansion plan. The demographic assessment will inform the researcher on the ministries that would best serve that community. Collaborators should also make and maintain contact with local civic organizations and the community ensure their willingness too.

Systems are only as strong as the personnel that executes their mechanisms. The multisite campus can only succeed when leadership and parishioners invest in it. Leadership is pivotal to the success of any church but especially in the multistate campus system. Leadership includes pastoral staff, church councils, and all staff positions. There must be complete participation from leadership and staff to achieve success. Parishioner investment is also critical to the execution of multisite campuses. The primary reason why churches establish multisite campuses is to meet the needs of church members. Existing and new parishioners should receive articulated onboarding instructions and the time to process the idea of becoming one church in multiple locations. Those people selected to be campus pastors will also play a vital role on this process.

Campus pastors should know well the mission of the main campus, so they may align with it. Campus pastors must reflect the main vision and bring continuity to each campus. A campus pastor's voice will carry more influence at that site than that of the senior pastor because they will be its main and visible leadership. The campus pastor is on-site to serve that community and its parishioners. The campus pastor will perform weddings, funerals, and baptisms, and counsel and visit the sick as any senior pastor serving his community. The campus pastor is not only the representative of the local assembly to the community but also God's representative to that community.

Lack of understanding or miscommunication can derail any project. Mistrust or misinformation between the principles of the pastoral leadership team can complicate matters to the point of extinction of the multisite campus. The experience of ending the New Orleans team's location taught the researcher how a lack of continuity in governance may lose an entire multisite campus. It is imperative to clarify the roles, expectations, and assessments of relevant personnel before engaging into an agreement. Likewise, all role-players must evaluate terms of resignation, re-assignment, and termination before signing a contract. Dissolution of the agreement between all parties may lead to a rift between campuses, which may leave parishioners vulnerable and susceptible to church predators. Comprehensive objectives are a necessity within the pastoral leadership team. Everybody must take steps to prevent against damage within pastoral and leadership teams.

In September 2005, after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Logos Christian Fellowship held worship services in four locations: Houston, Texas, New Orleans, Louisiana Atlanta, Georgia; and Birmingham, Alabama, eventually setting in New Orleans and Atlanta. The desire to minister as a multistate multisite campus was alluring but well beyond the researcher's church ability to execute in an excellent manner. A multistate ministry requires advanced technologies, an extensive staff, a professional software system, and sufficient revenue to operate with proficiency until the sites are able to become financially independent. Personnel might become stretched when operating a multisite campus but pushed beyond the pale when operating a multistate multisite ministry. Christ Temple was unequipped economically, and its personnel unpossessed of the facilities to operate a ministry of that capacity. This lesson prompted the researcher to realize an old adage of the African American community: take nothing for granted.

Complacency can sometimes produce a false positive. A false positive "is a result that shows something is present when it really is not."[104] People overlook the falsity of the sign because the optics of success are seductive. The number of people uniting with the church and the ability to pay the bills may mask the reality of the situation. The allure of success may hinder true assessment of the situation. Success hides fatigue, stress, discord and so much more. Simple goal achievement does signal genuine success. True success is in the journey and not in crossing the finish line. Consistency is a better measure of success.

Consistency may be boring because it is repetitious, and yet repeated actions bring stability to an organization. Repetition allows people to learn and time to understand how and why the mode of operation functions the way it does. It also an organization time and opportunity to perfect systems to suit its needs, therefore building sustainability and adaptability. Clarity and consistency are an important ingredients to the leadership team for multisite campuses to function.

This study allowed the researcher to cyanine various church ministries of African American descent throughout the country. America is a melting pot of cultures, and inside the African American ethnicity, there are many cultures.

The researcher typically purchases one-size-fits-all caps. There are times, however, when the researcher must purchase caps by size because not all manufacturers make adjustable ones. In the same way, the researcher has discovered by researching various multisite churches, that no model that will work for every situation. All churches must design systems that works for their unique situation. Each multisite may glean lessons from other multisites, but they must adjust the

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[104] "False Positive," Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary.false_positive.

information to meet their needs. There are multisites that have personnel but lack finances; those that have resources but lack staff; and those that have both or neither.

The researcher discovered that ethnical approaches to multisites differ drastically. White multisite churches perform surveys and cost analyses, conduct volunteer campaigns, prepare a business plans, solicit various committee votes, and usually request the church body to ratify recommendations before they activate multisite churches. In the African American church traditionally, however, the pastor proposes a vision, searches for a building and prays to God to provide finances through future parishioners or via a giving campaign. The objectives are similar: to expand the Kingdom of God via multisite churches. The methodology and procedures of implementation are vastly different. In many small African American churches, the pastor's voice is the deciding factor on most matters. This style of leadership is good if there need for immediate attention to a matter, but it is not a sound business model for sustainability. This model is personality-driven, and when that personality is no longer there, chaos may well ensue, especially if a plan is not in place.

Multisite campuses are experimental in nature. There are no guarantees that a multisite campus will succeed. It must be solid in its biblical foundation and mission, yet flexible in mode of operation and methodology as the need arises. Diverse thinking and responses are necessary, for change may be necessary. Multisites will profit from making decisions based on mission rather than method. A lack of willingness to experiment with various ideas and methods will be harmful for a multisite campus. The ability or lack therefore to make quick adjustments may ensure success, a downward spiral, or becoming stuck in an unprofitable status quo. The lessons this research yielded are valuable not only to this researcher but for future ones too.

The results of this research may be beneficial to other minority churches. Many minority ethnicities share similar financial hardships as African Americans, and many are commercial, like the African Americans. Anyone may profit from this research, but minorities stand to benefit most.

This research project was based on the African American small church in a southern state. Georgia is in the United States "Bible Belt," (i.e., Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee). The Bible Belt is where conservative religious belief mainly operates. "When American geographers map rates of religious belief and regular attendance at places of worship, a distinct region of religiosity appears on the map of the United States. This region is known as the Bible Belt, and while it can be measured in a variety of ways, it tends to include much of the American south."[105] This area, more conservatively religious in nature, would embrace multisite locations faster than other parts of the country.

There are states like Wyoming, Montana, Vermont, and Idaho where the number of African American residents are relatively low. This research project would not perform as well in states of low African American population density. The need for multisite campuses in less populated African American cities and states is non-existent.

In 1990, there were ten multisite churches in the United States. In 2014, there were[106]

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[105] www.thoughtco.com

[106] Eddie Gibbs, *Church Morph: How Megatrends are Reshaping Christian Communities*, Place of Publication: Baker Academic, 2009), p. 169.

8,000 multisite churches.[107] The multisite revolution has exploded in North America more than in any other continent. This project, which centers around the small churches of African American communities, would not be as effective globally.

There are many religions around the world. Christianity is not as dominant as it has been in the past. The number of people of African descent is smaller worldwide than in America. There is need for small multisite churches outside of this ethnicity (African descent) worldwide, but not inside it. The substantive material of this research may still apply, but not in the context for which it was written.

There are always many lessons to learn. The *Star Trek* mantra, "to go where no one has gone before," stands here. The Enterprise's mission was to explore galaxies. The researcher discovered that time will always yield a need for further study. As a student of the word of God, the researcher shares that "the progressive character of divine revelation is recognized in relation to all the great doctrines of the Bible. What at first is only obscurely and limited is gradually unfolded in subsequent parts of the sacred volume, until the truth is revealed in its fullness."[108] This wisdom teaches that time will yield more data about almost anything.

One important lesson is the value of investigating churches that are already operating as a multisites. One may avoid pitfalls by learning from the wisdom and mistakes of those who came before. Bishop Walker explained the need to shadow and learn from a pastor who has successfully operated a multisite church. The purpose of a tour guide is to lead one through a new experience. The tour guide provides the history and shares the value of the tour, allowing the tourist to exit with more information than before entering. An experienced multisite pastor or

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[107] Ed Stetzer, "Multisite Churches are Here, and Here, and Here to Stay," ChristianityToday.com, last modified February 20, 2014, url…

[108] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (Peabody, State: Hendrickson, 2003) 446.

lay leader will have data that a novice to the multisite concept does not possess. This researcher relied on his access to Bishop Morton and Bishop Darryl Brister for guidance and wise counsel on how to start and operate a multisite church. The researcher also investigated pastors who were operating multisite churches throughout the United States via the internet and television.

The researcher also learned the value of casting vision with a team rather than alone. He modeled the pollical spectrum of political candidates delivering their platform; they have surrogates who talk on their behalf. Rumors can be controlled when many people speak on behalf of the leader's platform. The researcher views this process as collaboration and emblematic of a shared leadership approach. The ability to speak to small pockets of people is important, because the combination of small groups will lead to the message, positive or negative, circulating through the entire congregation. The investment of key leaders is important in the process of becoming a multisite church. The rollout of the vision should have leadership support prior to its presentation to the church as a whole for consent.

There are two primary factors that demand further examination: 1) the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on multisites, and 2) how can this research cross pollinate with other ethnicities. Only time and more research can yield a greater result. The true impact of COVID-19 upon the world will be studied for decades to come. The impact of this virus upon the church will not be known fully for ten to twenty years. The Universal church has not gathered together in over nine months.

Human beings like to communicate within close distance. Social skills have been hampered. People will have to learn how to re-engage one another. Until the vaccine is operable, people will fear large gatherings, dreading possible sadness and even death. Young people's interactions many have permanently moved from making personal connections to using

computer over the internet. The COVID-19 pandemic's impact is the great unknown that people will understand better only in time. The question for this researcher is will the pandemic illustrate the virtues of internet worship permanently and spell the beginning of the end of mega churches and multisite churches?

Technology has made the world smaller. Humankind can reach across the globe by pressing a button. Christ Temple currently uses a streaming platform called Switcher Study. One of its features is the ability to cross pollinate, meaning to show one video on multiple platforms. Further research can focus on this data and its impact on various ethnicities and in various settings. Thirty years ago, no one could have imagined the multisite church expansion. Certainly, ten years ago no one could have thought small church multisite campuses would thrive in the African American population.

Life is ever evolving, and the need for continuous exploration is a given. Ten years from now, this model may be obsolete. It is this researcher's hope, however, that it will be the genesis of the kind of research that will further study. The enormity of studies by Thomas Edison, George Washington Carver, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford, and other great inventors had to endure in order to lead to today's technological evolution.

The multisite church is no longer as new phenomenon, but its diversification is. Completed and forthcoming research that addresses ethnicities throughout America and the world will more deeply understand these particular sectors. In 1908, the Model T became available for purchase in America through the Ford Motor Company, and in 2020, the same company produces over 30 models. Just as Ford Motors has expanded in over a century, the same has been true for the universal church over the last two thousand years. The church spread from Jesus and his twelve disciples to the 120 in the upper room at Pentecost, and today there are

millions of Christians. There are various denominations, sizes, ethnicities, but all share the common cause of leading the lost to God through Christ Jesus.

One day, the same concept may be true for the multisite evolution. What started out as one church expanding to meet the needs of its parishioners has evolved to over 8,000 multisite churches at the end of 2014. Multisite churches comprise mega churches but also churches with as few as 500 members. The purpose of this project is to share how multisites may work for churches with fewer than 100 members.

This project focused on how to build multisite small churches in the African American community. It discussed an evolution within the multisite phenomenon and attempted to provide guidance. Although, the multisite church concept has become quite popular generally, in the African American culture, it has been relatively non-existent. The African American community has embraced the multisite concept for mega-churches but not for small churches with 100 or fewer members. This dissertation asked and answered the question if it is plausible or possible for small churches in the African American community to operate multisites.

Change is inevitable. Progress is not change; it is the natural proof of life. Most humans grow from embryos to adults, and all eventually die. Most people move from baby hair, to gray hair, and perhaps even to no hair. Change is natural and inevitable, but progress is a choice. The dictionary defines progress as "a movement toward a goal or to be at a further or higher stage."[109]

Multisite churches are alive today because they made a choice toward progress. The intent of this project was to be a roadmap for a pastor of a small church in the African American community who had heard God call them to lead a multisite church. This dissertation is a

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[109] "Progress," Dictionary.com, date, url.

resource to glean from about how to do so. The lessons have been painful but also always satisfying. The joy is my obedience to God and the journey. The experiences that brought this dissertation forth was well worth it.

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Appendix A: Consent Forms

CONSENT and STAMPED CONSENT FORMS
Pastoral Leadership Strategies for a Multi-Site Church in a Small Church Setting in the African American
Community

Lionel R. Catchings

Liberty University

School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study of Lionel R. Catchings. This research will focus on multi-site churches in the African American community in a small church context. You were selected as a possible participant because you pastor a multi-site church in the African American community. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Lionel R. Catchings, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to provide a model of how small churches can function as a multi-site church within the African American community.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Take part in a 30 to 45 minute audio recorded interview.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risk that you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits:

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include more churches that will bring higher moral standards and values to the community of the local church.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University.

How to Withdraw from the Study:

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Lionel R. Catchings. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 678.8862968 and/or lcatchings@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Greg Faulls, at gsfaulls@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____

Signature of Investigator   Date

CONSENT FORM

Pastoral Leadership Strategies for a Multi-Site Church in a Small Church Setting in the African
American Community
Lionel R. Catchings
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study. This research will focus on multi-site churches in the
African American community in a small church context. You were selected as a possible
participant because you pastor a multi-site church in the African American community. Please
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churches can function as a multi-site church within the African American community.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Take part in a 30- to 45-minute, audio-recorded interview.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risk that
you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include more churches that will bring higher moral standards and values to
the community of the local church.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored
securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Recordings will be stored on a
password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access
to these recordings. Participants will be named in this thesis.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether
or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact
the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you
choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be
included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Lionel R. Catchings. You may
ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him

Appendix B: IRB Form

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY (D. MIN)
IRB APPLICATION

IRB APPLICATION #:   *(To be assigned by the IRB)*

I. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Complete each section of this form, using the gray form fields (use the tab key).
2. If you have questions, hover your cursor over the blue question mark (?) to the right of each heading, or refer to the IRB Application Instructions.
3. Review the IRB Application Checklist.
4. Email the completed application, with the following supporting documents (as separate word documents) to irb@liberty.edu:
    a. Consent Forms, Permission Letters, Recruitment Materials
    b. Surveys, Questionnaires, Interview Questions, Focus Group Questions
5. **Submit one signed copy of the signature page (available on the IRB website) to any of the following:**
    a. Email: As a scanned document to irb@liberty.edu
    b. Fax: 434-522-0506
    c. Mail: IRB 1971 University Blvd. Lynchburg, VA 24515
    d. In Person: Green Hall, Suite 1887
6. Once received, applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
7. Preliminary review may take up to 3 weeks.
8. Most applications will require 3 sets of revisions.
9. The entire process may take between 1 and 2 months.

Note: Applications and supporting documents with the following problems will be returned immediately for revisions:

1. Grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.
2. Lack of professionalism.
3. Lack of consistency or clarity.
4. Incomplete applications.

   Failure to minimize these errors will cause delays in your processing time

Appendix C: 10 Open Ended Questions

Lionel R. Catchings

L21856997

DMIN

10 Open Ended Questions

1.   What is your vision for this church?

2.   What is your brand?

3.   How have you been able to maintain your brand as a multi-site church?

4.   What are the challenges of operating as a multi-site church?

5.   What is the organizational structure used to facilitate this multi-site church?

6.   How do you develop and select campus pastors?

7.   What is your leadership development strategy?

8.   What are your formal and informal process for developing lay leaders?

9.   What is the financial system for funding the multi-site concept?

10. How do you keep all sites moving in the same vision and same core values?