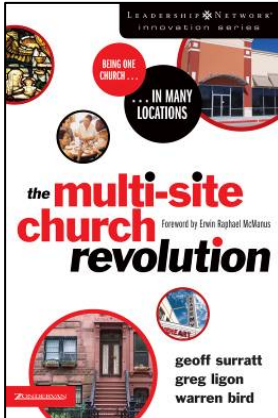


Frequently Asked Questions about Multi-Site Churches



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❖ What is a multi-site church?

A multi-site church is one church meeting in multiple locations – different rooms on the same campus, different locations in the same region, or in some instances, different cities, states, or nations. A multi-site church shares a common vision, budget, leadership and board.

❖ Definition of Multi-Site Terms

Multi-site church: Short for multiple-site church, or one church with multiple locations. A church is considered multi-site if it has more than one worship venue, more than one campus or a combination of both.

Campus: Any location where a complete church ministry (i.e., adult worship, nursery, children's programming) takes place. A multi-site church may have several campuses.

Branch or satellite: An off-site campus.

Venue: A location where a worship service for adults is held, such as a church's fellowship hall, gym, or chapel. For example, Saddleback Church has one campus in Lake Forest, CA, but that campus currently has seven venues for adult worship.

Worship service: Christ-centered community that usually includes singing, praying, and preaching. It happens regularly, usually weekly. Also known as a celebration, service of divine worship, worship experience, and sometimes simply "church."

Strategic partner: At North Point Community Church in Atlanta, where this idea is most actively being pioneered, a strategic partner is a church that shares North Point's mission, strategy, values, and beliefs but remains a separate entity.

❖ **What does a multi-site church look like?**

A multi-site church can resemble any of a wide variety of models. For some churches, having multiple sites involves only a worship service at each location; for others, each location has a full range of support ministries. Some churches use videocast sermons (recorded or live); others have in-person teaching on-site. Some churches maintain a similar worship atmosphere and style at all their campuses, and others allow or invite variation.

Video-Venue Model	Creating one or more on-campus environments that use video-cast sermons (live or recorded), often varying the worship style
Regional-Campus Model	Replicating the experience of the original campus at additional campuses in order to make church more accessible to other geographic communities
Teaching-Team Model	Leveraging a strong teaching team across multiple locations at the original campus or an off-site campus
Partnership Model	Partnering with a local business or nonprofit organization to use its facility beyond a mere “renter” arrangement
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

❖ **What kind of church uses the multi-site approach?**

The multi-site approach works best for already growing churches but is used by all types of churches. The majority of multi-site churches are suburban, but many can be found in urban contexts and some in rural contexts. Multi-sites are found among old churches and new, mainline and nondenominational, and in all regions of the country. Smaller churches (930-200 people) tend to do multi-site as a niche outreach or as a regional-campus approach. Medium-size churches (200-800 people) that go multi-site tend to have only two or three campuses. Larger churches (800-2,000 people) and megachurches (2,000 people and up) are the most likely to be multi-site and to do it in a way that develops a large network of campuses.

❖ **Why become multi-site?**

The purpose of becoming a multi-site church is to make more and better disciples by bringing the church closer to where people are. The motivation is to do a better job of loving people, including different types of people, with an outcome of making significant advances in obeying Jesus’ Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40) and Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). Churches report that conversion growth is greater on their extension campuses than at the original campus.

❖ What are the advantages of a multi-site church?

1. Assists in reaching friends and family unwilling to travel a great distance to church
2. Brings together the best aspects of larger churches and smaller churches
3. Increases the total number of available seats during optimal worship times
4. Overcomes geographic barriers when a church facility is landlocked or tightly zoned
5. Enables untapped talent to emerge each time a new venue or site is opened
6. Mobilizes volunteers through an added variety of ministry opportunities
7. Improves a church's stewardship of funds and resources
8. Enables a church to extend itself into smaller niches
9. Models and trains people for church planting elsewhere
10. Provides a pipeline for the development of emerging leaders and future staff

❖ What are the disadvantages of a multi-site church?

Going multi-site can stretch the budget, invite criticism from other churches, and make new demands on church leadership; therefore, to be successful, it is vital that the key leaders of the church be unified and enthusiastic about the decision to go multi-site.

❖ How long do multi-site churches last?

Several churches have been multi-site for up to twenty years, and a handful for even longer. Some churches use a multi-site approach as a transitional strategy during a building program or a seasonal outreach. Other churches intentionally choose to be multi-site only temporarily as a church-planting strategy to help new congregations start out strong.

❖ Can you be a multi-site church and still do church planting?

There are several churches that are multi-site but also do church planting. The key seems to be to be clear from the start if a new location is to be an on-going campus or a church plant. Each requires a different style of leadership and varying levels of investment from the original campus. A few churches that are actively doing both are Bethlehem Baptist Church – Minneapolis MN www.hopeingod.org, Lake Pointe Church – Rockwall TX www.lakepointe.org, Community Christian Church – Naperville IL www.communitychristian.org.

Check out the following for more information: *Launch Factors: When to Start Your Next Venue or Site; The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, pages 18, 51-53, 65-66, 116-118, 126-127, 131-132, 177-180.

❖ **Which churches are doing a successful hybrid model of moving a ‘venue’ to become a ‘church plant’?**

New Hope Christian Fellowship www.enehope.org, Honolulu HI, pastored by Wayne Cordeiro has had a successful model. In 2000, New Hope began its first off-site video venue, inviting church families by zip code to attend a new campus three miles away. This opened up room at the 1,200-seat high school auditorium that the church rented for worship services. New Hope had filled the auditorium for five services as well as an 800-seat overflow tent, where worshipers view the service on a nine-by-twelve-foot LED screen.

It became so popular that they moved to two Sunday services. Within the next three years, they began video venues in seven off-site locations. Each location, marked by a group of leaders who have pioneer hearts and the skills to lead, offers on-site worship, Sunday school, youth ministries, and a host of small group opportunities. One location is wired so that people can experience the message broadcast from the high school campus in real time, and others view it by watching a just-delivered DVD.

For Wayne, the satellite breakouts are a church-planting plan. This church-planting model is designed so that the campus pastors do only about 10 percent of the weekend preaching during the first year. Over the next year, the campus pastors notch up to handling 40 percent of the weekend preaching. During year two, it goes up to about 60 percent. In their third year, they can still use the DVDs but no more than 30 percent of the time. By the fourth year, they may use the DVDs only on special occasions.

❖ **How does a church stay true to the church’s identity and maintain unity as a multi-site church?**

The most important factor in maintaining unity as one church in many locations involves the church having a crystal clear understanding of their DNA – their vision, mission and values. Continuity comes as this DNA is replicated from campus to campus and venue to venue.

Resources that address this issue: *Extending Your Church To More Than One Place and One Church In Many Locations: What Multi-Site Churches do in Addition to Worship.* The 2003 *Survey of 1000 Multi-Site Churches* and the 2007 *Survey of 1000 Multi-Site Churches* also address maintaining the identity of the church.

❖ **How does a church address the issue of leadership development in a multi-site church?**

Leadership Development, whether the church is multi-site or not, is always a challenge. Churches that are addressing this issue are developing effective “leadership pipelines” to identify and release leaders in their congregation and community.

You will find more information in two of our resources: *The Leader-Making Challenge: 10 Ideas for Leadership Development in a Multi-Site Church* and *Leadership Development Tracking Tool: An Assessment Tool for Selecting and Developing Point Persons in Multi-Site Churches.*

❖ What about technology and media needs?

The list of technology and media needs varies from church to church. It is not uniquely different from one campus to many sites with the exception of having access between campuses. The access is most needed in areas of database, financial management and transfer of teaching if video or live transmission is being used. Some examples of databases that are being used are Fellowship One, Shelby Systems and ACS.

One of LN's resources is: *Quick Facts: Multi-Site Technology* which shows a comparison of what five churches are using.

❖ Should our church consider multi-site?

Expanding your church from one location to two or more is a move that has a great deal of potential but also tremendous risks. While the key criteria is, "What is God saying for your church in your community?" we've found that the following three questions often determine the success or failure of a church that is launching a new location. The decision makers in your congregation need to sort through these crucial issues.

1. **How healthy is your church?** Is your church growing? Is it a great gathering place for people to find their way to God, to be discipled, and to find a place of ministry? Are the members of your church excited about bringing family and friends? Launching a second site will not bring health to ailing congregation; and frankly it's generally not a good idea for an unhealthy church to reproduce itself. If you're unhealthy, why export your disease? One great way to check the health of your church is to take the Natural Church Development assessment (available at 222.ncd-international.org/public/profiles.html).
2. **Is there a driving impetus behind your desire to go multi-site?** All of the leaders we've talked with at successful multi-site churches chose to open a second site because they saw no better option for fulfilling God's purpose for their church. At some churches, the building was packed, they had run out of viable service times, and building a larger facility didn't seem to be the answer. At other churches, there was a sense of mission to go into the next city, into the next country, or across a cultural chasm they had been unable to cross. At still other churches, the congregation had a strong desire to take the ministry of their church into the neighborhoods of the members. In each case, though, multi-site was not seen as merely another program or strategy but rather as a key component in fulfilling their God-inspired vision. Starting a second site without a compelling drive behind it is like trying to give birth without being pregnant.
3. **Are the key leaders behind the decision?** Going multi-site can stretch the budget, invite criticism from other churches, and make new demands on church leadership; therefore, to be successful, it is vital that the key leaders of the church be unified and enthusiastic about the decision to go multi-site. While it is difficult to get 100 percent buy-in when moving in a new direction, if the senior leadership is not sold on the concept of being a church with multiple locations, it should be a major warning light.

One tool that may be helpful for your team is: *Should Your Church Go Multi-Site?*

❖ **Do multi-site churches have Saturday night services?**

There are several multi-site churches that have Saturday night services. The best successes are those that use an identical ministry to what is offered on Sunday morning (children, youth, Bible study, worship, etc.) where people don't feel a need to come back on Sunday morning because they missed something in programming or fellowship. If your community is accustomed to churches with Saturday evening services, then you know the local culture can support a growing Saturday evening service for your church.

❖ **Do you know of multi-site churches have adopted healthy congregations?**

The following churches adopted healthy congregations opposed to dying congregations: LifeChurch.tv www.lifechurch.tv, Edmond OK; The Chapel www.chapel.org, Grayslake IL; Lake Pointe Church www.lakepointe.org, Rockwall TX.

❖ **Are there any multi-site churches that are bilingual?**

New Life Community Church www.newlifechicago.org, Chicago IL, Healing Place Church www.healingplacechurch.org, Baton Rouge LA, Lake Pointe Church www.lakepointe.org, Rockwall TX, Community Christian Church www.communitychristian.org, Naperville IL are great examples of churches with bilingual ministry. New Life Community has nine campuses, five of which are Spanish speaking.

❖ **Do you know of any Canadian multi-site churches?**

We are familiar with a few Canadian multi-site churches. Chartwell Baptist Church www.chartwellchurch.org – Oakville, Ontario, RockPointe Church www.rockpointe.ca – Calgary, Alberta, and Southside Community Church www.southside.ca – Surrey, British Columbia have been a part of our Multi-Site Churches Leadership Community groups since 2003 and can be a valuable resource to you. The list continues to grow as we hear of congregations launching additional campuses.

❖ **Do any churches use video teaching from other churches?**

There are a few churches that use other churches' video teaching. One example is Heartland Community Church www.heartland.cc, Rockford, IL.

Resources

❖ How can I stay informed about what's new in the multi-site movement?

To stay informed about what's new you may sign up for our free e-publication at http://www.leadnet.org/epubs_signup.asp

❖ Do you have other blogs that ever mention multi-site church issues?

A blog was developed as a result of our Multi-Site Churches Leadership Community gatherings. Go to www.multisitechurchrevolution.com for church connections, latest news, and other helpful information.

Our Leadership Network Learnings blog occasionally mentions issues dealing with multi-site churches. Visit this blog at <http://learnings.leadnet.org/>

To stay informed about new multi-site resources, you may sign up for our free e-publication at http://www.leadnet.org/epubs_signup.asp and indicate interest in multi-site.

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❖ Are there any multi-site conferences or seminars coming up in the near future?

Leadership Network helped host three Coast to Coast Multi-Site Conferences in the past three years. Regionals are being planned for 2008. To stay informed, you can check http://www.leadnet.org/LC_multisitechurches.asp for updates.

As more churches have gone multi-site, some mainline denominations have begun to address this issue by having workshops at their denominational gatherings.

If you are thinking about becoming multi-site, you can also go to www.newthing.org to find out more about the Multi-Site Practicum which Community Christian Church hosts.

If you are interested in video venues, North Coast Church has some very helpful information. Check it out by going to <http://www.northcoastchurch.com/pastors/>

❖ **Are there any books available that address multi-site churches?**

The Multi-Site Church Revolution book authored by Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon and Warren Bird was released in May 2006. The book includes many excerpts from the reports mentioned below in the next question. To order, go to

http://leadnet.org/LC_Resources.asp

❖ **Are there other resources available regarding multi-site churches?**

There are several concept papers and tools that have been published as a result of our leadership community gatherings plus surveys that have been conducted:

Extending Your Church To More Than One Place

- ❖ The research behind this report draws on the experience of twelve pioneering churches selected to participate in a Leadership Network Multi-site Leadership Community.

Launch Factors: When to Start Your Next Venue or Site

- ❖ Multi-site is so much more than multiple services. This paper addresses the factors that have lead to new sites for churches with a proven track record of being “one church in multiple locations.”

Avoiding Detours: Insights from Multi-Site Pioneers Who Are Leading the Way

- ❖ Readers of magazines for church leaders consistently report that they like it better when an article talks about a church’s ministry warts, not just its good looks. Discover insights from churches that have developed a healthy multiple-locations approach to ministry.

Avoiding Detours – 2 Years Later: Insights from Multi-Site Veterans Widening the Path

- ❖ In 2004, several trendsetting multi-site churches shared what insights they wished to offer to those embarking on their own multi-site adventure in the report above. Find out what they learned from their experiences 2 years later.

Should Your Church Go Multi-Site?: A Self Diagnostic Tool

- ❖ How can your congregation know if a multi-site approach is right for you? Try this self-test diagnostic tool including 25 key evaluative questions to gain insight.

One Church In Many Locations: What Multi-Site Churches do in Addition to Worship

- ❖ Teaching, music, staffing, children’s ministry – there are numerous components of various complexities to consider when designing a multi-site church. Learn insights from 35 churches throughout North America that have experienced these challenges as they have become multi-site churches.

The Leader-Making Challenge: 10 Ideas for Leadership Development in a Multi-Site Church

- ❖ Ten practical ideas for leadership development in a multi-site church. These ideas come from the discoveries of churches that are pacesetters in the emerging multi-site movement. Most belong to a Multi-Site Churches Leadership Community sponsored by Leadership Network.

Leadership Development Tracking Tool: An Assessment Tool for Selecting and Developing Point Persons in Multi-Site Churches

- ❖ The need to develop leaders, both new and existing, rates high on the priority list of almost every church. In churches that have multiple sites or multiple venues, it usually moves from high priority to top priority. This tool will help your team work through some questions and ideas to help you select and develop point persons.

Multi-Site Special Report

- ❖ On September 11, 2001, Leadership Network held its first forum for multi-site churches. This special report contains some observations from the approaches shared there, as well as some staff research conducted in preparation for the forum.

Quick Facts: Staffing and Structure

- ❖ A quick comparison of the basic staffing strategies of five multi-site churches. Who does the campus pastor report to? How are new staff found or recruited?

Quick Facts: Transferring the DNA

- ❖ An at-a-glance comparison of five different churches' models of transferring their DNA - the values and culture of the church - to new sites. Profiles of each church include comparison of their approaches, examples of a major DNA quality, and how leaders learn the DNA.

Quick Facts: Funding the Multi-Site Vision

- ❖ Learn how several successful multi-site churches have funded the start-up and expansion of their ministry. This Quick Facts summary offers an at-a-glance comparison of proven funding methods being used by pioneers in the multi-site movement.

Quick Facts: Multi-Site Technology

- ❖ Learn about the important role that technology plays in the ministry of several successful multi-site churches. This Quick Facts summary offers an at-a-glance comparison of proven technology solutions being used by pioneers in the multi-site movement.

2007 Survey of 1000 Multi-Site Churches

- ❖ Did you know that the greatest reason churches go Multi-Site is for evangelistic outreach? One of the largest research projects ever undertaken by Leadership Network, the 2007 Survey of 1,000 Multi-Site Churches contains data and insights from some of the most influential Multi-Site Churches in the U.S. and Canada.

2003 Survey of 1000 Multi-Site Churches

- ❖ During late 2003 Leadership Network identified almost 1,000 churches across North America who were doing church in more than one location. Read about a dozen of the most significant findings including additional venues, meeting locations, greatest surprises.

Survey of Churches That Worship In Movie Theaters

- ❖ This report of findings from 2006 survey of churches that worship in movie theaters contains 25 illustrated slides, ready for presentation.

For a complete list and to obtain these free downloadable resources go to

http://leadnet.org/LC_Resources.asp

❖ **Are there any podcasts available that address multi-site issues?**

Several podcasts addressing multi-site have been developed and released since 2006:

For a complete list and to obtain these free podcasts go to http://leadnet.org/LC_Resources.asp

Multi-Site Revolution Conference: Jim Tomberlin

- ❖ Jim Tomberlin served 5 years at Willow Creek Community Church, heading its transition into becoming one church on several regional campuses. He is now an independent consultant for other multi-site churches through Third Quarter Consulting, Scottsdale, AZ. "By the end of this decade every midsize town and major city in America will have a multi-site church," Jim says as he traces developments from the first gathering of multi-site innovators four years ago. "It's not a one size fits all idea," he observes. He also offers some predictions for the future suggesting that multi-site will be the "vehicle for a great awakening in the twenty-first century."

Multi-Site Revolution Conference: Barry Brown

- ❖ Barry Brown heads a division of National Cinemedia that specializes in helping churches hold worship services in movie theaters. He describes a typical arrangement between church and theater, offers specific how-to advice, and outlines the pros and cons of a theater-based church or church satellite site. If your church is interested in pursuing this option, contact Cinemedia through <http://www.nationalcinemedia.com> or call 866-633-8232.

Insights on Acquisitions and Pain of Change: Kevin Penry

- ❖ One of the many impulses fueling the multi-site church movement is the merger idea. For various reasons one church asks another church, "How could we join what you're doing? How could we become a church that follows your approach to ministry?" LifeChurch.tv in Edmond, Oklahoma, has two experiences with this, and is actively exploring others. Kevin Penry talks about the concept and the motivation point. People are willing to go through the inevitable pain associated with a transition when they want what's ahead more than they want to continue what they're experiencing now.

Greg Surratt: Video Sermon Does Not Substitute for a Pastor

- ❖ Seacoast Church currently has 9 different campuses, and it continues to pray and plan toward the launch of more campuses. The primary teaching comes from our Mt. Pleasant campus by videocast. This model prompts questions about whether a teaching pastor in one city can effectively pastor people hundreds of miles away. The answer is no, and in the accompanying podcast lead pastor Greg Surratt explains Seacoast's approach and rationale.

Multi-Site: How the Questions Are Changing

- ❖ What multi-site questions are being asked now that weren't being voiced two years ago? Answer: lots! Current hot topics range from leadership DNA to organizational design, according to Troy McMahon, campus pastor, and Jon Ferguson, community pastor and teacher, both at Community Christian Church, Naperville, IL. This interview, conducted in May 2006 at the Coast-to-Coast Multi-Site Conference, occurred just after a message from Dave Ferguson who is lead pastor at Community Christian, and refers to it. Leadership Network's Dave Travis conducts the interview, and the first speaker is Troy McMahon.

Why Multi-Site Instead of Traditional Church Planting

- ❖ This interview contains a short dialog with two long-time leaders at Community Christian Church, based in Naperville, IL. Troy McMahon, campus pastor and Jon Ferguson, community pastor and teacher, are also both involved in the Community Christian-sponsored New Thing network whose mission is to be a catalyst for a movement of reproducing churches relentlessly dedicated to helping people find their way back to God. Their answer to whether multi-site is better than more traditional approaches of church planting is to argue for a both-and strategy. Leadership Network's Dave Travis conducts the interview. Jon Ferguson speaks first.

Dennis Choy: Going Video

- ❖ Dennis Choy, Technical Production Pastor at North Coast Church, Vista, CA, was one of the experts present at the May 2006 Coast to Coast Multi-Site Conference held at Seacoast Church. In this interview he fields questions about how to enter the world of video – everything from price ranges to types of equipment needed (camera, mixer, recording deck, cables, tripods, etc). He also comments on implications of high-definition format. He is interviewed by John Laster of Rochester Church, Dryden, MI and Leadership Network's Dave Travis, who emceeds the interview.

So You Want To Go Multi-Site?

- ❖ Greg Surratt is the founding and Senior Pastor of Seacoast Church, which has 9 locations with 10 distinct venues in South Carolina and Georgia. Known for creativity and transparency, Seacoast Church – with original campus in a suburb of Charleston, SC, has grown to 7,500 in weekend attendance since its beginning in 1988. Over 3,000 people worship each weekend in an off-site campus. Originally presented at the Coast to Coast Multi-Site Conference at Seacoast in May 2006, Greg talks in this excerpt about why Seacoast decided to become one church in multiple locations.

Multi-Site Leadership in a Young Church: An Interview with The Well's Brad Bell

- ❖ Brad Bell is lead pastor at The Well, Fresno, CA, a new church where the average age is 25 ("a ton of fun and no budget"). He presents multi-site as a way to broaden The Well's missional outreach, and he explains why he sees multi-site as a missional movement rather than a fad. The church's vision is to use different venues with varying musical styles to reach different people with the same message. Learn how this fast-growing church has embraced multi-site as part of their culture and intentional mindset.

Rapid Growth to Three Satellite Campuses: Lessons Learned

- ❖ Adding three new campuses in three months is daunting for any church. Celebration Church in Jackson, FL went down this road and shares their success and lessons learned. Testimonies from the church's executive pastor and one of the satellite campus pastors give insight to other churches about the lessons learned in launching satellite campuses, including technology implications gleaned along the way.

Launching Satellite Campuses with a Community-Minded Focus

- ❖ LifeBridge Christian Church of Longmont, CO knows all about impacting their community as an externally-focused church. Leadership Network asked the hard questions about being missionally intentional in adding churches to neighboring communities and found out how this church has made externally-focused and community-friendly the path to successfully adding new satellite campuses.

For a complete list and to obtain these free podcasts go to http://leadnet.org/LC_Resources.asp

❖ **Do you have a list of multi-site churches that we could contact for specific information about going multi-site?**

Visit our blog at www.multisitechurchrevolution.com where you will find a list of 52 churches that have participated in our leadership communities beginning in 2003. Scroll down the right hand column where you will see Group 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to click on the churches' websites. Feel free to browse their websites and contact any of them for more information.

❖ **What are some ways that churches keep their congregations informed as they transition from a single congregation to multi-site?**

There are various ways of keeping the congregation informed as the church moves through this transition such as informational meetings, newsletters, website announcements. Several churches post Q&A pages or informational pages on their church websites (samples below):

Broadway United Methodist Church, Bowling Green KY

<http://www.broadwayunited.org/Joel/index.asp>

Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis MN

<http://www.hopeingod.org/MultiCampus.aspx>

Discovery Church, Blackwood NJ

<http://www.discoverychurchnj.com/multisite.htm>

Grace Place Church, Berthoud CO (Update to congregation)

<http://www.graceplace.org/default.aspx?pid=375>

New Horizon United Methodist Church, Champaign IL

<http://www.newhorizonchurch.org/html/multisite.htm>

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ft. Worth TX

<http://worship.stpaulfw.com/page.php?page=template2.php&pageid=3ea4c7d770b57ed3c25bd0490a6235a8>

South Mountain Community Church, Draper UT

<http://www.smccutahwest.org/FAQwest.htm>

Vancouver Chinese Alliance Church, Vancouver BC Canada

<http://vcac.bc.ca/english/faqs.html>