

LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A MULTI-PLANTATION MINISTRY: BLENDING A MULTI-SITE AND CHURCH
PLANTING STRATEGY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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Lynchburg, Virginia

June, 2009

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ABSTRACT

A MULTI-PLANTATION MINISTRY: BLENDING A MULTI-SITE AND CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009

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A review of current literature shows a growing interest in the multi-site movement. However, very little is written about churches who are showing a commitment to both multi-site and to church planting. This kind of both/and commitment is called multi-plantation. The goal of this project is to provide a resource to pastors who are actively seeking to find new ways to fulfill the Great Commission. Through a study of the theological, ecclesiological, practical, and personal matters of multi-plantation ministry, the goal will be accomplished.

Abstract length: 84 words

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Meredith. You are my best friend and the greatest partner in ministry I could have ever asked for. I am forever grateful to God and you for joining me on this journey. I love you.

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INTRODUCTION

It was an icy morning in a northern suburb of Dallas, Texas. I had just resigned at a church in the area to accept a position at my home church back in Arkansas. I was scheduled to attend a Leadership Network conference with the Leadership Team of my new church in Arkansas when a crippling ice storm hit the Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas region. It was so severe that the team from Arkansas was not able to come. Not wanting to attend the conference alone, I reluctantly got in my car and braved the ice down the North Dallas Tollway to Bent Tree Bible Fellowship where the conference was held. It was there that God opened my eyes to a new strategy of fulfilling the Great Commission.

As I looked over the list of breakout sessions, I was drawn to a session that spoke about multi-site churches. I was naturally drawn towards this because of my background in multi-site. My senior year of high school, my home church, First Baptist Church of Springdale, Arkansas launched into the multi-site realm by starting a second campus called The Church at Pinnacle Hills in nearby Rogers, Arkansas. While doing my masters, I worked at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas. I had the opportunity to be a part of the launch team at Prestonwood North, a second location in Prosper, Texas.

The first day of the conference I went to the session on multi-site, which included a helpful analysis and dialogue from a few pastors. Two of the pastors included in this breakout were also a part of one the next day called *Multi-Plantation*. I decided to attend and I sat and listened as Greg Ligon of Leadership Network introduced pastors Mark

Driscoll of Mars Hill Church, Dave Ferguson of Community Christian Church, and Greg Surratt of Seacocast Church. Over the next hour or so, these pastors spoke of showing a commitment to both multi-site and to church planting. This idea of multi-plantation, named by Ligon and portrayed by these pastors, is something that has garnered my attention the past few months. That is the reason for this study.

CHAPTER ONE

THE VISION FOR MULTI-PLANTATION

A multi-plantation church is one that shows a commitment to and builds a strategy for going multi-site *and* for planting churches that are not considered campuses or locations of the main campus. In other words, they are a multi-site church that also plants separate churches. The three aforementioned churches have each created a church planting network in addition to being multi-site. The Association of Related Churches, New Thing Network, and Acts 29 Network are all ways that these multi-site local churches have attempted to create a movement of new church plants. However, churches need not think they have to create a church planting network to be considered a multi-plantation church. Some churches are a part of denominations that network together for the same purposes as that of a church planting network. For instance, since our church in Arkansas went multi-site in 2001, we have invested in or launched 34 churches. In addition to that, we are also a part of a denomination made up of churches that cooperate together to plant churches both nationally and internationally.

Why does multi-plantation ministry even need to be examined or promoted? Why can we not simply do things the way we have always done them? The reason is that America and the world are in desperate need of more and better churches. I agree with Bill Hybels who said, “The local church is the hope of the world.”¹ Our only hope of fulfilling the Great Commission is to have a renewed focus on evangelism in our local

¹ Lynne and Bill Hybels, *Rediscovering Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 12.

churches. The national scene is so bad that some are even beginning to describe our nation as a post-Christian society. As the unchurched population continues to grow in our own backyard, Barna estimates that there are nearly 100 million people in the United States alone who are unchurched.² Some even believe the percentage of unchurched people in our country is close to eighty percent.³ America is no longer America as we have known it.

With such bleak circumstances facing the American church, some may suggest that we just hold out and wait for the second coming of Jesus. Others, including myself, believe it is time for a revival in the local church. There was a time in history when Great Britain faced some dark times. After British and French forces retreated from Dunkirk and the Germans were sweeping through France, Winston Churchill gave these words to the British House of Commons in 1940,

We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing-grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender!⁴

Pastors and church leaders would be wise to have the fight and vigor of Churchill. While Churchill was fighting a physical battle, we are a part of a spiritual battle for the souls of men and women. We must never succumb to the enemy's temptation to be satisfied with the status quo. We must fight harder, pray longer, witness more frequently, and innovate

² The Barna Group, "The Barna Group – Grow Your Church from the Outside In," The Barna Group, http://www.barna.org/store?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage.tpl&category_id=1&product_id=14 (accessed June 13, 2009).

³ Aubrey Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 22.

⁴ The Churchill Centre and Museum, "Famous Quotations and Stories," The Churchill Centre and Museum, <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/learn/speeches/quotations/famous-quotations-and-stories> (accessed June 13, 2009).

more creatively with passionate pursuit of the advance of the gospel. Multi-Plantation is merely an innovative approach to fulfilling the Great Commission. Multi-Plantation churches refuse to buy into the lie that the church has had its best and most effective day. These churches look at the future and see endless possibilities for the local church to extend the gospel to the nations.

This work is not just about examining multi-site churches. It's not even just about looking at church planting. There are much greater books,⁵ blogs,⁶ and websites⁷ that give information on these things. Though both will be covered at different times throughout this work, there are many experts on both of these subjects that could speak and write in greater detail than I could about these topics. What I am setting out to do is identify a strategy that some churches are already implementing and promote it as a viable way to fulfill the Great Commission.

Multi-plantation gains its foundation from the centrality of the gospel mission of the local church given in Scripture. Acts 1 records the story of Jesus giving His disciples their final charge before He ascends into Heaven. In Acts 1:8, Jesus says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Multi-plantation is an effective way to fulfill this last commission of Jesus. Aubrey Malphurs writes,

It's important that church planters periodically ask themselves the basic questions, "What's Christ's church supposed to be doing, and who are we trying to reach?"

⁵ Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), and Scott McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movement's Next Generation* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009).

⁶ Ed Stetzer, "The Lifeway Research Blog," <http://blogs.lifeway.com/blog/edstetzer>, (accessed November 6, 2009).

⁷ www.churchplantingvillage.net

The answers to the questions undoubtedly are the Great Commission and lost people.⁸

Multi-plantation churches focus on the answers to these questions. They are determined to reach lost people through fulfilling the Great Commission. The multi-site side of multi-plantation allows a local church to literally saturate its community with God-honoring congregations. The church planting side of multi-plantation allows the church to reach out locally, nationally and internationally. In summary, multi-plantation is a practical and innovative way of advancing the gospel through the vehicle of the local church.

The Multi-Plantation Garden – The Both/And Strategy

On December 24, 2008, *The Times of India* wrote a story about a multi-plantation garden that was being planted in Ajmer, India, in an effort to save and distribute certain species of plants. One of these plants is the goggle plant, which can be used as a type of antibiotic. Divisional forest officer K.C. Meena was quoted as saying about the goggle plant, “We are planning to cultivate mother plants of this species and then distribute to the local people who are interested in plantation.” This action served as a way of saving certain plants while also helping people. An agricultural scientist added, “The theme of this garden is to prepare a bank of plants.”⁹

When you think about a multi-plantation church, think about a multi-plantation garden or nursery. The two-fold purpose of this garden in India is to grow plants at home

⁸ Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, 2nd ed. (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 2002), 121.

⁹ “First Clone Multi-Plantation Garden to Come Up in Ajmer,” *The Times of India*, December 24, 2008, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Jaipur/First_clone_multi-plantation_garden_to_come_up_in_Ajmer/articleshow/3882615.cms (accessed June 3, 2009).

in the nursery, and send the plants out. What a picture of the multi-plantation church! It is a church that grows the home church through multi-site and then sends others out for the purpose of church planting. As with the multi-plantation garden, the church exists to *prepare a bank of plants*. Some become campuses. Others become church plants.

Often critics of the multi-site movement ask the question, “Why not just plant a church?”¹⁰ Multi-Plantation church leaders ask the question, “Why not do both?” The whole idea of multi-plantation is all about the combination of both elements! Our church believes the best way to reach our surrounding communities is to plant multiple campuses in our region. We have seen the benefits of our campuses cooperating together as one church to reach our region. We do however realize that going multi-site alone will limit our reach. We know there is also a need for us to plant separate local, national, and international churches if we want to get the gospel to as many people as possible.

Some churches insist on doing only one or the other. I obviously believe that doing both is a great way to advance the gospel. I am not here to criticize pastors or other church leaders for their decisions on how they go about fulfilling the Great Commission. My only judgment will come in the form of an encouragement. Whether a church does only multi-site or only plants churches, be aggressive with the gospel. Passionately plant multiple campuses that bring renown to Jesus’ name. Or, plant numerous churches that will reach thousands of people with the hope of the gospel. *Or*, go multi-plantation and get the best of both worlds. Reach people regionally through multi-site and reach people globally through church planting. The bottom line is that we will all stand before God

¹⁰ Jonathan Leeman, “The Alternative: Why Don’t We Plant?” *9Marks eJournal* (May/June 2009): 67-68, <http://involve.9marks.org/site/DocServer/eJournal200963MayJune.pdf?docID=641> (accessed June 13, 2009).

one day and have to answer for what we have done with Jesus. My hope is that we will kneel before the King and be able to tell story after story of transformed lives that were changed because of His redemptive gospel.

The Five Marks of Multi-Plantation

A church that goes multi-plantation will be drastically impacted, or better said, *marked*. If we were able to look into the future five to ten years, these things could be said of your church should you choose to go multi-plantation. You will see that all five of these things are valuable things in the life of any local church. These are biblical ideas and should be said of any Christ-honoring church, whether they are a multi-plantation church or not. Let us begin.

Mark #1 – Passion for the Great Commission

The church that sets out to go multi-plantation will no doubt be marked by a passion for the Great Commission. W.A. Criswell once wrote, “What is evangelism? It is taking seriously the first command of the Great Commission – going, making disciples.”¹¹ Multi-plantation churches take this command of making disciples seriously. \ The great thing about multi-plantation is that passion for the Great Commission drives the whole thing, and if done well, the result will be a renewed passion for the Great Commission. If multi-plantation is the vehicle, evangelism is its fuel. Multi-plantation is something a church can really get behind because the Great Commission is at the very core. People will not give of themselves, their time, or their money to reach some kind of

¹¹ W. A. Criswell, *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors* (Nashville: Broadman, 1980), 228.

attendance goal in itself. They will however give all these things to something that they feel is making a difference in the souls of people.

I recently had a professor who said, “If your model doesn’t have the gospel, you’re wasting your time.”¹² Though I don’t want to refer to multi-plantation as a church model, I do think church leaders need to ponder this statement from my professor. I believe the multi-plantation church *is* one that holds the gospel of Jesus Christ higher than any other thing. In regards to the question of whether multi-plantation is a church model, I prefer to use terms that Aubrey Malphurs coined in his book *A New Kind of Church*. Malphurs describes developing a theology of change by using three *F*s: *function*, *form*, and *freedom*. He describes *functions* of the church as the timeless, unchanging, nonnegotiable, biblical mandates for the church, some of which would be worship, evangelism, and teaching. He describes *forms* as the temporal, changing, negotiable practices of a church to accomplish its functions. Examples of these would be going door to door, having crusades, or creating evangelistic websites. He concludes: “All churches under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are *free* to choose the *forms* or methods that best accomplish the *functions*.”¹³ Rather than promote this as a model, I would say it is a *form* that our particular church and many others are choosing to accomplish our *functions*, in particular the function of evangelism.

This message of hope that we carry in our evangelism is that people can be saved if they will turn from their sin and put their trust in Christ to save them. Apart from Christ, people will spend eternity in hell. A few decades ago, one Southern Baptist

¹² Dave Earley, “Church Planting Methods, Models, Culture, and Context” (lecture, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA, May 15, 2009).

¹³ Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church*, 91.

laymen who believed this wholeheartedly decided to do something about it. In the 1970's, a Houston judge named Paul Pressler was a part of the transformation of the Southern Baptist Convention. He believed in the lostness of man and knew the importance of getting the pure gospel to the world. Pressler and fellow Southern Baptist Paige Patterson led the charge for what is known as "The Conservative Resurgence" in the Southern Baptist Convention. In his book, *A Hill on Which to Die*, Pressler recounts their feelings towards the future of the denomination as it faced the danger of theological heresy and the detrimental effect it would have had upon evangelism and ultimately the salvation of lost souls. He writes,

We believed that many people who could have been won to Jesus Christ would be eternally lost if liberal theology destroyed the Southern Baptist Convention as a force for evangelism and missions. This conviction made the cause truly "a hill on which to die." Countless millions will be brought to Christ because our institutions are being returned to the faith once delivered to the saints based on the authority of God's Word. A greater hill on which to die has never existed for a follower of our Savior.¹⁴

The Great Commission is being fulfilled by churches in the Southern Baptist Convention because of people like Paul Pressler who fought for the Bible. It was their courage that allowed Southern Baptists to join hands once again for the task of global evangelization. We must be willing to fight against anything that would cease to make evangelism a high priority. As pastors, we must make sure evangelism is always one of our church's highest priorities. Pastors, churches, and even denominations must continually ask the question, "Are we doing all we can to fulfill the Great Commission?" Multi-plantation churches have sought to answer this question with a "yes" by reaching out locally, nationally and globally through multi-site and church planting.

¹⁴ Paul Pressler, *A Hill on Which to Die* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), xi.

Mark #2 – Increased Vision

For the congregation to truly grasp the vision for multi-plantation, the pastor must hear from God and give a compelling vision for reaching people. Thumma and Travis comment that, “In our experience, we find that those churches that have grown to megaproportions in a short period of time are led by senior pastors who have a person passion, desire, and call to evangelism.”¹⁵ A vision for multi-plantation has to be led by the pastor and then caught by the people. It is a vision that is all about reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. As Mancini writes, “People need vision and they need hope.”¹⁶ When they grasp this multi-plantation vision set on reaching the world, things will begin to happen.

Not only is it a vision for evangelism by going multi-site and through planting multiple churches, it is also about *multiplication*. These churches, from the pastors to the members, realize that they are responsible for taking hold of the vision for multiplication. Dave Earley said it best in his book *Turning Members into Leaders* when he said, “Multiplying leaders is the only way we can ever hope to fulfill the Great Commission and reap the harvest.”¹⁷ In this kind of church, everyone realizes their role to play in the multiplication of leaders. For pastors and other staff, their job is to multiply themselves in other ministers who will be the next campus pastor, worship pastor, or church planter. Godly laymen also must play a role in bringing these young ministers into their homes to

¹⁵ Scott Thumma and Dave Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths* (San Francisco: Jon Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2007), 160-161.

¹⁶ Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 41.

¹⁷ Dave Earley, *Turning Members into Leaders* (Houston: Cell Group Resources, 2003), 12.

teach them such things as hospitality, money management, and how to have a lasting marriage.

The church that grasps the vision for multi-plantation will no longer look only to their own comfort and needs at its campus, but will instead join God in His mission of bringing people to Himself. Multi-plantation has a way of making both ministers and members “look not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:4). This multi-plantation vision forces these people to view the Great Commission with greater prominence than their own wealth, comfort, or happiness. It keeps a healthy level of discomfort in the church as the members know that they will be consistently called to greater levels of outreach and obedience.

Mark #3 – Mentored Ministers

John Piper once wrote, “We cannot overemphasize the importance of our seminaries in shaping the theology and spirit of the churches and denominations and missionary enterprise.”¹⁸ While seminary is often the place theology is studied and adopted by students, we cannot underestimate nor minimize the education and mentorship that comes within the context of the local church. A common criticism of the multi-site side of multi-plantation is the hindrance of the development of leaders or preachers.¹⁹ I would say I have seen the exact opposite in my own experience. Take our church in Arkansas for example. When we launched the Pinnacle Hills campus in 2001, it actually gave some of the ministers on our Springdale staff a chance to move up and

¹⁸ John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 261.

¹⁹ Leeman, “The Alternative: Why Don’t We Plant?” 67-68.

develop. Our education minister at Springdale moved into a higher role as the Campus Coordinator for the entire Pinnacle Hills campus. Our junior high minister was moved into the lead student minister role at the new campus. He now is a pastor in Georgia.

The same held true during my time at Prestonwood. The student minister at the Plano Campus became the Campus Pastor at the North location. He later left Prestonwood North to become the pastor at the biggest Baptist church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I was serving in an intern role at the Plano Campus in our young singles ministry and was moved up to the position of Young Adult Minister at the new campus. The men's minister at our church also had the opportunity to move into a role with more responsibility as he became the minister of spiritual development. He is now the pastor of a church in Phoenix.

My experience with these two churches directly opposes the criticism mentioned above. These ministers have had the opportunity to be mentored and developed in a much greater way than if they had simply stayed in their previous roles. I would go so far as to say the problem in our churches is not that we do not have developed preachers, but developed *leaders*. We have far too many pastors in our churches who struggle not in their preaching to the flock, but in their leading of the flock. How could they have benefited from being in a situation like the ones mentioned above? Multi-plantation churches provide environments for ministers and future church leaders to grow, make mistakes and prepare to lead.

Mark #4 – Developed Lay Leaders

Multi-Plantation gives pastors and staff the incredible opportunity to fulfill their duty that is laid out in Scripture. Ephesians 4:11-12 says, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” In short, ministers are to equip the laity to do the ministry of the church. If we’re honest, most churches have this backwards. The pastor and/or staff does the majority of the teaching, serving, and visiting in the normal church. Seacoast Church’s Pastor of Ministries Geoff Surratt writes about how easy a trap this is for pastors. In a recent article in *Outreach Magazine*, Surratt tells about a time like this in his own church: “Rather than equipping the saints for the work of ministry, I was doing the work of ministry and inviting the saints (and sinners) to watch.”²⁰ Multi-Plantation churches give the ministers no excuse in fulfilling their God-given role. There is simply too much to do for these ministers to try to do it alone. In some circumstances, if they do not equip and empower their members, they will not have church that day!

When we launched Prestonwood North in August of 2006, we met in Prosper High School. Scores of volunteers had to be recruited to unload several twenty-four foot trailers of sound equipment, baby toys, tables and chairs (and everything in between). We were literally in a situation where if our lay members did not show up to set up, we would not have church. This was the greatest thing that ever happened to our church. We were forced to empower our members to do the work of the ministry. Not only were

²⁰ Geoff Surratt, “The Stupid Things We Do: Barriers to Growth,” *Outreach Magazine*, September 2009 Special Issue, 108.

lifelong relationships formed in those early Sunday mornings, but it also gave the lay members and deacons from the Plano campus a fantastic opportunity to come and serve a work they had helped financially and prayerfully support. God has blessed the church with an incredible building now, but there will always be something special about those Sunday mornings at Prosper High School.

Let me further illustrate this principle with a man named Jim Wicker. Jim was a successful businessman who was in between jobs when we were leading up to the launch of the church. During that time Jim began to work with our staff on the massive details that were required with starting a mobile church in a high school with several hundred people. Jim essentially became the man who led the charge for all of set up and break down. If you've ever been in a mobile situation, you understand the importance of this guy! Jim gave countless hours strictly as a volunteer and long-time member of Prestonwood. For two years Jim was often one of the first ones at the school in the morning and one of the last to leave in the afternoon.

During this time the church obviously saw the dedication and the skills that Jim brought to the table. He ended up being hired as the Director of Operations and Multi-site for the entire church. As Jim served in this role during the week and gave of his weekends to our campus, God continued to raise Jim up. Jim now leads the whole small group ministry for Prestonwood North. He is a great example of someone who was developed as a lay leader and whose life was literally turned upside down by multi-plantation. One thing is for sure, Prestonwood North would not be where it is if it had not been for Jim Wicker. (Actually, we would probably still be outside the high school trying to fit the carts into the trailers).

Mark #5 – The Renown of Jesus Will Be Extended

Much of the task of multi-plantation could be considered by most churches as *missions*. A natural result of the first four marks is that the name and renown of Jesus is extended throughout the earth. This extension is what Moreau, Corwin, and McGee term *Missio Dei*. They write,

Missio Dei, Latin for “the sending of God,” is a relatively new term in mission circles. Over the course of the twentieth century mission scholars gained a new appreciation for the fact that mission originates in God, not in the church or in people. It was admitted that our traditional focus on mission was church-centered (what the church does) or people-centered (what the evangelist or missionary does) rather than God-centered (what God does).²¹

This God-centered view of missions is all about God’s renown. Where that renown goes, lives are changed! When people meet Jesus, transformation cannot help but happen. Hardened hearts become soft. Broken people become restored. People in bondage find freedom. Wicked unrepentant sinners become the repentant righteous. This future goal of transformed lives causes us to look inward at our own desire for God. Piper writes, “Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak.”²² Obviously the opposite would mean that where passion for God is strong, zeal for missions is strong. In multi-plantation churches it is crucial that we have the glory and renown of God as our highest goal. These kinds of churches seek to plant God-centered churches locally, nationally and internationally that spread this fame of Jesus. Mark Driscoll put it this way: “Jesus speaks of going, evangelizing, making disciples and planting churches that plant churches to continue the process. Therefore, the mission of the church is nothing

²¹ A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 73.

²² John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 18.

less than bringing the entire world to Christian faith and maturity.”²³ When this process is put into place, we will see the renown of Jesus spread.

Therefore, we must plant churches. In fact, we must plant *multiple* churches so that the gospel may go forth. Bisagno once noted, “Church planting produces rapid growth, with the greatest percentage of growth in a new church coming within the first three years.”²⁴ I agree one hundred percent with Bisagno. However, my hope and Bisagno’s hope is not that high attendance will be your goal. It is also not that your own renown would be your purpose for going multi-plantation. My hope and prayer is that you will determine whether or not your church should go multi-plantation based off the fact that people are lost, in need of a Savior, and we have the greatest story they could ever hear. My hope is that you will view the renown of Jesus as the number one reason you would take your church down this path. If it’s not, the last thing you need to do is lead your church to become a multi-plantation church. As Stetzer, Towns and Bird wisely assert regarding church innovations, “If the innovation is for any other motive or purpose than to call attention to the power, plan and presence of the Lord, then back away.”²⁵ We would be wise to heed their warning.

Multi-Plantation At Its Best – An Overarching Vision

Let me tell you how I believe multi-plantation works at its best. It is nothing groundbreaking or earth-shattering, but I do believe it is essential. *Multi-Plantation*

²³ Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 217.

²⁴ John R. Bisagno, *Letters to Timothy: A Handbook for Pastors* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 281.

²⁵ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007), 21.

works best when the senior pastor receives an overarching, strategic vision for multi-plantation from God and clearly articulates and teaches the vision to his people. For example, Pastor Joe from First Baptist Somewhere, Texas feels God's leading to become a multi-plantation church. Pastor Joe takes this leading seriously and commits to pray about this to receive an answer from the Lord. God answers his prayer and leads Pastor Joe to lead First Baptist to plant twenty-five churches and/or campuses in the next five years. Pastor Joe shares the vision with his board of directors, elder board, deacons, staff or any other leadership team within the church and eventually takes the vision to the people. For the next five years, the church's whole strategy is about fulfilling this call to plant these twenty-five churches and/or campuses.

Let me give you two, real life examples. On that cold, January day that I sat and listened to Greg Surratt, pastor of the pioneering Seacoast Church in Charleston, South Carolina. He told the story about standing up in front of his people on a "Vision Night" in 2001 and telling them he wanted to reach 10,000 people in the next ten years and plant 2,000 churches in his lifetime. At the time they were *only* reaching about 3,000 people. Obviously this was going to require passion, strategy and innovation. As he stood in front of our group not even ten years later, they had already reached part of their goal. They were touching 10,000 people weekly across 13 campuses. Why? God's people responded to a God-sized vision. This multi-plantation pastor gave five helpful thoughts on innovation that apply to multi-plantation during his message:

1. Most innovation is desperation in a fancy package.
2. Trust your gut, unless you've been wrong a lot.
3. God plants His dreams in those who are willing to pull the trigger.

4. If you overreach, sometimes big people will come help you clean up.
5. If you don't try to control it, it might just outgrow you.²⁶

The second example of a big vision for multi-plantation comes from Mars Hill Church in Seattle, Washington. Recently their pastor, Mark Driscoll, released a document that is titled, "Mars Hill Global: Fifty-Thousand for Jesus."²⁷ In this document the church leaders laid out the church's goals for the next ten years. They want to go from seven campuses reaching 8,000 people to 100 campuses reaching 50,000 people. They also seek to come alongside their church planting organization, Acts 29, to go from 213 church plants reaching 64,000 people to 1,000 church plants that reach 250,000 people. The final tally is that they want to move from 72,000 worshippers of Jesus to 300,000 by 2019. One has to admire Driscoll's vision and passion for evangelism. He is accomplishing his evangelistic vision through multi-plantation.

I believe leading the church into a specific vision for multi-plantation will result in a few things for your church. First of all, it puts everyone on the same page. For the coming years, everyone in the congregation knows where the church is headed. If people do not want to be involved in a church like this, there are most likely other Christ-honoring local churches in their area that they can attend. Second, it puts the Great Commission at the forefront of everyone's minds. You cannot help but think about the gospel consistently in this kind of church. Third, it involves everyone. There is no way massive visions like this can take place without everyone's involvement through prayer, giving, and going. Last but certainly not least, it requires the action of a big God. Big

²⁶ Geoff Surratt, "Multi-Plantation" (lecture, Innovate3 Conference, January 28, 2009).

²⁷ Mars Hill Church, *Mars Hill Global: Fifty-Thousand for Jesus*, http://www.marshillchurch.org/media/2009/04/10/20090410_mars-hill-global-50-000-for-jesus_document.pdf (accessed June 16, 2009).

visions like the ones described above will not be accomplished apart from a major movement of God's Spirit through a congregation and in its community.

You Cannot Break the Rules

The great thing about multi-plantation is that you cannot break the rules because there are no rules. I am not concerned with drawing out a long list of requirements for churches to live up to so they can be considered a multi-plantation church. Here is one sentence that will help you determine if you are a multi-plantation church: *You are a multi-site church that plants other churches.* In this, there should be great flexibility in the planting of these churches. It does not matter if you partnered with three other churches in starting that urban church in the heart of your city. In fact, it is probably not the smartest thing to plant them all by yourself without any support or partnerships. There are numerous ways to plant churches and we would be wise to seek out every avenue. The bottom line is that gospel-centered churches are being planted!

This discussion reminds me of the situation Paul speaks of in Philippians 1. While some people were preaching Christ out of envy and rivalry, Paul was simply rejoicing in the fact that Jesus was being preached. In a similar way, I rejoice with you and your church if you are preaching the gospel. We may differ on certain beliefs of practices, but if the name of Jesus is lifted high, "...in that I rejoice" (Philippians 1:18). We would do well not to get so hung up on the details of multi-plantation that we miss what's most important: the gospel.

You Will Not Have it Figured Out...And it is Ok

Let's say you hear from God, you feel like he wants you to go multi-plantation, you tell your leaders, now what? Unfortunately, many will get stuck at this point. The reason is that many will try to determine the *how* instead of focusing on the *what*. As our church looks toward our future vision, we have struggled with this very issue of getting past the how and instead focusing on the what. This was all brought to a head recently after reading something from Thomas Nelson Publishers' Chief Executive Officer, Michael Hyatt. Hyatt wrote an incredible article entitled, *Why Vision is More Important Than Strategy*.

In the article, he tells the story of his boss resigning in July of 2000. As a result, he was put in charge of his division, which at the time had been the least performing in the entire company. He describes how he went away on a personal retreat, determined to get a clear picture of what he wanted the division to look like in the future. He writes, "Through the years, I had learned that if you think about strategy (the 'how') too early, it will actually inhibit your vision ('the what') and block you from thinking as big as you need to think." Hyatt set lofty goals for his division and shared the vision with his staff. At the time of his writing, their division had exceeded almost every aspect of their vision. For the past six years, his division has been the most productive in the company.

With as big as a multi-plantation vision can become, these multi-plantation pastors can get stuck in the rut of the "how" so much that they never get to the mountain of "what." Hyatt states,

The problem is that people get stuck on the how. They don't see *how* they could accomplish more, so they throttle back their vision, convinced that they must be

realistic. And what they *expect* becomes their new reality. This is simply *faith* applied negatively.²⁸

Let's take this into our current discussion. The first question that will come into every pastor's mind is, "How will we pay for this?" Other questions could be, "How will I sell this to our church?" or "Who on my staff will be willing to do this?" Be careful not to buy into the temptations of Satan that our God is not big enough to determine the "how." Expect the "how" to dominate your thoughts. Resist this and choose to embrace faith to reach the "what." This world is in desperate need of godly men who will pursue the "what."

An example of a man who pursued the "what" instead of getting caught up in the "how" was Jerry Falwell. This incredible visionary had a dream of creating a university that would rival what Catholics have in Notre Dame and Mormons in BYU. In 1971, Falwell founded Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Early in the vision process there was no way to know all the "how" of the vision, but Falwell did know the "what" of the vision. He prayed and worked for more than thirty years developing Liberty University into what is now the largest evangelical university in the world. Thousands of students every year graduate and go into the world as pastors, businessmen, nurses and missionaries that carry the gospel into their communities. All because a man was determined to focus on the "what" and let God take care of the "how."

During the years since the school's founding, Falwell poured incredible passion for vision into his students as they sat in their chapel services. Those students sat in those seats in the Vines Center on the campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia

²⁸ Michael Hyatt, "Why Vision Is More Important Than Strategy," February 23, 2007, <http://michaelhyatt.com/2007/02/why-vision-is-more-important-than-strategy.html> (accessed June 15, 2009).

because Falwell was determined to focus on the “what” instead of the “how.” He often challenged us to have a BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious, Goal) for our lives. He asked five questions that have the potential to revolutionize your life if you take them seriously. As you face the possibility of your church going multi-plantation, ask yourself these five questions:

What is it that I really want to accomplish with my life?

What would I try to do if I thought I might succeed?

What goals would I set if I knew I would not fail?

What price am I willing to pay?

What sacrifices am I willing to make?²⁹

What is it that you want to give your life to? Could it be that God is calling you to build a multi-plantation church? I can think of nothing better than to give your life to building your local church into a church with the world on its mind. Imagine being the pastor of a church that decides to do multiple locations in order to effectively reach their local communities. Imagine your local church gaining a heart for the multiplication of leaders that literally go across the world. Imagine being a part of a church that plants hundreds of churches over the span of your ministry. Imagine seeing person after person transformed by Jesus. Do you see it? This is the potential of multi-plantation. Is God calling you to go multi-plantation?

²⁹ Staff reporters, “Pastors Enjoy Upbeat Worship at Annual Conference,” *Biblical Recorder*, November 14, 2003, http://www.biblicalrecorder.org/content/life/2003/11_14_2003/b1141103pastors.shtml (accessed June 16, 2009).

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY OF MULTI-PLANTATION

As I sat in our Pastor's Council meeting in the fall of 2009, I listened as one of our lay members asked for permission to speak. This man had been a faithful member of the church and also had been a part of our Pastor's Council, the highest board in our church, for several years. He began to speak about how his struggle with Parkinson's disease had slowed him in different ways and offered to the group that he may need to step down in the near future and wanted advice from the group. This godly layman told this gathering of men how privileged he had been to be a part of that council. In many ways, this elected group of men has assisted our pastor in leading our church for years. This man had paid his dues and had been a part of major decisions in the church for over a decade. In a chapter full of theology and ecclesiology, it is easy to forget men like this that are in our lives. These are *real* men of God who have a *real* passion for Jesus' church and who count it a *real* privilege to serve in it. Keeping this in mind should help us have a proper perspective in dealing with these sensitive issues.

This chapter will be on an entirely different level than the rest of the work. We will take an in-depth look at the theology involved in multi-plantation. Obviously, there are more theological concerns about the multi-site side of multi-plantation than the church planting side. As a result we will deal in a theological sense specifically with multi-site churches. I must confess that I write from a Southern Baptist perspective, so that will obviously paint how I deal with these issues. Coming from this "free church"

perspective means that we will deal with issues that a Presbyterian or Methodist brother may see as normal and completely acceptable while a Baptist brother may see considerable danger. My hope is that I will explain how multi-site churches do not violate the beliefs that I hold as a Baptist. Let's begin by looking at some theological motivations for why a pastor would lead his church into a multi-plantation ministry.

Theological Motivations for Multi-Plantation

Lostness of Man

We live in a world that is approaching seven billion people in population. The harsh reality is that billions are lost and on their way to eternal separation from God in hell. Distant countries are engrossed in false religions like Islam and Hinduism while the dominant religion in America is the worship of self. No longer can we look at the world and say *they* are our only mission field. We are now living in a diverse country that is becoming less and less Christian.

The statistics about the unchurched in America are dumbfounding. This is no longer the America that our parents and grandparents grew up in. The spiritual landscape is completely different. While most believe the unchurched numbers are not good, Malphurs writes,

The situation is likely worse than what the figures show. My experience is that the 80 percent unchurched figure is probably the most accurate one. This means that today America is widely unchurched, reflecting a post-Christian status.³⁰

³⁰ Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church*, 22-23.

The spiritual lostness of not only the world, but also of our own country screams for action on our part. Multi-plantation churches fully realize the magnitude and reality of people who will spend eternity in hell if they are not “made alive with Christ” (Ephesians 2). It is only through a passionate pursuit of fulfilling the Great Commission that we will indent the lost culture of our nation and world. That is where we will now turn our attention.

The Commission of Christ

The gospel is humanity’s only hope. Jesus’ initial disciples and present disciples are commissioned to, “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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20a). We carry the commission of Jesus as an honored privilege to share the message of how Jesus has changed our lives. This message is the story of His death, burial, and resurrection. The greatest news we can ever tell a person is how Jesus died for them, was buried for them, and rose for them. In a sense, we simply tell them that the tomb is empty! This garden tomb where they buried Jesus has served as a marker for believers of several generations to travel to in commemoration of the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. Yet this practice is funny, because as Green notes, even in the gospel of John, the tomb is ill-suited for its role since it becomes irrelevant.³¹ Our whole message is not focused upon a death, but a resurrection! In essence, our commission from Jesus Christ is to tell people that He is no longer in the tomb!

³¹ Joel B. Green, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 836.

Multi-plantation churches view themselves as mission sending agencies who are daily fulfilling this Great Commission given to us by Christ. It is all about the mission of the empty tomb. In a multi-plantation church, it is possible for mission, rather than space or buildings, to determine the agenda.³² Our lives and our churches are to be all about this mission. Carson writes, “The Son’s mission was itself the consequence of God’s love.”³³ Now our mission is motivated by that same love. Multi-plantation is all about the mission given to us by Jesus!

Unity of and Cooperation with Believers

In the 2005 book, *One Sacred Effort: The Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists*, Brand and Hankins write, “Since the earliest days of the faith, churches have engaged in cooperative efforts in carrying out their mission.”³⁴ Unity and cooperation have been two defining marks that have identified Southern Baptists for many years. The creation of the Cooperative Program in 1925 is a specific example of how Southern Baptists across the world have been united in a common cause of theological education, North American missions, and international missions. This type of cooperation is an outstanding way that we have typified the love Jesus spoke about in John 13:35 when he said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Allison notes, “The New Testament emphasis on love, unity, cooperation, and

³² Bill Easum and Dave Travis, *Beyond the Box: Innovative Churches that Work* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003), 85, quoted in Towns, Stetzer, and Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church*, 70.

³³ D. A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 204.

³⁴ Chad Owen Brand and David E. Hankins, *One Sacred Effort: The Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 53.

interdependence addresses the sanctified reality that should characterize churches individually.”³⁵ Could it be that this type of love, cooperation, and unity that Allison speaks of perfectly identifies who we are as Southern Baptists?

Morris Chapman, CEO of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, seems to believe so. He recounts a story of being asked, “What is Southern Baptist tradition?” Chapman perfectly described it as conservative theology and cooperative methodology.³⁶ The fact that we have some 50,000 churches and missions that all unite and cooperate for impacting the world for Christ is astounding. Chapman believes this kind of multi-church cooperation is biblical. He states, “Another example of multi-congregational cooperation was the commissioning of missionaries.”³⁷ We as Southern Baptists have taken this biblical idea of unity and cooperation and have banded together for the cause of the Great Commission. Another Southern Baptist giant, Richard Land, notes, “Baptist churches are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel...”³⁸ We are a denomination that has covenanted together and held cooperation as one of our highest values because we believe we can do more for the gospel together than we can apart.

Is not multi-site a fantastic way to implement something that is so consistent with who we are as a denomination? What better picture of unity and cooperation is there than believers at different locations cooperating together for the furthering of the gospel?

³⁵ Greg Allison, “Theological Defense of Multi-Site,” *9Marks eJournal* (May/June 2009): 12, <http://involve.9marks.org/site/DocServer/eJournal200963MayJune.pdf?docID=641> (accessed June 13, 2009).

³⁶ David S. Dockery, ed., *Southern Baptist Identity: An Evangelical Denomination Faces the Future* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 165.

³⁷ Ibid, 169.

³⁸ Ibid, 246.

Millard Erickson comments on some of the benefits of cooperation that apply to multi-site. He writes,

A congregation may enter into cooperative affiliations, but these are strictly voluntary in nature...They display in visible form the unity present within the universal church or invisible church. Second, they provide and promote Christian fellowship on a wider basis than is possible within a single congregation. Further, they enable service and ministry in a more effective fashion than does the local church alone.³⁹

Even though Erickson is not specifically speaking about multi-site, the principles he lays forth about cooperation definitely apply. In one way, a multi-site church is a picture of the universal church. It promotes Christian fellowship between people who meet at different locations but are part of the same church. Last but not least, they enable each other to have a more effective ministry than they could alone. They combine finances, staffing, and other various aspects of the church allowing for significant ministry to take place.

Even though unity and cooperation are similar, they also are very different. Some would say the SBC has been great at cooperation, but not great in their unity. Though we have been united in purpose, we have at times not been a great example of unity among our members. Unity, however, is something that we should strive towards with other believers and other churches. The SBC would be wise to listen to the words about unity from Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears in their book *Vintage Church*,

Theologically, unity is to be pursued by churches and among churches for five reasons. (1) Jesus prayed for it often. (2) As the leadership goes, so goes the rest of the church. (3) Without unity spiritual health and growth cannot be maintained because the church gets diverted from Jesus and his mission for them. (4) Unity is

³⁹ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 1090.

fragile because it is gained slowly and lost quickly, which requires that it never be assumed or taken for granted. (5) Paul repeatedly commands unity in churches.⁴⁰

Once again, multi-site churches can serve as a fantastic model of unity. When churches have responsible leadership who will challenge their church towards this type of unity, it can be an incredible picture of how one church cooperating across multiple locations can impact a region. Is this really so different from who we are as Southern Baptists? Or is it merely an innovation that expresses in a new way our commitment to unity and cooperation among believers?

Theological Questions to be Answered

What is a Church?

Though this question may seem elementary, it is really quite foundational for our ecclesiology. Malphurs writes, “A definition is important not only for clear communication, but to help leaders gauge when a church has gone too far or not far enough, and might not legitimately be considered a church.”⁴¹ Towns, Stetzer, and Bird also add a valuable question for us to answer concerning any innovation, such as a church choosing to go multi-site. They ask, “Does this innovation bear the marks of a New Testament church?”⁴² Let’s begin to shed some light on the issue of exactly what a New Testament church is.

As is appropriate when studying any major doctrine, I have included various definitions that people have used to define Jesus’ Bride, the Church. I drew from a wide

⁴⁰ Driscoll and Breshears, *Vintage Church*, 136.

⁴¹ Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church*, 115.

⁴² Towns, Stetzer, and Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church*, 18.

variety of resources; using theologians, pastors, a seminary president, and a few influential figures from church history. Here are their thoughts on the church.

Name	Profession	Definition of a Church
Wayne Grudem	Research Professor of Theology and Biblical Studies at Phoenix Seminary, Author	“The church is the community of all true believers for all time... We may conclude that the group of God’s people considered at any level from local to universal may rightly be called ‘a church.’” ⁴³
Elmer Towns	Dean of the School of Religion at Liberty University, Author, Co-founder of Liberty University	“It is an assembly of believers where Christ dwells in their midst, organized to carry out the Great Commission, under the discipline of the Scriptures, that administers the ordinances and reflects spiritual gifts.” ⁴⁴
John Piper	Pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Author	“We believe it is God’s will that the universal Church find expression in local churches in which believers agree together to hear the Word of God proclaimed, to engage in corporate worship, to practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, to build each other’s faith through the manifold ministries of love, to hold each other accountable in the obedience of faith through Biblical discipline, and to engage in local and world evangelization. The Church is a body in which each member should find a suitable ministry

⁴³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 853.

⁴⁴ Elmer Towns, “21st Century Tools and Techniques” (lecture for the class “21st Century Methods for the Revitalization of the Church,” Liberty Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA, May 12, 2009).

		for His gifts; it is the household of God in which the Spirit dwells; it is the pillar and bulwark of God's truth in a truth-denying world; and it is a city set on a hill so that men may see the light of its good deeds—especially to the poor—and give glory to the Father in heaven.” ⁴⁵
Aubrey Malphurs	Senior Professor of Pastoral Ministries at Dallas Theological Seminary, Author, President of the Malphurs Group	“A local church is an indispensable gathering of professing believers in Christ who, under leadership, are organized to pursue its mission through its functions to accomplish its purpose.” ⁴⁶
Daniel Akin	President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Author	“We may offer a tentative theological definition of the church as the whole body of those who through Christ's death have been savingly reconciled to God and have received new life. While it is universal in nature, it finds expression in local groupings of believers which display the same qualities as does the body of Christ as a whole.” ⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Desiring God, *The Desiring God Affirmation of Faith* (Minneapolis, October 22, 2004), http://www.desiringgod.org/media/pdf/affirmation_of_faith.pdf (accessed June 19, 2009).

⁴⁶ Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church*, 116-117.

⁴⁷ Danny Akin, *Ecclesiology*, book 4 of *Christian Theology Part II*, class notes, 10. http://apps.sebts.edu/president/wp-content/uploads/old/Resource_576/The%20Doctrine%20of%20Christology%20Class%202-%20Sec%204%20Ecclesiology.pdf (accessed June 19, 2009).

Baptist Faith and Message 2000	Statement of Faith of the Southern Baptist Convention, revised statement of faith by 15 member committee chaired by Adrian Rogers in 2000	“A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.” ⁴⁸
Mark Driscoll/Gerry Breshears	Pastor at Mars Hills Church, Author/Professor of Systematic Theology, Chair of the Division of Biblical and Theological Studies at Western Seminary, Author	“The local church is a community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. In obedience to Scripture they organize under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and Communion, are unified by the Spirit, are disciplined for holiness, and scatter to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as

⁴⁸ Southern Baptist Convention, “The Baptist Faith & Message,” Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp> (accessed June 19, 2009).

		missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy." ⁴⁹
John Calvin	Theologian and author from the 1500's	"For Calvin, the marks of the true church were: (1) that the Word of God should be preached and (2) that the sacraments should be rightly administered." ⁵⁰
Martin Luther	Theologian and author during the 1400-1500's, Reformer	"For Luther, the church was an event – the Holy Spirit's act of gathering believers around Word and sacrament." ⁵¹

Let me now give you my definition of what a church is so we can be clear as we move forward. My definition of a church is, "A local body of believers who join together in a covenant relationship under the word of God to worship Him, administer the ordinances, and use their spiritual gifts to passionately pursue fulfilling the Great Commission."

⁴⁹ Driscoll and Breshears, *Vintage Church*, 38.

⁵⁰ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 398.

⁵¹ Timothy J. Wengery, *Harvesting Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 15.

Theological Grid to Examine a Church

It is helpful for our study to build a theological grid to filter any kind of church through to see if they are biblically faithful. I will use my above definition as the grid for this work. It does not matter if it is an innovative multi-site church, a traditional First Baptist Church, a charismatic megachurch, or a country Presbyterian church; the filter of God's Word must be applied to all.

- *Believers joining together in a covenant relationship?*

Nearly every person would agree it is important for the church to be together. The author of Hebrews urges Christians in Hebrews 10 to continue earnestly meeting together because some were withdrawing from the fellowship for various reasons.⁵² There are really two aspects here: assembly and covenant. These two issues are at the center of a theological controversy regarding multi-site churches. Many believe the biblical term for the church, *ekklesia*, means assembly, and therefore there are certain ramifications. How can a multi-site church be considered a church when it rarely or never assembles together? Others believe that the main issue is not with the aspect of assembling, but with the covenant relationship of the members.

This will be dealt with in detail below, but it is important here to point out a few things. There is a necessity for the church to be assembled together. In a multi-site church this can happen quarterly or however often the church leadership determines. This can be a service where all people from all campuses join together for worship, preaching, and observing the ordinances. The covenant relationship aspect of this

⁵² F. F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. ed., ed. Gordon Fee (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 257.

definition would cover issues such as church discipline and pastoral care. The members step into a covenant relationship with each other and take responsibility for one another.

- *Word of God being proclaimed and obeyed?*

Any church that is biblically faithful will hold the Scriptures as one of the central aspects of its existence. Do those Scriptures necessarily have to be preached from the same room as the congregation? Controversy surrounds the issue of video preaching that many multi-site churches take advantage of. This allows the main pastor to speak to as many campuses as the church leadership deem appropriate. On this issue, James MacDonald writes,

Theologically, I have no hesitation with multi-site. In fact, when I am up preaching, I will often say, “I’m glad that you are here today wherever you are worshipping. It doesn’t matter where I am. All that matters is where you are and where God is, and He is right with you now as we open God’s Word together.”⁵³

MacDonald’s attitude keeps the focus exactly where it should be, namely, on God and the Scriptures. Whether it is a multi-site pastor projected on a screen or a pastor standing in a pulpit, we must first ask ourselves, “Is the Word of God being proclaimed?” If so, then it passes through the filter of Scripture. The second question we must ask is, “Is the Word of God being obeyed?” A faithful church will be obedient to the commands of God given in Scripture. They will view themselves as “under the Word of God” in every area of their lives. Whether or not the Word is being taught from the same room as the congregation hearing it may prove to be irrelevant.

- *Worship of God occurring?*

⁵³ McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches*, 22.

The church who does not believe their number one duty is to worship God is a confused and mistaken church. The church exists first and foremost to bring glory to the One who brought them into the church. This happens through various outlets within the ministry. There is the Sunday morning worship experience where God is worshipped through singing, preaching, praying, and other forms of worship. Worship also happens weekly through individual members living a glorifying lifestyle of obedience to Jesus and His commands. The often-used phrase, “Worship is a lifestyle” cannot be overstated here. Churches must worship God.

- *Ordinances being administered?*

Are there specific times when the church baptizes those who have been won to Christ? Are there also times where they remember the Lord’s death through Communion? This is a vital and necessary aspect of church life that all points to Jesus. Baptism points to the fact that He has inwardly changed who we are. It gives an outward symbol and celebration of the fact that we are “new creations” (2 Cor. 5:17). Communion, or the Lord’s Supper, is the celebration and remembrance of what Jesus has done for us on the cross. It is a unique time for examination and repentance. Churches that want to be considered churches must follow the Scriptural commands to administer the ordinances. We cannot underestimate and disobey these two direct commands from Jesus Himself.

- *Use of Spiritual Gifts?*

God has equipped each believer at salvation through the Holy Spirit to play his or her role in the church. The lists of spiritual gifts in Scripture are found in Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:11.⁵⁴ Churches should repeatedly encourage their members to discover and work out their spiritual gift in the life of the church. Those churches that hold back all of the ministry to the pastor and staff will soon find an exhausted staff and a limited ministry. God through His Holy Spirit has equipped every believer with a gift to minister within the Body. Church leaders must allow the Body to be the Body. A common phrase that should be asked among church members is, “If not you, then who?” If we are not all using our individual spiritual gifts, who will take our place? We must all play our role.

- *Great Commission being passionately pursued and fulfilled?*

A church that seeks to be obedient to Jesus and His Word will take evangelism seriously. This kind of church holds the Great Commission as its highest priority behind the worship of God, and in essence sees evangelism as worship. What about those churches who do not hold evangelism as an important aspect of church life? Aubrey Malphurs raises the question about these kinds of churches who don’t fulfill the Great Commission. He writes,

Are they really a church? Can you be a missionless church? ... If a church has no intention of pursuing the Great Commission as specifically articulated by the Savior, I would question whether it is truly a church.⁵⁵

Although some churches show little care and concern for those outside their four walls, Malphurs concludes, “That doesn’t mean they cease to be a church. It makes them a

⁵⁴ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 891.

⁵⁵ Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church*, 122-123.

disobedient church.”⁵⁶ Churches were given a mission. That mission was to make disciples of all nations. We must passionately pursue fulfilling the Great Commission.

Theological and Practical Questions

What is the Essence of the Church – Assembly or Covenant?

As mentioned above, an important question that arises out of this discussion is about the essence of a church. Is it about the assembling or is it about a covenant body? Grant Gaines, a godly pastor and friend, writes, “The word *ekklesia* denotes a literal assembly. Therefore, it should not be used to designate a body of Christians who are not characterized by literally assembling together in the same place.” He also argues that *epi auto* (“in the same place”) is used alongside *ekklesia* in different portions of Scripture. He states this as further evidence that the church should be gathered together *in the same place*.⁵⁷ White would agree and believes when a church calls themselves “one church in many locations,” it is a contradiction. He states, “An un-gathered ‘church’ cannot know one another, love another, or bear one another’s burdens in the same way a single assembly can.”⁵⁸ Hammett brings further information regarding the use of *ekklesia* in the Scriptures. He writes,

90 times it is used with reference to a local church or churches, assemblies that have a degree of order and purposefulness in their gatherings. 40 times it is found in the singular, for a local church. 14 times it is used for all the Christians in a

⁵⁶ Ibid, 124.

⁵⁷ Grant Gaines, “Exegetical Critique of Multi-Site: Disassembling the Church?” *9Marks eJournal* (May/June 2009): 45, <http://involve.9marks.org/site/DocServer/eJournal200963MayJune.pdf?docID=641> (accessed June 13, 2009).

⁵⁸ Thomas White, “Nine Reasons I Don’t Like Multi-site Churches,” *9Marks eJournal* (May/June 2009): 42, <http://involve.9marks.org/site/DocServer/eJournal200963MayJune.pdf?docID=641> (accessed June 13, 2009).

city, who apparently met and acted together. 36 times *ekklesia* is used in the plural for local churches.⁵⁹

This kind of in-depth look at the original language is essential as one seeks to determine a biblical answer about difficult issues like multi-site. An interesting insight is given by Frederick, William, and Danker in *The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. One of the definitions they give of *ekklesia* is, “*The congregation or church as the totality of Christians living and meeting in a particular locality or larger geographical area, but not necessarily limited to one meeting place.*”⁶⁰ This could be a reference to some of the same passages that Hammett references. To boil this whole discussion down, we must now ask, “Is the church about assembling together, or is it deeper than that?”

Pastor J.D. Greear believes it is. He argues the essence of the local church is that of a covenant body. He writes, “Assembly is a much-needed function, but ‘covenant’ is the essence.”⁶¹ Should the aspect of assembling be raised above that of covenant? It’s a slippery slope to say the entire church has to be joined together to be considered a church. What about churches that have two services? Are they considered a church? Some may say, “Build a bigger building.” Is that always the wisest financial decision in regards to stewardship? The slope continues. Consider something pastors hate: The dreaded

⁵⁹ John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 31. He later writes that Paul tended to only use the word church for those believers that actually met together. Multi-site advocates should take this to heart and have some scheduled meeting times when all campuses come together.

⁶⁰ Frederick William Danker, ed., *The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 304.

⁶¹ J. D. Greear, “A Pastor Defends His Multi-Site Church,” *9Marks eJournal* (May/June 2009): 21, <http://involve.9marks.org/site/DocServer/eJournal200963MayJune.pdf?docID=641> (accessed June 13, 2009).

Sunday morning thunderstorms. No doubt some of your church members will not be in attendance that day. Does that result in a large spiritual gathering, but not the church? *If we're not careful, our churches will only be considered churches in a world that has perfect weather, no sickness, no seating or parking problems, and the most Godly congregation this side of heaven...because that's when the whole church will show up!*

I fear we are putting the concept of assembling over that of redemption. What do we do if people get saved and our churches grow to complete capacity? The easy answer and I believe the Biblical answer is to do everything in your power to open up the doors and cry to the people in the streets, “We have a place for you! We want you here! We have a glorious God who sent His Son so that you could be reconciled to God!” I fear an opposing mindset would be nothing short of a church marquis that reads, “We’re full. Go to hell.”

Two faithful Southern Baptist brothers would disagree with me wholeheartedly on this issue. Thomas White and John Yeats see the multi-site church as a dangerous threat to local church autonomy and congregational polity. They believe,

The starting point is moving to multiple services. No matter how we stage it, each worship experience we create takes on its own identity. Any church worshipping in more than one service creates more difficulty in displaying the fellowship, or *koinonia*, characteristic of the church in the book of Acts.⁶²

Stewardship, evangelism, and discipleship must all be considered when trying to find answers in discussions like this. The best answer may not always be to start another church or build a bigger building. Growth in general causes church leadership to make tough decisions. These decisions are at the heart of the assembly vs. covenant debate.

⁶² Thomas White and John M. Yeats, *Franchising McChurch* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), 80.

Assembly proponents cry out that we are creating separate churches. Covenant proponents believe we are one body who has covenanted together to reach our community. This may mean that we move to two services, or it may even mean we move to two campuses.

Probably the most respected theologian in Southern Baptist life today is Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He attends a multi-site church, Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He writes concerning multi-site churches,

Such a thing was unheard of among Baptists in the past, but it is becoming more and more common because churches are beginning to understand that being a covenanted community may no longer mean we all have to be in one room at one time. Any church that holds multiple services in one location has already made the great theological jump, so going from two services to two locations is not too complicated or radical.⁶³

Even though this kind of covenanted community is not together every Sunday, they realize that they can reach more people by being a covenanted community in different locations of their region. This in essence, can make their meetings together even more special. It is a gathering of committed, covenanted Christians who are actively involved in cooperating together to fulfill the Great Commission. Their partnership and cooperation gives light to the fact that they feel they are a part of a Gospel mission handed down from Christ Himself to the apostles, the church fathers, the reformers, and now to them.

⁶³ Dockery, *Southern Baptist Identity*, 35. This term “covenant community” is used by Albert Mohler again later in the chapter. This could be evidence that he would hold to the covenant view over that of assembly.

Does This Take Away Church Autonomy?

The autonomy of the local church is something we champion as Southern Baptists. As White and Yeats point out, the free-church viewpoint emphasizes autonomy of the local body from any outside organization.⁶⁴ One of the main criticisms of multi-site ministry is that it takes away from the autonomy of the local church. This is a valid concern and one that we should take seriously in our theological investigation of multi-site churches. I think it is important to understand that the simple term “multi-site church” has a wide variety of meanings. In that term are various ecclesiological models. We would be wise to examine each multi-site church as an autonomous church that may not do things exactly like the multi-site church across town. While one may toss doctrine and ecclesiology aside, others may take it very seriously and shouldn’t be lumped in with others who don’t.

Often the best answers to questions are simply more questions that probe us to think about the very questions we are asking. So, in answering this question about autonomy, here are a few questions that may help us answer the initial question of “Does multi-site take away church autonomy?”

- (a) *If a church chooses to become multi-site, are they not expressing their right to be autonomous and do what they feel God wants them to do?*
- (b) *If a church chooses to merge with a multi-site church, is that church not also expressing their autonomy by choosing to join the fellowship of that multi-site church?* Obviously there can be abuse in these kinds of situations. But when two, genuine gospel-centered churches decide to join forces, is that not a picture

⁶⁴ White and Yeats, *Franchising McChurch*, 191.

of autonomy? The truth of the matter is, we may applaud these two churches merging if they were going to also consolidate into one church building. Is the issue of location and buildings really as significant as some make it?

(c) In the same way, if the congregation at one campus chooses to continue to be a part of the church, are they as an autonomous congregation not also expressing their autonomy?

Maybe the solution to all of this heartburn about campuses and their autonomy can be somewhat solved by having a certain process in the constitution or bylaws of a church that explains how a campus can break away from the church and become their own church should they ever desire to do so. However, this is a dangerous slope as it could lead to division and take away from the foundational principle of multi-site: We can do more for the Kingdom together than we can alone.

What About Congregationalism?

Nearly all Southern Baptists hold to a congregational view of church government. This is often played out in various ways, but nonetheless there is a general consensus of congregationalism among Southern Baptist churches. Whether the total church attendance equals 500 or 5,000, multi-site ministry causes us to look afresh at congregationalism and see how we can retain the principles of congregationalism in a new model. Gilbert took an in-depth look at what is congregational, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian about multi-site churches. He concludes there is actually a lot about multi-site that is congregational. He writes,

Congregational multi-site churches hold a whole-congregation meeting several times during the year...It's also significant that when the whole membership of a

multi-site church meets together in its regular meeting, they have considerable decision-making authority. They call the senior pastor, fire the senior pastor, call the various campus pastors, exercise church discipline, vote on membership, and even celebrate the ordinances together.⁶⁵

A great example of a congregational multi-site church is Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. All campuses meet together at different times of the year and celebrate the ordinances of baptism and communion with one another.

The most effective way to do this may be through a “representative congregationalism.” This can happen through the congregation voting on things such as the church’s executive staff, board of directors, elders, or some other form of decision making body that will come alongside the pastor in making key decisions for the church. This allows the church to have a vote in who helps make the decisions in a church. In my experiences with churches going multi-site, they have still put major church changing decisions before the entire church to be voted upon. Actions like these allow a church to keep their foundational beliefs of a congregational church government without hindering the work and progress of the church by voting upon issues that can be decided by a previously elected group.

Larger churches almost *have* to implement a representative congregationalism. They are simply too big to do congregationalism the same as a church of 200-300 members. Sugden and Wiersbe point out that the size of the church should determine the amount of organization needed.⁶⁶ Some need little organization while others need major organization. In organizing a church’s governing system, large churches often

⁶⁵ Greg Gilbert, “What Is This Thing, Anyway? A Multi-Site Taxonomy,” *9Marks eJournal* (May/June 2009): 29, <http://involve.9marks.org/site/DocServer/eJournal200963MayJune.pdf?docID=641> (accessed June 13, 2009).

⁶⁶ Howard F. Sugden and Warren W. Wiersbe, *Answers to Pastors’ Frequently Asked Questions* (Colorado Springs: NexGen, 2005), 46.

experience some of the same struggles of multi-site churches in trying to practice congregationalism. Hammett sees this as a three-fold problem: The first difficulty is getting a large amount of people to attend congregational meetings in order to participate in this type of church government. The second difficulty is finding some way to make sure all of the members are well informed on the issues the church will be dealing with and voting on. The last difficulty he sees is that most megachurches are pastor-led and pastor-centered.⁶⁷ The first two are definitely realistic concerns. The final “difficulty” of pastoral leadership can actually be a positive for the church. No pastor would say the church needs to be pastor-centered. The church is to be Jesus-centered. However, a strong pastoral leader is a great asset to the church. It can actually prove helpful even in the church’s attempts to be congregational. More about congregationalism will be dealt with below.

Does This Allow for Proper Care of the Flock?

This is a valuable question to ask because it is one of the main responsibilities of the pastor is to keep watch over the people entrusted to him by God. 1 Peter 5:2 encourages us to “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you...” Could I propose that multi-site ministry may actually allow churches to do *better* pastoral care because of the smaller number of people? In some cases, could it not be the most responsible and most “shepherding” task for the senior pastor to lead the church to go multi-site? In response to the critics who say multi-site actually hurts pastoral care, Allison comments that the pastoral team at responsible multi-site churches are charged with the task of shepherding

⁶⁷ Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*, 152-153.

their people with pastoral care.⁶⁸ In my experience at multi-site churches, pastoral care has not dropped at all.

If you look at this issue from a large church perspective, there is simply no way a senior pastor of a mega-church can visit all of the people in the hospital. As a result, the staff minister assigned to that department is usually the one to represent the church. In multi-site churches, there is a greater opportunity and possibility of the senior leader on the campus, usually the campus pastor, to personally visit those who are in the hospital or who have just lost a loved one. Multi-site churches allow for pastoral care to be broken down into smaller groups so that the church leaders can effectively shepherd the flock.

Instead of viewing multi-site as an inconsiderate, careless act by an egotistical senior pastor, we need to see multi-site as a pretty effective way for the flock of God to be distributed into groups that can be cared for in a more timely and efficient way. Could it be that multi-site allows these senior pastors to greater fulfill the charge of Peter from 1 Peter 5? There are certainly benefits. Of all the reasons someone may critique multi-site churches, pastoral care is one that should pass the test most of the time. Responsible churches, no matter the size or the number of sites, will take this charge seriously and make sure they are organized in such a way to fulfill this task.

What About Pastoral Transitions?

The question of, “What happens when these multi-site pastors die or retire?” is a

⁶⁸ Allison, “Theological Defense of Multi-Site,” 12.

valid and necessary one to be answered. Though we disagree on many issues regarding multi-site, White and Yeats ask some legitimate questions concerning transitions. They write,

But what will happen should there not be agreement over the new pastor? Will the sites wither away and die like Montgomery Ward or KMart in some regions? Will onetime megachurches be constant reminders of a failed religious experiment? Will the sites go through the process of separating from the founding church through court battles and property settlements?⁶⁹

The answer is for churches to deal with this question now. A tragic death or an unexpected retirement could prove detrimental to the church if these issues have not been dealt with in an effective manner. The church's current pastor, board, or congregation should deal with this issue so there is no doubt in the new pastor's mind about the future of the church. Appropriate adjustments to the constitution or bylaws should be made so that everyone is on the same page.

Greear actually sees no issue when transitioning pastors of multi-site churches. He believes few preachers can communicate effectively to thousands of people on a Sunday, yet many churches build big sanctuaries to hold the people during this time. As a result, there are empty sanctuaries. He suggests it would be better to have ten campuses of one thousand people who identify with the campus pastor than ten thousand people who identify with the pastor on one campus.⁷⁰ Eventually, the church must decide whether the campuses will remain intact when a new pastor comes, or if they will separate as Greear proposes as an option.

⁶⁹ White and Yeats, *Franchising McChurch*, 162.

⁷⁰ Greear, "A Pastor Defends His Multi-Site Church," 24.

Is It Prohibited by Scripture?

Some would argue that the church in Jerusalem had some of the same characteristics as a multi-site church. Hammett believes that there could have been both house churches and then larger group meetings with the believers in a particular city.⁷¹ While some may believe this is a biblical example of multi-site, that understanding is by no means crystal clear. But does this mean we should not lead our churches to go multi-site if it is not clearly portrayed in Scripture? To this end James MacDonald writes,

There is definitely a multilocation dynamic to the church in Acts. And I don't see anything in Scripture that forbids it. And technology allows it and abundant fruitfulness tends to force it and church planting doesn't protect us from it. We arrived at it reluctantly because we can't discount it from Scripture.⁷²

MacDonald has asked and answered an appropriate question. Is multi-site discounted or prohibited from Scripture? It is definitely innovative. It is different. But no, it is not discounted in Scripture. Multi-site pastor Matt Chandler would agree with MacDonald that it is not forbidden in Scripture. He comments:

The theological and philosophical criticism we did find was both limited and weak. The main criticism we encountered is that the Bible is silent on multi-site. This is an argument from silence. To say that the Bible doesn't say anything about such and such and therefore it's wrong to do such and such is weak at best and hypocritical at worst. In the end, it just isn't compelling. The Bible says nothing at all about cell phones. Does that mean it's a sin to use one?⁷³

The fact that we do multiple things in our churches today that the Bible speaks nothing about should help Chandler's argument. The Bible says nothing of organs or pianos, a small groups pastor, wearing suits, using microphones, projecting the words of Scripture or songs on the screen, or having after church potlucks. Yet we do them. The silence

⁷¹ Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*, 30.

⁷² McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches*, 22.

⁷³ Chandler, "Clouds on the Horizon," 40.

argument is one that does not hold much weight among those in the multi-site realm. The difference would be if multi-site churches clearly violated the Scriptures. Then it would become an extremely important and valid issue.

Towards a Biblically Faithful Multi-Site Ecclesiology

How should multi-site churches organize their church and govern themselves?

This question deserves an honest attempt at an answer. There is considerable debate among scholars as to which is the most biblically faithful way for us to “do church.”

Erickson appropriately notes,

Nowhere in the New Testament do we find a picture closely resembling any of the fully developed systems of today. It is likely that in those days church government was not very highly developed... There is so much variation in the descriptions of the New Testament churches that we cannot discover an authoritative pattern.⁷⁴

McGrath agrees that ecclesiology was not a major issue in the early church.⁷⁵ However, this question about ecclesiastical structure definitely grew throughout the centuries. For example, Charlemagne later showed concern for ecclesiastical issues; one of those concerns being a hierarchy loyal to the crown.⁷⁶

Because of the fact that ecclesiology is not dealt with in any major, clear-cut way in Scripture, we must realize church government in our day is going to be formed in different ways. Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary seems to agree that there can be variation in ecclesiological form. He writes, “The local church should be elder led and congregationally governed. Here in my judgment, there is

⁷⁴ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1094-1095.

⁷⁵ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 476.

⁷⁶ Everett Ferguson, *Church History: From Christ to Pre-Reformation*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 367.

room for flexibility in terms of patterns, structure, and implementation.”⁷⁷ How do we come to a valid conclusion as to how the church should be governed? We would all agree that there must be order. Calvin once wrote, “If we wish to provide for the safety of the church, we must attend with all diligence to Paul’s command that ‘all things should be done decently and in order.’ (1 Cor. 14:40)”⁷⁸ In situations like this where there is no crystal clear picture of how we are supposed to do church, we must take a look at the churches in Scripture as a whole to determine what our structure and government must look like. I fall in line with many Baptists who believe in the single-elder led, congregational church government.

Why single-elder and not multiple-elder led as even some Baptists hold to? Patterson admits there is no commandment that honors the single-elder over the multiple-elder view, but that this case is made by observing leadership practices within Scripture. He believes that throughout Scripture God calls a leader from among the people (Moses, the judges, the prophets, Peter).⁷⁹ As Adrian Rogers used to say, “Anything without a head is dead. Anything with more than one head is a freak.” That may serve as valuable wisdom in this observation. Towns agrees and makes the case that the New Testament churches seem to have a leader, as with James in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:13).⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Dockery, *Southern Baptist Identity*, 289.

⁷⁸ Donald K. McKim, ed., *Calvin’s Institutes*, abr. (Louisville: Westminster John Know, 2001), 139.

⁷⁹ Steven B. Cowan, ed., *Who Runs the Church?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 150-152.

⁸⁰ Elmer L. Towns, *Theology for Today*, (Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2001), 662.

If I can take it a step further, I want to make the case for a single-elder, representative congregationalism. Congregationalism is the form of church government held by most Southern Baptist churches. How was congregational church government played out in the Scriptures? Towns writes,

The congregation seemed to be the final seat of authority which determined who could be received into fellowship (Rom. 14:1), and who would determine those that would be examined and/or rejected (2 Cor. 13:5), and which would determine their leaders (Acts 6:3, 5; Acts 14:23).⁸¹

How does congregationalism take form in our current day? Baptist churches do this in at least a few ways. First, there are meetings where church members can vote for or against certain decisions being put up for discussion. Every person has a vote and every person matters. The other way Baptists have often expressed congregationalism is in the form of electing certain members to represent the congregation in decision-making. Committees of all kinds are formed to accomplish specific tasks of the church. There are pulpit committees that search for a new pastor, finance committees that deal with budget issues, and personnel committees that put the stamp of approval on new hires. Other times churches may have an elder board, board of directors, or trustees that represent the congregation in giving assistance and decision-making support to the pastor. We must allow for flexibility in how we implement congregationalism in our churches. Akin wisely asserts that Scripture does not set forth the specifics of how we are to congregationally govern our churches, though he believes it is the most defensible view from Scripture.⁸²

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Dockery, *Southern Baptist Identity*, 290.

Electing specific people from the congregation or staff and delegating to them certain responsibilities of the church can allow for greater effectiveness. A representative congregationalism allows the church to be the church without having to squabble over simple decisions that can be decided by an elected body. Erickson believes orderliness in the church suggests that people should be elected to represent the congregation on some level.⁸³ Instead of sitting in a business meeting voting on the color of the carpet, they can hit the pavement going door-to-door witnessing. The major, church-changing decisions can still be dealt with in a business meeting or special voting time during the weekend service. Some examples of the issues dealt with in this kind of meeting are the yearly budget, a fundraising campaign for a new building, or the addition of a new campus. As a result, congregationalism can still be upheld through the elected bodies of the church and these voting sessions. Gilbert rightly assesses that it would be hard to say that multi-site churches can be “just as congregational as another congregational church.” He concludes, “The fact is, they’re doing something fairly unique.”⁸⁴ He is right. It will look different. However, while these congregational churches may not look like others, it is still possible to hold to the congregational principles that we see in Scripture in a multi-site model.

The questions and issues that have been dealt with in this chapter are serious things to be considered by the pastors and theologians of our day. Francis Schaeffer, in his 1970 book, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, gives us significant wisdom on the matters that have just been dealt with. He writes,

⁸³ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1096.

⁸⁴ Gilbert, “What Is This Thing, Anyway?” 30.

Not being able, as times change, to change under the Holy Spirit is ugly. The same applies to church polity and practice. In a rapidly changing age like ours, an age of total upheaval like ours, to make nonabsolutes absolutes guarantees both isolation and the death of the institutional, organized church.⁸⁵

We would be wise to heed Shaeffer's warning. These are difficult theological issues that must be dealt with and considered in light of faithful ecclesiology *and* evangelism. As the multi-site church movement continues to spread, we must also spread the passion and desire for theological orthodoxy in all matters concerning the faith. At the same time we must bring our innovation to new levels in order to fulfill the mandate given to us by King Jesus.

⁸⁵ Francis Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1970), 68, quoted in Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church*, 92.

CHAPTER 3

PARTNERSHIPS THAT PUT LEGS TO MP

While the previous chapter focused mostly on the multi-site side of multi-plantation, this chapter will focus almost entirely on the church planting side of it. Partnerships are a vital component of multi-plantation. The multi-site aspect of multi-plantation is one that definitely emphasizes partnership, but it is almost always partnerships between the different campuses instead of two separate churches cooperating together. Therefore, the partnerships focused upon in this section will deal with the cooperation of two or more churches that have the goal of planting other churches. Three different kinds of partnerships will be covered: Southern Baptist Denominational Partnerships, Southern Baptist Church Partnerships, and Southern Baptist Church Partnerships with Churches or Networks of Like Faith and Practice.

First, let's ask the question, "Why should we plant more churches?" To answer simply, it is because gospel-centered churches that take evangelism seriously will have a major impact on the world. As Ed Stetzer writes,

Evangelism takes place best when unbelievers are already connected with a biblical community. Then, people can make a dangerous decision (for Christ) in a safe place (the church). The church needs a vision for evangelism as a journey in community.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, *Breaking the Missional Code* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 145.

If there is no biblical community near the unbeliever, how will he or she hear the good news? Or if he does come to Christ through some evangelistic effort, where will he grow in the discipleship process? We need thousands upon thousands of new churches across the world that will embrace their community and invite them into a new community of faith that will share the gospel with them.

Second, let's ask the question, "Why should we partner with others?" We should partner with others because we can do more together than we can do apart. David Pickard provides some helpful principles of partnership that will help in our discussion. He believes: (1) Partnerships are dynamic, not static, (2) Partnerships require integrity, and (3) Partnerships require long-term thinking.⁸⁷ Along the lines of long-term thinking, this discussion of partnerships is really a discussion of *strategy*. Partnerships are a strategic way to fulfill the church planting wing of multi-plantation. Payne wisely asserts,

Flexibility is a key principle in strategy development. Church-planting strategies must not be too rigid, or they will break when change arrives. There is much science to strategic planning; however, strategies must allow for adjustment so church planting can occur.⁸⁸

Whether a church is partnering with a denomination or another church, it should make provision for a certain level of flexibility within the plans. No matter how high the level of planning and strategy, there will always be unforeseen circumstances. As a result, the church should partner with those whom they know will uphold their end of the agreement while maintaining a flexible spirit when change arrives. Let us now move to a discussion of the three types of partnerships mentioned above.

⁸⁷ William D. Taylor, ed., *Kingdom Partnerships for Synergy in Missions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1994), 189-190.

⁸⁸ J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 157.

Southern Baptist Denominational Partnerships

One of the great ways for Southern Baptist churches to do the church planting side of multi-plantation is through partnering with the denominational entities. As we begin this discussion it is important to note, as an old Oklahoma Baptist preacher once did, that, “No association, state convention, or the Southern Baptist Convention has any authority over any local Baptist church. All co-operation is completely voluntary.”⁸⁹ As we talk about this voluntary cooperation of churches and our denomination, we must first get a grasp of the convention itself and its giving mechanism, the Cooperative Program. There are both positive and negative aspects involved in this discussion. The Southern Baptist Convention has two main church planting entities, The International Mission Board and The North American Mission Board. In addition to these two, the convention also consists of 42 state conventions and numerous local associations. The North American Mission Board, state convention, and local association all play a role in the planting of churches in America.

At the end of 2008, NAMB had 5,611 missionaries on the ground with 3,739 of those being cooperatively funded through the state conventions and local associations. NAMB’s website states that Southern Baptists planted more than 1,500 new congregations in 2008 in North America and recorded thousands of salvations through its various ministries.⁹⁰ Likewise, on the overseas front, the International Mission Board

⁸⁹ M. E. Ramay, *Plain Statements On Baptist Faith and Practice* (Oklahoma City: The Messenger Press, 1957), 60.

⁹⁰ North American Mission Board, “Annual Report – NAMB.net,” Southern Baptist Convention, http://www.namb.net/site/c.9qKILUOzEpH/b.245607/k.A9D1/Annual_Report.htm (accessed August 1, 2009).

planted 26,970 churches in 2008, baptizing almost 566,000 people.⁹¹ Southern Baptists are extremely blessed to have over 10,000 missionaries between these two mission entities.

All of this is funded through the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention. Established in 1925, it has been the crown jewel of the denominational world that combines the resources of almost 50,000 churches and missions to fund these two main mission entities, the state conventions and local associations, six conservative seminaries, the Executive Committee, and the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. The local, autonomous Southern Baptist church decides how much it desires to send to the state convention, which serves as the “collecting agent” for the convention.⁹² The state convention takes a certain percentage of that gift, decided by the messengers of that state convention⁹³ and sends the rest to Nashville for distribution to the rest of the entities. The International Mission Board automatically gets fifty percent of the remaining money while the rest is divided up and distributed to The North American Mission Board, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, the Executive Committee, and the six seminaries.

The current distribution system has sparked controversy in SBC life that could have a direct impact on whether or not some Southern Baptist churches will choose to partner with the denomination to plant churches. This dissatisfaction among pastors explains why some are even leaving or have simply become disinterested in the

⁹¹ International Mission Board, “International Mission Board :: Home,” Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.imb.org/main/page.asp?StoryID=4452&LanguageID=1709> (accessed August 1, 2009).

⁹² Brand and Hankins, *One Sacred Effort*, 112.

⁹³ Ibid.

denomination altogether. Much of this controversy centers on the high percentage of Cooperative Program dollars that some state conventions keep. The original Cooperative Program agreement was a 50/50 split between the state conventions and the national entities. Unfortunately, we have drifted away from this and keep entirely too much money within our own states while the majority of the world's population is outside the borders of our nation. Between the years of 1985-2005, the average Cooperative Program funds sent to Nashville for distribution have been about thirty-six percent, with a low of thirty-five percent and a high of thirty-nine percent.⁹⁴ On top of the percentage kept by the state conventions, they also receive money back from The North American Mission Board after it has been funneled to them from Nashville. Some would argue that this is a detriment to church planting.

All of this begs the question, "Are we doing everything we can to get as many resources as possible to church planting and to reaching the nations?" This question leaves pastors and others wondering if there is not a need for significant change. The President of the Executive Committee, Morris Chapman, said the following in an address to the Baptist Identity Conference in 2004:

The Southern Baptist Convention needs fine-tuning. In fact, the Convention may require an overhaul, not in its polity, but in its programming and processes by which it functions daily. A major overhaul by the national convention and the state conventions appears to be an absolute necessity, letting the facts speak for themselves lest the conventions discover too late they were blind and deaf to a delivery system that better serves the churches.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Dockery, *Southern Baptist Identity*, 236. In this chapter, Michael Day gives an incredible vision of what the future of state conventions and associations should look like.

This kind of overhaul could encourage some discouraged pastors to once again partner together with the denomination's entities for the planting of churches. It would also certainly help these pastors who, like Michael Day, see what he describes as "The Duplicated-Effort Syndrome" and "The Institution-First Syndrome"⁹⁶ of the SBC. Deep in the heart of most pastors is a desire to win the world to Christ. Many feel we should direct a significant portion of our SBC dollars towards planting churches. When they see their church's money going to other things than church planting and missions, they begin to ask questions. This is a controversy that is likely to extend over the next several years. All of this eventually points back to the issue of church planting. It begs the question, "Does the current SBC structure and allocation system allow for the greatest partnership possible to help us plant churches both nationally and internationally?" If it is not, then we may need to look at refining how we do what we do as a convention.

Aside from the questions that loom facing certain aspects of the convention, there are also significant reasons that a church should consider partnerships with the denomination to plant churches. First of all, by cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention and through giving to the Cooperative Program, all Southern Baptist churches are in essence, church-planting churches. However, churches should always remember that the Great Commission was given to them, not the denomination. A church should never just give and pray, but also give, pray, and go themselves! Having said all of that, it is an incredible thing to be a Southern Baptist. It doesn't matter if your church has 20 members or 2,000 members, you are a church-planting church that makes up a church-planting denomination.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 231.

Another benefit of partnering with the denomination is the like-mindedness of the entities. We have joined together under a common set of beliefs, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, and use this as a guide for our cooperation. Joining together under a set of beliefs has been a mark of Baptists. Brackney notes that even in the seventeenth century Baptists had confessions that marked their beliefs on the individual, church, and associational level.⁹⁷ This similarity of doctrine allows for great flexibility. If a church has a heart for a specific city, state, country, or people group, chances are we have faithful Southern Baptists serving nearby. Through partnering to plant churches with The North American Mission Board or The International Mission Board, churches have the opportunity to partner with local Southern Baptist pastors and missionaries to plant other Southern Baptist churches. You do not have that benefit when you partner with some other denomination or missions organization who does not necessarily hold the same beliefs. Therefore, there is a built-in “safety mechanism” for churches by planting within the convention.

Finally, there is the benefit of procedures and processes that are already in place. The North American Mission Board⁹⁸ and The International Mission Board⁹⁹ both have various items already in place to assist churches in planting other churches. Both have been in existence for years, formerly as the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board, and therefore have decades of experience helping Southern Baptist churches plant other churches at home and around the globe. In other words, they are not

⁹⁷ William H. Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 14.

⁹⁸ See Appendix 1 for one example of how churches can help plant churches through The North American Mission Board.

⁹⁹ See Appendix 2 for information from The International Mission Board on how a church can adopt a people group.

new to the task of church planting. This wealth of knowledge can be a great asset to the young pastor who has great passion, but not a great understanding of how to go about fulfilling the Great Commission through the planting of churches. Southern Baptist pastors would be wise to take advantage of the opportunities that come with planting with the assistance of the denomination.

Southern Baptist Church Partnerships

Another great reason to partner with the denomination is the ability to have the flexibility to *also* partner with other Southern Baptist churches. In this dual partnership approach, the churches hold much of the weight for the church plant while benefiting from the resources and direction of the denomination. This kind of partnership also highlights the incredible potential that churches have when they focus their attention and resources together to plant a new church. Here are a few examples of how this has been played out on a national level.

Hope Fellowship Church – Cambridge, MA

Curtis Cook was a young church planter in the Boston suburb of Cambridge who started Hope Fellowship Church in 2003 through a partnership with the North American Mission Board. Cook and Hope Fellowship then came into a relationship with Jack Graham and the Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas. Through that relationship, Hope Fellowship has not only garnered financial assistance from the church, but also a host of “people assistance” who come on short-term mission trips. Numerous mission teams have gone out from Prestonwood to spend their vacation serving Christ through helping this young church.

Over the past five years, Hope Fellowship has had a unique relationship with the young singles ministry at Prestonwood. Through that department alone, Prestonwood has sent over 300 short-term missionaries who have gone on one of the three annual trips to the Boston area. Former young singles pastor and now teaching pastor at Prestonwood Jarrett Stephens said,

Ministering in a city like Boston where the culture and context is not as saturated with the gospel as the Bible-belt has sharpened the way that we do evangelism. Knowing that 60% of the visitors to Hope Fellowship come by way of servant evangelism projects has influenced the way we do outreach within our young singles ministry.¹⁰⁰

The young singles ministry has adopted this kind of servant ministry by doing things like passing out free water bottles, helping new residents move in to their apartments, and washing cars for free. This is all done with the hope of either sharing Christ with these people or letting them know they have a church nearby that loves them. Both Hope Fellowship and Prestonwood would agree that this partnership has been a valuable one for both sides. Hope Fellowship has benefited from hundreds of Prestonwood members coming to Boston and serving the church while Prestonwood has benefited from having these same members come back and live as missionaries in their own city.

Cross Church – San Diego, CA

Church-planter Brad Graves started Cross Church in San Diego, California through a variety of partnerships. The kind of relationship Graves experienced is what McNamara and Davis would describe as “Partnership Church Planting.” They write,

This brothering model involves a cooperative effort between one or more churches and a mission agency. An experienced missionary church planter under

¹⁰⁰ Jarrett Stephens, interview by author, September 7, 2009.

the agency joins forces with a single local church or group of churches that desire to initiate a new work in a needy area.¹⁰¹

This describes the church planting strategy of Cross Church in San Diego, California almost perfectly. Pastor Brad Graves was an experienced church planter in Southern Baptist ranks, successfully planting churches in New Hampshire and Cleveland. God began working out the details for Brad and his family to begin a new church in San Diego. Graves' home church, First Baptist Church of Springdale, Arkansas and The Church at Pinnacle Hills brought him in to become a part of their staff for about a year. The church committed to invest \$250,000 in helping Graves plant this new church in this beautiful region of Southern California. The North American Mission Board also came alongside Graves, one of their own missionaries, spending an additional \$250,000 for all the necessities of living and planting in San Diego.

In addition to their major partners, Cross Church was also able to receive funding and mission team assistance from several churches that included: Olive Baptist in Pensacola, Florida, First Baptist North Spartanburg, South Carolina, First Baptist Concord in Knoxville, Tennessee, Prestonwood Baptist in Plano, Texas, First Baptist Orlando, Florida, First Baptist Jackson, Mississippi, First Baptist Rogers, Arkansas, and First Baptist Oviedo, Florida. As of March 2008, these partnerships have allowed Cross Church to host 13 mission teams totaling 301 missionaries, have 3 summer or semester missionaries that have served as short-term staff, prayer walked 34,000 homes, seen 225 families visit one of their events, 4 staff members join their team, and seen 50 people

¹⁰¹ Robert N. McNamara and Ken Davis, *The Y-B-H Handbook of Church Planting* (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2005), 150.

saved.¹⁰² That is incredible evidence of the value of partnership! Cross Church San Diego has been able to minister in the community in a much more effective way because of the partnerships that they have had with these local churches across the country.

Churches should not underestimate *their* responsibility to partner with others to fulfill the Great Commission through the planting of churches. As Thom Rainer says, “Starting new churches is always important. But starting churches today is critical.”¹⁰³ With our culture spiraling downward, we must partner together to plant new works that will reach new people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Pastors and churches should feel the burden of planting new churches locally, nationally, and internationally. The local churches are the ones who must carry the banner for church planting into the 21st century.

Partnerships with Churches or Networks of Like Faith and Practice

“In the future, those who are not networking will be not working.”¹⁰⁴ Those were the words of James Davis, founder of Cutting Edge International and co-founder of Billion Soul Network, in an address to our staff in September of 2009. Davis challenged our group with a presentation on “Visionary Leadership,” in which he spoke not only of vision in itself, but also of a vision to reach the world by doubling the amount of churches across the world. He respectively stated, “Southern Baptists cannot fulfill the task of the Great Commission. There are almost 7 billion people. It’s too big.”¹⁰⁵ Davis may be striking a chord that Southern Baptists and other denominations should pay attention to.

¹⁰² http://crosschurchsandiego.com/?page_id=70.

¹⁰³ Thom Rainer, “Foreword,” *Starting Churches from the Ground Up*, ed. Tom Jones (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2004), 2.

¹⁰⁴ James O. Davis, (presentation given to ministry staff at The Church at Pinnacle Hills, Rogers, AR, September 1, 2009).

¹⁰⁵ Davis, presentation.

Can we as Southern Baptists really fulfill the task of the Great Commission by ourselves? Or are there times when we should partner with churches of like faith and practice to establish gospel-centered churches who reach the world?

Another one of those church-planting organizations that provides opportunities for partnerships is Vision 360. Al Weiss, President of Worldwide Operations for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, is the founder behind this church-planting movement. In the past four years, Vision 360 has planted 24 churches in the Orlando area. However, their vision for church planting is much bigger than just Orlando. Their goal is to plant 500 churches in 500 large cities in the world by 2025.¹⁰⁶ Vision 360 provides church leaders certain benefits in partnership that a local church could not do alone. Local churches should partner with organizations like this when it allows them further opportunities for the spread of the gospel without compromising theology and practice.

What about the current practice of some Southern Baptist churches to partner with organizations like Acts 29 or others? Is this practice of uniting with like-minded churches or organizations something to be commended or discouraged? What if our local church wanted to partner with a Bible church in town to plant a Hispanic church in our region? Here are a few guidelines for our understanding of partnering with like-minded churches or organizations for church planting:

- (1) Who will determine the planted church's beliefs and practices?
- (2) Will this partnership violate any of the pastor's or church beliefs?
- (3) Is the organization or church we are partnering with gospel-centered?
- (4) What potential pitfalls are there in this partnership?

¹⁰⁶ Al Weiss, interview by author, Rogers, AR, September 24, 2009.

(5) What can we put in place to save ourselves from these pitfalls?

These guidelines should help a church wade through some of the issues of partnering with these like-minded churches or organizations for the purposes of church planting. There are no doubt more issues to be covered when planting with other churches or organizations outside of a church's denomination, but that does not necessarily mean that it should not be done. The whole idea of church partnerships with others who are like-minded has the same goal as that of multi-plantation; fulfilling the Great Commission.

James Davis nailed the idea behind partnerships when he said, "We can do a lot more together than we can by ourselves."¹⁰⁷ When we can partner with others for the proclamation of the gospel and not sacrifice any of our beliefs or values, we should feel the freedom to partner and be encouraged to do so. Through these three kinds of partnerships, we will hopefully see a new harvest of souls brought about through the gospel ministry of thousands of new local churches around the world.

In conclusion, whether partnering with denominations, other churches of the same denomination, or churches or networks of like faith and practice; partnerships should be sought out. Marksberry writes,

There is incredible value in partnership. Because of their true value, we must purposefully forge strategic partnerships in church planting. Partnership is an endeavor worthy of our most dedicated efforts because it has consistently proven its true value, even from the very beginning of time.¹⁰⁸

Your church does not have to go on the road of church planting alone. Partnership with others provides a level of security, wisdom, assistance, and unity that cannot be experienced in planting alone. It also gives an incredible message to the world of the

¹⁰⁷ Davis, presentation.

¹⁰⁸ Tom Jones, ed., *Starting Churches from the Ground Up*, (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2004), 112.

unity of believers in different contexts joining together to give of their time and resources to plant an entirely different church in another location. These kinds of partnerships for church planting are an essential component of being a multi-plantation church and should be taken advantage of whenever possible.

CHAPTER 4

THE MIGHTY MEN OF MULTI-PLANTATION

In my research eleven pastors of multi-plantation churches were surveyed to help us grasp the heart behind multi-plantation. The seven questions they answered showed everything from their motivation for going multi-site to advice they would give pastors who are considering leading their church into a multi-plantation ministry. There were some common characteristics between their answers on some questions, while others were full of a wide variety of answers. Each question will be dealt with individually below with the common characteristics noted as well.

1. Why Did You Lead Your Church to Go Multi-Site?

The dominant answer among these eleven pastors dealt with extending the reach of their local church. This is a not a surprising conclusion as one could easily guess evangelism and outreach would be one of the primary reasons that a church would choose to go multi-site. Surratt, Bird, and Ligon, authors of *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, would agree with this conclusion. They write,

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).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 18.

Scott McConnell, author of *Multi-Site Churches*, would also agree. He writes that multi-site churches have a “bent to make decisions based on a desire for the kingdom of God to grow. The decision to add their second site and sometimes other sites since then was driven from this desire to reach people with the good news of Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁰ More than anything, multi-site churches allow their congregations to be a part of an evangelistic movement that has the potential to impact thousands of lives. In giving reasons why multi-site churches and video churches will increase, Mars Hill Church pastor Mark Driscoll writes, “More people need to meet Jesus...If multiple campuses and video are ways that God the Holy Spirit chooses to reach more people for Jesus, then we would be wise not to criticize or oppose it, even if our church decides not to do it.”¹¹¹ These eleven Southern Baptist pastors would agree that more people need to meet Jesus and they have found that going multi-site has allowed them an avenue to do that.

The second most dominant reason these pastors decided to lead their church to go multi-site was space issues on the original campus. Eric Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia explains, “One of the motivating factors was the lack of space at the Norfolk Campus, and we were also landlocked. We, therefore, determined a satellite would better reach the people of that area without losing connection with First Norfolk and her programming.”¹¹² The Village Church was also one that had space issues. After failing to alleviate the space issues through two local church plants, God brought about a second campus, which has helped in the overall growth of The Village

¹¹⁰ McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches*, 6-7.

¹¹¹ Driscoll and Breshears, *Vintage Church*, 259.

¹¹² Eric Thomas, survey by author, September 15, 2009.

Church.¹¹³ Space issues have the potential to hinder a growing church. If people are parking a mile away or have no place to sit in the worship service, it could become an issue for any church. Multi-site provides a solution to these kinds of space issues so that people from the launching campus can empty seats for guests while also going on mission in their own communities.

2. Why Show a Commitment to Both Multi-Site and to Church Planting?

Similar to the answers to the first question, five of the eleven pastors referenced some aspect of reaching people. Ronnie Floyd, pastor of FBC Springdale, Arkansas and The Church at Pinnacle Hills writes,

Our missional vision as a church is reaching Northwest Arkansas, America, and the World for Jesus Christ. Following an Acts 1:8 model calls to a strategy that is regional, national, and global. Both multi-site and church planting are essential to seeing this fulfilled.¹¹⁴

This kind of three-pronged approach to multi-plantation makes incredible sense. One church in many locations cooperating in a region can reach thousands of people.

However, just going multi-site will eventually limit the impact of that particular local church. That is why it is essential to apply this both/and strategy of multi-site *and* church planting. In responding to this question, Keystone Community Fellowship pastor John Cope says, “We are driven by the vision not the method... We watch and see what kind of leader God brings.”¹¹⁵ The benefit to this approach is that it really does show a dependence on God. If He brings a leader that is better equipped to plant than to be a campus pastor, then Cope will send them out to start a church plant. On the other hand,

¹¹³ Matt Chandler, interview by author, September 21, 2009.

¹¹⁴ Ronnie Floyd, survey by author, September 2, 2009.

¹¹⁵ John Cope, survey by author, September 17, 2009.

some men may need further training and accountability before they can be sent out on their own. There is significant freedom in this kind of approach.

3. How Has This Commitment to Both Been a Benefit in Your Church?

The answers to this question were some of the most surprising in the entire survey. More than half of the eleven pastors mentioned something about the benefit that multi-plantation has been to their members. For instance, Al Gilbert, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church writes, “Everything we do to cast vision for lostness deepens the roots of our people. We have challenged them to ‘drive the pegs deep so that we can lengthen the rope’ (see Isaiah 54:2).”¹¹⁶ What a great statement! Calvary is penetrating lostness through multi-plantation. Jonathan Falwell has also seen the benefits to the Thomas Road congregation. He said, “We have seen much excitement in our members over this new campus. And, we have over 70 individuals in our church who are committed to serving in the new campus.”¹¹⁷ Multi-plantation is giving Thomas Road members a great opportunity to reach out into an entirely different community. Five out of the eleven pastors also mentioned some aspect of how multi-plantation has helped them in their outreach, which shows consistency with the answers of the first two questions.

4. How Would You Advise a Pastor Considering Taking His Church Towards this Kind of Both/And Ministry?

The answers to this question seemed to be all over the map as these pastors thought of

¹¹⁶ Al Gilbert, survey by author, September 24, 2009.

¹¹⁷ Jonathan Falwell, survey by author, September 14, 2009.

a number of things they would advise a pastor on. Both Jack Graham and Ronnie Floyd spoke to the issues of giving strong leadership and vision. Graham wrote four simple yet powerful things in response to this question. He said, “Give strong, confident leadership. Build consensus. Share the vision multiple times. Engage the new site personally.”¹¹⁸ If the pastor considering multi-plantation would simply put into practice these four things, he is likely to experience success.

J. D. Greear and Eric Thomas pointed to the importance of church planting.

Thomas encourages “every pastor to begin church planting today.”¹¹⁹ Fellow Southern Baptist pastor J. D. Greear would agree. He writes,

We believe the healthiest church is a church-planting church. First, address your commitment to this prospect before taking the steps to become multi-site. That’s not to say that you have to plant another church before launching a second campus, but we would advise that you are taking active steps toward becoming a church-planting church.¹²⁰

Obviously this work is about showing a commitment to both multi-site and church planting. If a church ever feels they need to choose between one or the other, they should choose to do church planting. It has the greatest potential for world transformation. Multi-site alone will either limit the ministry to the senior pastor’s tenure or limit the church’s reach to only a regional approach. Church planting has limitless possibilities.

As mentioned above, the approach of John Cope and Keystone Community Fellowship is one that shows a dependence on God to bring the right leader who will determine whether the church should plant or start an additional campus. Eric Thomas and First Norfolk also see the benefit to this kind of strategy. He writes, “I would

¹¹⁸ Jack Graham, survey by author, September 16, 2009.

¹¹⁹ Eric Thomas, survey by author, September 15, 2009.

¹²⁰ J. D. Greear, survey by author, September 15, 2009.

encourage the pastor to begin developing the leaders now for both strategies. Without the right leadership, neither of the strategies will be effective or faithful.”¹²¹ Taking this approach of equipping men for both strategies has the potential for significant impact in the future.

5. Are There Any Long-Term Plans to Continue Being Committed to Both More Campuses and Plants?

Nine out of the eleven pastors surveyed said there are plans to continue showing a commitment to both. The other two still plan to do church planting, but do not have any plans for additional sites. Curtis Cook and the Hope Fellowship Church outside Boston are one of the two that plan to plant instead of add a campus. Cook writes,

In our context, I think this is probably the wisest way forward for the long-term viability of the churches, their credibility in the communities and so that they can be appropriately pastored at a local level. It is our plan to try to plant a new church every 2 years.¹²²

As stated above, in situations where a church is going to focus most of their attention on one, it is important they put their energy into church planting because of its long-term viability and potential. Churches must take into account all the various issues that come with being a multi-plantation church. After an examination of these issues, pastors and their church leadership must make hard decisions about the future of their particular church. For some, it is a continuation of both. For others, it is a specific focus on one of the two. These decisions must be carried to the Lord in prayer.

¹²¹ Cope, survey.

¹²² Curtis Cook, survey by author, September 9, 2009.

6. Were There Certain Churches that You Looked at in Your Journey Towards Multi-Site and Church Planting?

Ed Young Sr. and the Second Baptist Church of Houston, Texas seemed to be the best example for churches to look at in their journey towards multi-plantation. The reason for this is that Young and Second Baptist were on the frontlines of the multi-site movement in Southern Baptist life. Four out of the eleven churches mentioned the Houston church as one they looked at in their journey. The church with the second highest number of mentions from these pastors was Seacoast Church in South Carolina. Geoff Surratt, one of the authors of *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, serves on staff at this church. Seacoast is a dynamic church with many locations. First Baptist Springdale and North Coast Church of San Diego were tied for next in line of those mentioned by these pastors. Two churches said they did not look at anyone in their journey towards multi-plantation. In all, eighteen churches across thirteen states were examined by these eleven multi-plantation churches in their journey towards multi-site and/or church planting.

7. What Are the Three Main Challenges With Being a Church Committed to Both Multi-Site and Church Planting?

The two most dominant answers to this question are not surprising. Eight of the eleven pastors mentioned finances as one of the three main challenges of multi-plantation. One of the greatest obstacles to a vision for multi-plantation is the reality of the financial strain that it may put on the church. Surratt, Bird, and Ligon have a great perspective on this issue. They write, “The first cost to count is the price of not opening a

second campus.” They continue by talking about how churches who are not growing or do not have a mission may not incur financial costs, but, “They are still paying a cost: the cost of not gaining ground in obedience to Jesus’ command to make disciples.”¹²³ These multi-plantation churches have counted the cost of not reaching out and have decided on the necessity of planting campuses and churches to reach people. They have taken the issue of financial difficulty head on in an effort to see people saved.

The second highest answer had to do with the issue of leadership. Finding the right kind of leadership to lead an additional campus or a separate church plant is a significant issue. Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd writes, “You have to become a ‘farm club,’ using a baseball term, in order to serve these new works you are beginning. You have to equip leadership, once you find them within your church or outside of it.”¹²⁴ Multi-plantation churches are always equipping, always looking for leadership, and always looking forward. If they fail to do this, they will be stuck with a great amount of vision but no one to carry it out.

Another one of the dominant answers dealt with, “When do we plant a campus and when do we plant a separate church?” Eric Thomas, Aaron Coe, and Matt Chandler all noted this as one of the three main challenges of multi-plantation. In his response Chandler said, “We have to tap into the Holy Spirit.” He noted that if left up to them, a video venue will always be cheaper, but is it right in that situation?¹²⁵ He believes receiving wisdom from God will help them in these decisions. Pastors would be wise to

¹²³ Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 97.

¹²⁴ Floyd, survey.

¹²⁵ Chandler, interview.

take Chandler's advice and seek the Lord through prayer to determine whether they should add a location or plant a church.

Regardless of the size of their congregation or the location of their church, these Southern Baptist pastors are on the front lines of multi-plantation ministry. They serve as models for pastors across the world who seek to lead their congregations in reaching out locally, nationally, and internationally. Each one of these men are passionate about seeing the Great Commission fulfilled and they are currently building a legacy that will far outlast their lives. They are planting congregations everywhere that are playing their role in the gospel mandate in Matthew 28 of "making disciples of all nations."¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Full manuscripts of all of these surveys are provided in appendix 3.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHURCHES OF MULTI-PLANTATION

It is important to note that this idea of multi-plantation did not originate in the brain of this author. For years, faithful, gospel-centered churches have been innovatively seeking new ways to fulfill the Great Commission. One of those ways has been for churches to go multi-plantation. To rehash, these are churches with multiple locations who also show a commitment to separate church planting. To keep with the theme of previous chapters, I have kept this study to specifically deal with Southern Baptist multi-plantation churches. It is encouraging to see that our denomination is on the front lines of cutting edge ministry that is reaching people all over the world. Let's take a look at these churches and then conclude with some common characteristics of these churches.

First Baptist Church of Springdale, Arkansas and The Church at Pinnacle Hills

This church nestled in the beautiful northwest corner of Arkansas has served as a great example of multi-plantation for years. Under the leadership of Ronnie Floyd, the church had already successfully planted a church on all six inhabited continents of the world. In August of 2001, this congregation decided to take another bold step. They became one church in two locations, starting The Church at Pinnacle Hills in nearby Rogers, Arkansas. Floyd believed being in a smaller city and seeing the separatist mentality between the two local counties meant that it was crucial for the church to reach into Benton County for the future of the ministry.¹²⁷ Three hundred people left the comforts of the Springdale megachurch to go and plant an exciting new work in a

¹²⁷ Ronnie Floyd, interview by author, September 2, 2009.

growing area of the region. In eight years, the church has seen God do unbelievable things. In 2008, the church averaged over 2,400 people each Sunday. They have seen hundreds of people saved and baptized since their inception. All of this was made possible by the grace of God and a passionate congregation in Springdale who was willing to step out in faith.

Since becoming a multi-site church in 2001, First Baptist Springdale and The Church at Pinnacle Hills has continued its church planting passion by planting 34 churches all over the world. Floyd recently laid out a vision for multi-plantation over the next seven years of the church that will include starting more campuses and planting 10 churches a year. First Baptist Springdale and Pinnacle Hills are keeping their priorities straight. As Bob Russell once wrote, “Every church needs to remember that the primary mission – the main thing – is evangelism.”¹²⁸ This is a church that keeps the main thing the main thing!

Church Plants Since Going Multi-Site in August of 2001

Date	Location	Churches Started
June 2002	Blantyre, Malawi, Africa	1
July 2003	Port Au Prince, Haiti	1
October – November 2003	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1
May 2004	Curitiba, Brazil	1
2005	Fayetteville, Arkansas	1

¹²⁸ Bob Russell with Rusty Russell, *When God Builds a Church* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Company, 2000), 252.

June 2005	Curitiba, Brazil	1
August 2005	Africa	4
January 2006	Las Vegas	1
June 2006	Brazil	1
July 2006	Cleveland, Ohio	1
July –August 2006	Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa	1
September 2006	Brazil	1
March 2007	Brazil	1
April 2007	China	2
July 2007	Curitiba, Brazil	1
July 2007	Mexico	2
August – September 2007	Ntcheu, Malawi, Africa	2
2007	Fayetteville, Arkansas	1
2007	Strongsville, Ohio	1
2008	San Diego, California	1
2008	Lincoln, Arkansas	1
July 2008	Campina Grande, Brazil	3
August – September 2008	Ntcheu, Malawi, Africa	1
2008	Springdale, Arkansas	1
2008	Pea Ridge, Arkansas	1
2009	Makwangala Village, Malawi, Africa	1 ¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Doug Sarver, e-mail message to author, May 26, 2009. Sarver serves as Missions Pastor at First Baptist Church of Springdale, Arkansas.

Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas

When the name Prestonwood comes up in the rough neighborhoods of south Dallas, smiles abound. This has been a church with the city on its heart for years. Pastor Jack Graham led the church in the 1990's in "Love Dallas" nights where they would meet the needs of the poor in Dallas. In 1995, Prestonwood member and later staff member Mike Fechner joined with Velma Mitchell to create H.I.S. BridgeBuilders, a faith-based non-profit organization. Located directly in the south Dallas lower-income housing development known as Turner Courts, Prestonwood and H.I.S. BridgeBuilders has a weekly impact taking the gospel to their community. In addition to evangelistic efforts, this urban ministry also assists local residents with education, employment training, and medical care.¹³⁰

In August of 2006, the church decided to take its regional outreach to a whole new level. The church launched Prestonwood North, its second location in Prosper, Texas. This north campus has enabled the church to reach the burgeoning community that spreads across highway 380 just north of Frisco, Texas. Three years later after beginning this campus, Prestonwood North is reaching over 1,000 people on a weekly basis. Countless lives have been touched because Prestonwood was willing to take a risk and step out in faith to reach more people with the hope of Jesus.

The future is full of possibilities for Prestonwood. Though there are no plans for additional campuses, they still plan on reaching more people through planting

¹³⁰ H.I.S. BridgeBuilders, "H.I.S. BridgeBuilders | History," H.I.S. BridgeBuilders, <http://hisbridgebuilders.org/AboutUs/History.html> (accessed September 8, 2009).

churches.¹³¹ The church has had a strong passion for missions for years. In fact, each year the church takes up a special offering specifically for missions. This year, the church's goal for this offering is over 1 million dollars. From investing in church planting in Romania to meeting the medical needs of Guatemalans, Prestonwood has a heartbeat for the world.¹³² This church serves as another great example of multi-plantation.

Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina

In 1919, Calvary was started with 43 members who had no idea of the global impact that their church would have nearly a century later. In 2002, the church called Al Gilbert to be their new pastor. Gilbert had served as Special Assistant to the President of the International Mission Board for five years prior to coming to Calvary. He describes this experience in a recent blog,

For five years I visited missionaries serving in hard places and preached in churches awakening to a missions vision. My assignment was to be bilingual: speak 'church' to the mission board and speak 'missions' to the churches. In the churches I kept hearing the question: 'Is it local or global?' It is not a question about who needs Jesus the most—the whole world is filled with people who need Christ! We must embrace the local and global task.¹³³

One can imagine the impact that this local church will have upon the world with a pastor who has had that kind of experience. In the above paragraph, he speaks of the

¹³¹ Jack Graham, interview by author, September 16, 2009.

¹³² Prestonwood Baptist Church, "Global Outreach || Prestonwood on Mission," Prestonwood Baptist Church, www.prestonwoodmissions.org (accessed September 11, 2009).

¹³³ Al Gilbert, "The Great Commission and Me | Praying for a Great Commission Resurgence," Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.prayer4gcr.com/2009/08/the-great-commission-and-me/> (accessed September 11, 2009).

responsibility we have of taking the gospel to people both locally and globally. In this philosophy of ministry we find that multi-plantation fits perfectly.

On the local front, Calvary has sought to reach further into their community by going multi-site, adding a West Campus in Advance, North Carolina. Gilbert explained that he developed two teams upon arrival at Calvary. One was called the Growth Planning and Property Acquisition Team that was seeking to acquire property to give room for expansion at the Central Campus. The other was a multi-site research team. While God closed the doors on the Growth Planning and Property Acquisition Team, the multi-site team reported on their findings and Calvary came to the conclusion that God was leading them to go multi-site.¹³⁴

While they are reaching out locally through multi-site, Calvary also has an extensive missions ministry. Churches looking for a missions ministry to imitate would be wise to look at Calvary. The church lists twenty-six mission opportunities in which their members can participate.¹³⁵ These trips and experiences range from making a difference locally, to touching people for Christ nationally, all the way to sharing the gospel with those in countries like Kenya, Egypt and Russia. They also support a host of missionaries across the world who are taking up the task of church planting.¹³⁶ For instance, they support the Gilpin family who work as IMB missionaries in Brazil. Their responsibility is to plan and implement training for lay leadership. The Gilpins also plan

¹³⁴ Al Gilbert, survey by author, September 24, 2009.

¹³⁵ Calvary Baptist Church, "Opportunities," Calvary Baptist Church, <http://www.calvarynow.com/templates/System/details.asp?id=44069&PID=623283> (accessed September 11, 2009).

¹³⁶ Calvary Baptist Church, "Missionaries," Calvary Baptist Church, <http://www.calvarynow.com/templates/System/details.asp?id=44069&PID=623282> (accessed September 11, 2009).

to cooperate with a local seminary to train ministers who will plant churches in the northern part of Brazil.¹³⁷ On the national front, they have partnered with church planters Josh and Erin Gilbert. The Gilberts just recently planted Trademark Church on Easter Sunday of 2008.¹³⁸ Also on the American front, the church will soon plant Infinity Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

Steve Hardy serves as the Associate Pastor of Missions at Calvary. This extensive ministry has church planting directly at the heart of the overseas missions strategy of Calvary. Hardy writes,

All of our overseas trips point toward church planting in some way, whether evangelism or medical or whatever. Our recent team that went to Kenya saw 7 new house church starts while there. A recent India team saw 13 new house churches.¹³⁹

Though their emphasis on church planting looks different in each location of the world, they are a multi-site church that is committed to also planting churches. Calvary is a body of believers that are dead set on fulfilling the Great Commission through multi-plantation. One would be hard-pressed to find many churches that are fulfilling the task of church planting more than Calvary. Calvary would agree with Olson that the message we have is a matter of life and death,¹⁴⁰ and they are doing something about it! They serve as an excellent model of multi-plantation.

¹³⁷ Gilpin Family, "The Gilpin Family," Gilpin Family, <http://www.thegilpinfamily.com/> (accessed September 11, 2009).

¹³⁸ Gilbert Family, "Easter Service Recap," TM Blog, entry posted March 24, 2008, http://web.mac.com/trademarkboise/TM/TM_Blog/Entries/2008/3/24_Easter_Service_Recap.html (accessed September 11, 2009).

¹³⁹ Steve Hardy, e-mail message to author, September 11, 2009.

¹⁴⁰ C. Gordon Olson, *What in the World is God Doing?* 4th ed. (Cedar Knolls, NJ: Global Gospel Publishers, 2001), 17.

Keystone Community Church in North Wales, Pennsylvania

Church planter John Cope and his family moved to the Philadelphia region in August of 2000 to plant a Southern Baptist church in the heart in this major region of the northeast.¹⁴¹ They launched just a few months later in September of 2001 in partnership with the North American Mission Board, First Baptist Church of Springdale, Arkansas, First Baptist Church at the Mall in Lakeland, Florida, Calvary Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas, the Pennsylvania/South Jersey Convention, and First Baptist Church of Orlando, Florida.¹⁴² Partnerships like these help church planters and their churches get off the ground in various ways.

Since its inception, Cope and the Keystone Community Fellowship have already planted another church in Philadelphia. In addition to this, Keystone will also begin a second location in October of 2009. Cope explains that multi-site is a part of a twenty-year vision to see 50,000 people going to a Keystone Community Fellowship type of church. He believes multi-site allows him to help develop pastoral skills among young guys who may be good preachers but are not yet strong leaders.¹⁴³ It is awesome to see the picture of multiplication here. One multi-plantation church in Arkansas helped start a church that will be a multi-plantation church as well. This model of support and reproduction is one that has the potential to change the face of church planting in America and around the world.

¹⁴¹ Keystone Community Fellowship, http://kcfonline.org/cgi-bin/kingdomtools/ktpublic.rb?utility=Page&ministry_id=1&page_title=1137681749 (accessed September 17, 2009).

¹⁴² John Cope, "Why I Remain | Praying for a Great Commission Resurgence," Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.pray4gcr.com/2009/09/why-i-remain/> (accessed September 17, 2009). Cope also currently serves as a member of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force in the Southern Baptist Convention.

¹⁴³ Cope, survey.

Keystone Community Fellowship is a great example of the diversity of multi-plantation. Though many of the multi-plantation churches studied were in the south where churches often thrive, multi-plantation ministry is making its way to the least-reached people groups of our nation. Only 1.6% of our Southern Baptist churches are in the northeast,¹⁴⁴ and John Cope and Keystone are picking up the slack. They are a church with church planting on their hearts. They serve as an excellent model of doing multi-plantation outside of the Bible belt. In the next twenty years we will likely see Keystone reach their goal and see 50-75 new campuses and churches that are reaching Pennsylvania for Christ.¹⁴⁵

Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia

From the very beginning, Thomas Road Baptist Church was infused with the fire and passion of a church planter. The late Jerry Falwell started Thomas Road Baptist Church on June 21, 1956 in the Mountain View Elementary School auditorium.¹⁴⁶ Thirty-five people helped Falwell start what would become one of the world's most well-known and impactful churches. Falwell wrote of those early church planting days in his 2005 book *Building Dynamic Faith*,

I tacked a map of Lynchburg to a poster board and put a large black dot at the place of Thomas Road that marked our church's location. Then I placed my Bible on the map, opened it to my text for that day, and read slowly the key passage from the fifth book in the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles: "And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Cope, "Why I Remain."

¹⁴⁵ Cope, survey.

¹⁴⁶ Jerry Falwell, *Falwell: An Autobiography* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty House Publishers, 1997), 194.

¹⁴⁷ Jerry Falwell, *Building Dynamic Faith* (Nashville: World Publishing, 2005), 59.

Thomas Road was birthed through the call of God and the heart of a church planter. Falwell passionately worked to build Thomas Road into a dynamic church that would impact the world. The church's passion for reaching the world has not missed a beat since his youngest son, Jonathan, took over the pastorate at Thomas Road. The church is in the process of reaching the goal of starting 500 churches in 5 years.¹⁴⁸ At Thomas Road's recent Innovate Conference led by Falwell, church planting was a constant theme throughout the conference. This church planting passion will be fueled and carried out in part by its built-in church planter force through its relationship with Liberty University and the adjoining Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

Having the church planting side of multi-plantation covered, Thomas Road will soon take the plunge into the multi-site realm. In October of 2009, the church will launch a second campus, Dan River Church in nearby Danville, Virginia. 70% of the Danville population is unchurched.¹⁴⁹ One could however make an argument that Thomas Road has been multi-site for years. The church has offered "Campus Church" to the students on campus for years. This consists of three Sunday and Wednesday church services for the students under their care. In essence, Thomas Road has been a multi-site church for years. There is no doubt this church will go down in history as one of the most dynamic churches in the history of Christianity. Their passion for church planting and reaching the world is continued through the ministry of Jonathan Falwell. As Macel Falwell wrote of her late husband, "His goal was that Thomas Road Baptist Church would preach the

¹⁴⁸ John W. Kennedy, "Liberty Unbound," *Christianity Today* 53, no. 9 (September 2009), <http://ow.ly/oVgl> (accessed September 11, 2009).

¹⁴⁹ Falwell, survey.

gospel to every available person at every available time by every available means.”¹⁵⁰

Jonathan now carries that same torch in reaching the world right from Lynchburg, Virginia.

The Summit Church, Durham, North Carolina

Summit pastor J.D. Greear made his goal clear: Plant 1,000 churches in the next 40 years.¹⁵¹ This is a church that makes no bones about being committed to the Great Commission. They are a church focused on the planting of churches in addition to being a multi-site church. When asked why he led his church to go multi-site, he simply replied, “The gospel did. We kept our primary focus not on building a location, but reaching people.”¹⁵² They are currently spreading the gospel through meeting in three different locations in the Durham, North Carolina region. Greear is a staunch proponent and defender of the multi-site church. In the May/June edition of 9Marks Ministry’s eJournal, Greear made his case for the multi-site side of multi-plantation. It states, “Becoming a multi-site church has enabled us to expand the gospel by allowing people to worship closer to where they live. We will continue to explore opportunities for new campuses throughout RDU.”¹⁵³

The Summit also extends the gospel and their reach through the planting of churches. They currently have three church planting teams serving overseas while also

¹⁵⁰ Macel Falwell, *Jerry Falwell: His Life and Legacy* (New York: Howard Books, 2008), 105.

¹⁵¹ J. D. Greear, “Last Night,” J. D. Greear Blog, entry posted September 10, 2009, www.jdgreear.com (accessed September 11, 2009).

¹⁵² Greear, survey.

¹⁵³ The Summit Church, “The Summit Church: History,” The Summit Church, <http://www.summitrdu.com/index.cfm/PageID/1820/index.html> (accessed September 14, 2009).

coming alongside four national churches in support.¹⁵⁴ These four American churches are the Gallery Church in New York City, Integrity Baptist Church in Greenville, North Carolina, Redemption Hill Church in Richmond, Virginia, and Youngstown Metro Church in Youngstown, Ohio. To assist them in their goal of planting 1,000 churches in the next 40 years, the church recently established “SendRDU.” This will serve as the church planting center for The Summit as they train men who will be sent out to plant churches across the world. This is yet another multi-plantation church having a major impact on the world through their commitment to both multi-site and to church planting.

First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia

Under the leadership of pastor Eric Thomas, this 200-year-old church is reaching out both locally and across the world. They have a second campus, Chesapeake Fellowship, in nearby Chesapeake, Virginia. Thomas explains the decision to add a satellite location was made in order to facilitate future growth in addition to relieving space issues on the Norfolk Campus. They were landlocked and determined a satellite campus was the best option for people so that they would not lose their connection with First Norfolk and its programming.¹⁵⁵ While many multi-site churches choose to broadcast video or have the senior pastor drive back and forth between the campuses, First Norfolk has taken a different approach. Jay Albritton is the pastor of the Chesapeake Fellowship and preaches weekly to the congregation in Chesapeake. First

¹⁵⁴ The Summit Church, “The Summit Church: Church Planting,” The Summit Church, <http://www.summitrdu.com/index.cfm/PageID/1667/index.html> (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁵⁵ Thomas, survey.

Norfolk and Chesapeake Fellowship remain in cooperation and partner together in reaching their region of coastal Virginia.

On the missions and church planting side, First Norfolk has designated an entire website, www.bigservedglobal.com, to inform their church of their mission opportunities as well as updates during the actual trips. Through these mission endeavors, they fulfill the church planting aspect of multi-plantation. For instance, they are partnering with Pastor Vasily in Ukraine who is starting new churches and doing evangelistic crusades.¹⁵⁶ They have also been a part of church planting in Malawi and the Dominican Republic. On the national scene, Thomas has led the church to take part in “City Uprising,” a mission strategy of a recent church plant called The Gallery Church. There is no doubt that First Norfolk is a multi-plantation church with their community, nation, and world on their heart.¹⁵⁷

The Gallery Church, Manhattan, New York City, New York

In September of 2006, Aaron Coe and eight others launched The Gallery Church in New York City.¹⁵⁸ They are somewhat of a model for church plants who seek to become a multi-plantation church. In their three years of existence, they already meet in two separate locations in New York City. Coe actually defines multi-site as, “Church planting with shared overhead (services).”¹⁵⁹ In addition to their locations, they have also already planted a church in Baltimore, Maryland. They break the mold of multi-

¹⁵⁶ First Baptist Norfolk, “BigServeGlobal,” First Baptist Norfolk, <http://www.bigservedglobal.org/> (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁵⁷ See appendices for First Norfolk’s Antioch and Napkin Strategy

¹⁵⁸ Highview Baptist Church, “National << Highview Missions,” Highview Baptist Church, <http://highviewmissions.com/strategy/national/> (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁵⁹ Aaron Coe, surveyed by author September 7, 2009.

plantation churches having to be established churches. Even in their infancy they have shown that a church can be committed to both multi-site and to church planting.

They have also come up with a few mission strategies to reach the world. One of those is called SendNYC. This is a church planting network seeking to plant 100 churches over the next decade.¹⁶⁰ The second strategy is called “City Uprising.” This strategy offers opportunities for believers to go on mission in some of the major cities across the world. Their vision is to “propel the local church and prosper the city.”¹⁶¹ This year they will offer two mission experiences in New York City, along with endeavors in Raleigh/Durham, Baltimore, and Vietnam. People who take part in City Uprising will be involved in community revitalization, community health care, and evangelism and church planting.¹⁶² This is simply one way that The Gallery Church is fulfilling the call to plant churches. The great thing is they’re bringing others along with them. New and established churches should take notice of their multi-plantation ministry!

Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky

Perhaps no other church in this study has as extensive a multi-plantation ministry as Highview Baptist in Louisville, Kentucky. They meet in seven different locations around the Louisville region, with one of those campuses actually extending into Indiana. In a similar fashion to that of First Norfolk, the campus pastor is the preacher at their

¹⁶⁰ Coe, survey.

¹⁶¹ Aaron Coe, e-mail message to author, September 7, 2009.

¹⁶² See Appendix for more information on City Uprising.

particular campus. Pastor Kevin Ezell leads this cooperative effort between the seven different campuses. He believes,

Multi-site has helped keep the Great Commission in front of our people and given them the opportunity to participate first hand. To be a part of the birth of a campus and to watch it grow has been an incredible experience for our leaders and members.¹⁶³

Highview and Ezell have used their Great Commission mindset to reach thousands of people in this unconventional way. Highview has the blessing of being in the same city as the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. As a result, they are blessed to have students and faculty teach and preach on a regular basis. Southern Seminary professor Russell Moore serves as a teaching pastor while seminary president Albert Mohler teaches Sunday school. This is one of the many things that makes Highview a special place.

It would be wrong, however, to consider Highview as a church focused only upon its community to the neglect of the world. They have an extensive missions ministry. They are fulfilling the call to plant churches by investing in national church plants in Boise, Atlanta, New York City, Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Philadelphia.¹⁶⁴ Ezell believes “the church plants have enabled their people to see beyond Louisville and have a heart for our entire country.”¹⁶⁵ On the international front, Highview has determined to focus on certain countries in hopes of planting churches within their borders. These

¹⁶³ Kevin Ezell, survey by author, September 9, 2009.

¹⁶⁴ Highview Baptist Church, “National << Highview Missions,” Highview Baptist Church, <http://highviewmissions.com/strategy/national/> (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁶⁵ Ezell, survey.

countries are Guatemala, India, North Africa, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.¹⁶⁶ Any church that is seeking to reach their community, nation, and world through multi-plantation would be wise to look at how God is using Highview Baptist Church. They are paving new ground for Southern Baptists in the ministry of multi-plantation.

The Village Church, Highland Village, Texas

Pastor Matt Chandler leads one of the most dynamic churches in the entire country. According to Outreach Magazine, The Village Church was ranked in 2008 as the 23rd fastest growing church in America.¹⁶⁷ Chandler was called in 2002 as the fourth pastor of Highland Village Baptist Church. It was in those first few years that God led Chandler and the church to make several changes, one of those being a name change. They decided to rename the church, The Village Church. Since that time, Matt Chandler and The Village Church have grown to reach an average of around 7,000 adults per week. In an old church building in a bad location, God has raised up this church to be a light in the Dallas-Forth Worth metroplex.

The Village Church began planting churches just a few years after Chandler's arrival. In 2005 they planted Providence Church in Little Elm, Texas, followed by another church plant called City View Church in Keller, Texas in 2006. This focus upon planting soon flourished into a multi-site approach that would also involve the planting of separate churches. In 2007, the church launched its second site in nearby Denton,

¹⁶⁶ Highview Baptist Church, "Focus Countries," << Highview Missions," Highview Baptist Church, <http://highviewmissions.com/strategy/international/focus-areas/> (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁶⁷ "The Fastest Growing Churches in America," *Outreach Magazine*, Special Issue 2008, 39.

Texas.¹⁶⁸ This site is located within minutes of the almost 35,000 student University of North Texas.¹⁶⁹ The possibilities for evangelism and discipleship among these college students provides endless opportunities for the Denton Campus. On Sunday, September 13, the church also added an additional site in Dallas that they call their Dallas Northway Campus.¹⁷⁰ The first Sunday 2,000 people showed up.¹⁷¹

The Village Church is one Southern Baptist church that has chosen to also align itself with the Acts 29 church planting network. In addition to being a member of the Acts 29 network, they are directly involved in the sending and sponsoring of other churches. They have partnered to help support Soma Austin Community Church in Austin, Texas, Abundant Grace Community Church in Dallas, Texas, The Crossroad in Irving, Texas, ONE Church in Allen, Texas, and Epiphany Fellowship in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.¹⁷² In addition to these local and national plants, they have also partnered to plant churches in France and in Asia.¹⁷³ The Village Church has shown itself to be an excellent example of a true multi-plantation church, showing a commitment to both multi-site and to church planting. Missions pastor Jeremy Pace explains, “You have to really be careful to celebrate both or one will end up dominating you. It is much easier,

¹⁶⁸ The Village Church, “The Village Church : Who We Are – A History,” The Village Church, <http://hv.thevillagechurch.net/about/history> (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁶⁹ University of North Texas, “UNT Proud : University of North Texas,” University of North Texas, <http://www.unt.edu/pais/untproud.htm> (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁷⁰ The Village Church, “The Village Church : Who We Are – A History,” The Village Church, <http://northway.thevillagechurch.net/about/history>, (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁷¹ Chandler, interview.

¹⁷² The Village Church, “The Village Church : Church Planting – Church Plants and Planters,” The Village Church, <http://hv.thevillagechurch.net/church-planting/plants-planters> (accessed September 14, 2009).

¹⁷³ The Village Church, “The Village Church : Church Planting – Planting History,” The Village Church, <http://hv.thevillagechurch.net/church-planting/history> (accessed September 14, 2009).

in some ways, to do multi-site, but you have to be fully committed to both.”¹⁷⁴ Chandler describes their approach as being “ferociously committed to church planting and planning for but not pursuing additional locations.”¹⁷⁵ This commitment to both has helped The Village Church to extend its borders and reach people all across the world.

Hope Fellowship Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts

God has used Curtis Cook and the people of Hope Fellowship Church to break all the rules of church growth and outreach. First of all, they are in the northeast, an area hostile to the gospel and to church. Hope Fellowship is nestled in the Boston suburb of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Second of all, they have lived out multi-plantation ministry even though they were a relatively small church. They are currently reaching around 425 people through their work in Cambridge and in Coolidge Corner in Brookline, Massachusetts. Cook has proven that a church can be committed to reaching those outside its four walls regardless of their size. Through its ministries, Hope Fellowship has made an eternal impact upon the Boston region since being planted less than a decade ago.

Cook planted Hope Fellowship in September of 2003. After a year of ministry in this difficult region, the church was already averaging around 100 people every Sunday. Four years after starting the church, they launched their second site in nearby Brookline, Massachusetts.¹⁷⁶ From there Cook and the Hope Fellowship congregation have made a new twist on multi-plantation ministry. In August of 2009, Hope Fellowship and Hope

¹⁷⁴ Jeremy Pace, survey by author, September 8, 2009.

¹⁷⁵ Chandler, interview.

¹⁷⁶ Hope Fellowship Church, “Hope Fellowship Church,” Hope Fellowship Church, <http://www.hopefellowshipchurch.org/> (accessed September 15, 2009).

Fellowship Brookline made a change. Hope Fellowship Brookline began a new path in their history by getting their own pastor, associate pastor, and worship pastor.¹⁷⁷ In other words, their multi-site church is now becoming two separate churches. They have taken the first step in moving towards Hope Fellowship Brookline becoming their own church and they have used multi-site as an effective way to do it.

For Cook and Hope Fellowship, the planting of sites has done nothing but help them in their task of church planting. Cook explains,

We went multi-site because we felt like we were at the stage where we really needed to begin to do some church planting and this seemed like a way to take a first step. We felt it was more economical financially but also in the use of our staff. Without adding the full-cost of an entire church planting staff and with the experience that we had already acquired in the area we felt that this was a wise way to begin. We think that using the site model enabled us to begin to do church planting sooner in the life of our church than we might have otherwise been able to do so. It would have taken us longer to accumulate the people and financial support that would have been necessary for church planting. We have learned a number of valuable lessons through planting the site that we hope to be able to share with future church plants as well.¹⁷⁸

As Hope Fellowship moves on towards fulfilling the Great Commission, they carry a firm commitment to church planting. While they have already served as a sponsor church for Mill City Church in Lowell, Massachusetts and the Greater Boston Nepalese Church, they want to do more.¹⁷⁹ Cook hopes to heavily invest in the planting of churches over the next 5-6 years, with the goal of planting a church every two years. He admits he would do some things different if they decide to add another site, but acknowledges they have learned valuable lessons from their multi-site experience that will help them in their future church planting. One thing is for sure, Hope Fellowship is breaking all

¹⁷⁷ Hope Fellowship Church, "Hope Fellowship Church Brookline," Hope Fellowship Church, <http://www.hfcbrookline.org/> (accessed September 15, 2009).

¹⁷⁸ Cook, survey.

¹⁷⁹ Curtis Cook, e-mail message to author, September 15, 2009.

stereotypes. They are charging full steam ahead carrying the gospel to this much-needed region of the country. Churches of all sizes and in all locations should model this type of commitment to the Great Commission.

These churches serve as excellent models of churches that are sold out to the mandate given to us by King Jesus. They are paving a new path to reach people in the 21st century. Each one of these pioneer churches share some common characteristics. As you look over these eleven churches, several things are likely to stick out.

Strong Pastoral Leadership

Though the personality types differ between these men, all show strong leadership to their churches in reaching the world. Perhaps no other characteristic is as crucial as strong leadership in the life of a multi-plantation pastor. These are men of influence. As leadership guru John Maxwell writes, “If you don’t have influence, you will *never* be able to lead others.”¹⁸⁰ Over a period of years these men have developed such influence with their people that their people are willing to give of themselves and their resources in an effort to reach people through multi-plantation. MacArthur notes, “If Godly men and women will step out and *lead*, people are prepared to follow the right kind of example.”¹⁸¹ These men have proved to be that kind of example. They are leading towards the right things.

It is interesting to note how this idea of strong leadership has been a characteristic of growing churches for years. In the 1974 book *How Churches Grow*, Bernard and

¹⁸⁰ John Maxwell, *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 11.

¹⁸¹ John MacArthur, *The Book on Leadership* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2004), 5.

Marjorie Palmer examined eleven churches to find the reasons why these churches were growing. As part of their study, they looked at the historic First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas. During this chapter they commented on the leadership of the pastor, W.A. Criswell. They wrote, “Those who know the church need not be informed that Dr. Criswell’s strong leadership has been a strong factor in the success of First Baptist Church.”¹⁸² Some things never change. Three decades later the great churches of today often have pastors who are strong leaders.

The example of their Godly character cannot be underestimated in this discussion. Had these men given into sin at different points in their lives or sought to live in a half-hearted commitment to Jesus, their congregations would likely disregard their leadership. These men have proven themselves as men of character. Allen and Smith got it right when they wrote, “Christians are much more concerned with a leader’s character than their competency.”¹⁸³ Pastors do not have the luxury of being two-faced. Weak character *will* result in weak leadership. Stanley rightly connects the relationship between leaders and their character. He writes, “Character is what makes you as a leader worth following.”¹⁸⁴ These multi-plantation leaders have lived in such a way that their leadership is a direct result of their character. They have proven themselves to be leaders worth following.

¹⁸² Bernard and Marjorie Palmer, *How Churches Grow* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1976), 83.

¹⁸³ Chuck Allen and Benj (sp?) Smith, *Extraordinary Leadership for Everyday People* (Tulsa, OK: Insight International Publishers, 2005), 90.

¹⁸⁴ Andy Stanley, *The Next Generation Leader* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 111.

Passion and Action for the Great Commission

Had these churches not expressed and acted on their passion for the Great Commission, they would likely not be a part of this work. They are a part of this study because their churches have spent thousands and even millions of dollars in an effort to get the gospel to as many people as possible across the world. These churches have lived out this statement from Ray Ortland: “In teams, in cooperation, in strategy, through prayer and maybe through tears – we must reach and reach and reach.”¹⁸⁵ These churches are always on the lookout for new opportunities to reach and reach and reach. We could say these churches are “reaching churches.”

It is important to note that these churches did not sit back with a mere passion for the Great Commission. Rather, this passion led to action. This passion is the same passion carried by the disciples and shared by believers today. As Mims correctly writes, “The Great Commission has been the driving force of missions and evangelism for believers and churches in every generation since New Testament times. It continues to be the driving force for missions and evangelism and shall ever remain so.”¹⁸⁶ One thing drives these pastors and churches: The Great Commission. Just a few years ago, it was normal for 10,000 Southern Baptist churches to not even baptize one person during their calendar year.¹⁸⁷ If Southern Baptists as a whole begin to capture the passion and action for the Great Commission that these multi-plantation churches are showing, that statistic will surely dwindle down.

¹⁸⁵ Ray Ortland, *Three Priorities for a Strong Local Church* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1988), 92.

¹⁸⁶ Gene Mims, *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1994), 19.

¹⁸⁷ Allan Taylor, *The Six Core Values of Sunday School* (St. Paul: Riverstone Group Publishing, 2003), 33.

Courage to Innovate

It is likely that not many if any of these pastors sat in their seminary classrooms and dreamed of being a multi-plantation church. Most of them probably never could have imagined the impact that their churches would one day have in the world. While church planting has been around since the beginning of Christianity, multi-site is still a relatively new idea. Even in 1993, Thom Rainer concluded that this method of one church in many locations “may be the way of the future in American churches.”¹⁸⁸ Sixteen years later it appears that Rainer may have been right. More and more churches are innovatively reaching out by going multi-site. These eleven churches have decided to also plant churches in addition to being multi-site.

The overall principle here is that these churches followed the lead of their pastor to do something that was different. They were courageously pressing forward in an effort to lead people into a relationship with Jesus Christ. In his classic work *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders recounts a story of the Reformer Martin Luther when he stood before Emperor Charles V and refused to recant. He writes, “A few days before his death Luther recalled that day. ‘I was afraid of nothing: God can make one so desperately bold.’”¹⁸⁹ These eleven churches have exemplified this kind of boldness. They have perfectly expressed the characteristic of courage! While some churches in America were arguing over insignificant matters, these eleven churches were in numerous meetings trying to figure out how to reach more people. These churches are effectively leading the way in Southern Baptist life in outreach through the innovation of

¹⁸⁸ Thom Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 211.

¹⁸⁹ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 60.

multi-plantation. What can your church learn? Is your church a good candidate to go multi-plantation? The next chapter will deal with whether or not your church should try to go multi-plantation.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW TO KNOW IF YOUR CHURCH SHOULD GO MP

We have discussed the vision for multi-plantation, the theology and ecclesiology of multi-plantation, the partnerships of multi-plantation, along with the pastors and churches of multi-plantation. We must now ask the question, “How does a pastor know if his church should go multi-plantation?” I have sought to answer this question through an acrostic of the word PLANT. This is an appropriate word since multi-plantation is all about planting both campuses and churches. Let’s get started.

Prayer – What is God leading the church to do?

The most important aspect of the decision to go multi-plantation is the spiritual aspect. Although it is the most important, it could easily be pushed aside as excitement grows towards future possibilities. Donald Whitney appropriately writes,

The contemporary church has technology, psychology, and marketing, but do we know anything of the power of God upon our preaching and ministry...? The Bible and the testimony of church history say that, despite how outdated it may seem, the effectiveness of the gospel and of the church are inseparably related to the united prayers of God’s people.¹⁹⁰

Have the pastor and church leadership spent a season in prayer concerning the decision?

Is there a general consensus in prayer that the church is healthy enough to go multi-plantation? Does the church leadership feel that God has united them together

¹⁹⁰ Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 172-173.

concerning this decision? There must be a diligent search of the Scriptures and a willing spirit in prayer to determine the Lord's will in the matter. When Matt Chandler and The Village Church were still out of room after planting two churches in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, he called the church to an eight week season of fasting and prayer.¹⁹¹ This type of leadership in prayer that Chandler showed is one that should be emulated. Bounds writes, "Prayer is one of the eminent characteristics of strong spiritual leadership."¹⁹² Through Chandler's strong spiritual leadership in prayer, God answered the church and led them into a new multi-site opportunity.

What an incredible and humbling privilege we have to pray. Piper writes, "How astonishing it is that God wills to do His work through people. It is doubly astonishing that He ordains to fulfill His plans by being asked to do so by us. God loves to bless His people...to do it in answer to prayer."¹⁹³ We have an amazing privilege in prayer. This cannot be underestimated, as it is the most important aspect of the decision to go multi-plantation.

Literature – Have You Done Your Homework?

There is absolutely no reason that a pastor or church should enter into multi-plantation without being completely educated on the subject. The pastor and church leaders should read, study and evaluate the various aspects of multi-plantation to come to

¹⁹¹ Chandler, interview.

¹⁹² E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Family Christian Press, 1991), 77.

¹⁹³ Piper, *Brothers, We are Not Professionals*, 53.

a wise conclusion. There are fantastic resources about multi-site¹⁹⁴ and church planting¹⁹⁵ that leaders can consume in an effort to come to a decision. With the amount of literature in bookstores, libraries and the internet, there is no excuse for pastors to not study up on the issues.

Alignment – Are we ready to shift our entire ministry?

Those at multi-plantation churches will tell you about the significant shift that occurred when they made the decision to go multi-plantation. There are huge shifts that take place when a church goes from one location to two or from an inward focus to an outward, church planting focus. Are the pastor and church leadership ready to align the ministry in such a way as to accommodate the needs of a multi-plantation church? Does the budget allow for this kind of alignment? Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger see this issue of alignment as one of the main things a church must do to become simple. They spend an entire chapter in their excellent book, *Simple Church*, on the subject of alignment. They write, “Without alignment, complexity is assured. Without alignment, you will not be simple. The church must be united around the same approach to ministry.”¹⁹⁶ Hawaiian pastor Wayne Cordeiro also sees the absolute necessity of alignment. He writes, “The strength of any vision lies in alignment – that is, vision that is caught and shared by every person involved.”¹⁹⁷ The church that faces the decision of whether or not

¹⁹⁴ Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, and McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches*.

¹⁹⁵ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006).

¹⁹⁶ Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 169.

¹⁹⁷ Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2001), 150.

to become a multi-plantation church should examine whether they are truly able to align all their ministries to become this kind of church.

Nike Principle – Are we ready to just do it and do it all out?

“Just do it” has been a phrase that has been recognized for years as that of the superpower corporation called Nike. In a recent CNBC interview, CEO Mark Parker explained a previous failure of Nike to penetrate into in the skating world. He said, “We never really committed to the sport until, really about 4 or 5 years ago. We dabbled. And we’re not good at dabbling. We’re at our best when we commit.”¹⁹⁸ Pastors would be wise to take this lesson from Nike. You cannot just “dabble” in multi-plantation. If a church feels God’s leading to go multi-plantation, then they must do it and do it wholeheartedly. The church must be ready to commit!

Theology – Have we worked through the issues theologically?

Has the pastor and church leadership discussed and worked through the issues from a theological standpoint? If not, they are sure to face problems that will creep up at a later date. Pastors should discuss these issues with their leadership to come to a general consensus if there are any major theological hurdles that would prevent their church from going multi-plantation. In his 2001 book, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, Thom Rainer describes the importance of doctrine and certitude in attracting unchurched people. He writes, “Doctrine is the content of belief, certitude is the conviction of belief. In nearly one-half of our interviews, the formerly unchurched gave us some indication

¹⁹⁸ *Swoosh! Inside Nike*, CNBC, February 12, 2008.

that certitude was an important reason they chose a church.”¹⁹⁹ Churches who come to a firm conviction on where they stand theologically in regards to multi-plantation will see the fruits of this hard work.

One of those theological issues that we have dealt with above was church government. Since this is written from a Southern Baptist perspective, and most Southern Baptists hold to a congregational form of church government, how does the congregation feel about the decision of going multi-plantation? The pastor who wants his church to go multi-plantation should examine if he has the support of the church leadership, staff, deacon body, and congregation. If there have been recent tumultuous times within the congregation, it may not be the right time for significant change. The pastor should have significant support behind him before he even begins to think about a shift this large.

Questionnaire for Churches Considering Multi-Plantation

Answer the questions on a scale of 1-3. (1 – disagree, 2 – not sure, 3 – agree)

Prayer

1. ____ I feel confident that God has spoken to me about going multi-plantation.
2. ____ The church leadership has prayed through this and there is unity among us.
3. ____ I have no hesitations about what God is leading our church to do.
4. ____ God has spoken to me in His Word about this decision.
5. ____ I can clearly explain to my congregation how God has spoken to me.

¹⁹⁹ Thom Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 131.

Literature

1. ___ I can honestly say that I have done my homework on this issue.
2. ___ I have provided my church leadership with the appropriate literature.
3. ___ I have a grasp on the different models involved in multi-plantation.
4. ___ We have studied other multi-plantation churches.
5. ___ We have interviewed staff or pastors from multi-plantation churches.

Align

1. ___ We are at a place where we can align all of our ministries to go MP.
2. ___ Our budget would allow for significant alignment of all funds.
3. ___ I am ready to align my life in order to meet the needs of MP.
4. ___ Our congregation is supportive and ready to align themselves for MP.
5. ___ There are no major obstacles in the way of aligning our church.

Nike Principle

1. ___ My attitude towards multi-plantation is “just do it.”
2. ___ Our church is ready to fully commit to going multi-plantation.
3. ___ This is not something we are merely trying to dabble in.
4. ___ The leadership of the church is ready to follow me as we go MP.
5. ___ There are no major church leaders who are opposed to going MP.

Theology

1. ___ I have worked through all theological issues personally.

2. ____ My church leadership has worked through all theological issues.
3. ____ I can clearly articulate our position on various theological aspects of MP.
4. ____ I have the support of the leadership, staff, deacon body, and congregation.
5. ____ I would describe our church as a healthy church.

Results:

60-75 – Multi-Plantation...here we come! It appears you have the spiritual guidance in line, the support of your church, and other issues worked out in order to become a multi-plantation church. If God gives you the green light, go for it!

45-59 – Go slow...multi-plantation may be in your future. You may be at a church that will be ready to go multi-plantation in the next few months or years. Remain patient and see what God may do in your church. Continue to commit this decision to prayer.

30-44 – Hold on...multi-plantation may not be for you. There are some questions that need to be answered before you proceed down the path of multi-plantation. Stop moving forward and discuss these questions with your church leadership. Multi-plantation may be in the distant future, but it may not be the best option for your church right now.

15-29 – Don't move...multi-plantation is not for you right now. There are significant issues concerning multi-plantation that are hindering your progress. Take heed to these issues and don't force the shift to multi-plantation. Determine what the next step is for your church. That doesn't necessarily have to be a step towards multi-plantation.

0-14 – Stop right where you are. The last thing you need to think about is multi-plantation. There are other vital things you need to focus on right now. The church is not

at a place where it can go multi-plantation. Rest where God has you and ask Him for direction.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of where your church stands today, you can be involved in the gospel mission of seeing people from all nations come to a knowledge of the Savior. It is my hope that if nothing else, you have been challenged in your pursuit of fulfilling this mission. Multi-plantation is currently proving itself to be a viable way for churches to fulfill the Great Commission. The eleven pastors and churches that have been researched are making a dramatic impact in their communities and world by their commitment to multi-site and to church planting. They are from diverse locations and have different size locations, but they all have come under this ministry of multi-plantation. For them, it has been a valuable way to put their churches on mission. For you, it could do the same. It is time for the churches of the world to make a radical commitment to the Great Commission. The gospel demands it. The lost of the world are crying out for it. We must do it.

APPENDIX ONE

5/52: HOW ANY CHURCH CAN SPONSOR A CHURCH PLANT

By

Greg Penna

Any church can afford to support a church plant. Most churches can afford to be the sole sponsor of a church plant if they will engage their member's hearts into church planting and use a strategy that is proven to work. Of course, there will be members who will see sponsorship as an impossible venture because "the church is barely meeting budget, and there is the debt to pay off, plus we already give so much." However, a pastor-leader who is a true visionary with a heart for planting churches can have a major success through a stewardship emphasis called 5/52.

5/52: A Basic Explanation

5/52 is a stewardship campaign, over and above the tithe, in which the congregation simply is asked to give \$5 a week for 52 weeks. It has a huge success rate because the pastor is only asking a family to give \$5 per week. Now in almost any American home, \$5 is not something that will cause the family to suffer. Because the pastor is asking for so little, the membership is quick to embrace the new stewardship effort.

What is important for the pastor to realize is that 5/52 pays off in huge dividends. First, it's a great way to raise money. Five dollars a week over 52 weeks turns out to be a gift of \$260. This is an amount many people wouldn't ordinarily give to church planting except through this type of installment plan.

A second benefit of 5/52 is the high level of participation. In the last church where I used this emphasis to raise money to sponsor a new work, we experienced over 70 percent participation from the church family. To put this into context, this was a church of 300 members with 70 percent making a commitment; we had over 200 commitment cards. The reason was both husband and wife would turn in separate cards. Students would pledge because the level was within their grasp. This level of participation is typical of a 5/52 emphasis done correctly.

5/52 works because of the power of weekly giving. If just 200 people make the \$5 commitment per week for one year, the amount raised is \$52,000. But that is just for one year. The beauty of 5/52 is that it is an annual commitment, with those funds coming in each year as long as the new work needs funds or as long as the congregation has a passion for new church starts.

5/52: Just the beginning.

While the power of weekly giving from just 200 people is truly amazing, what is even more amazing is what can be raised leading up to and including commitment Sunday. 5/52 works best as a total stewardship program through which people are taught to give over and above the tithe for the purpose of planting new works. It is a time of vision-casting by the pastor that can lead to greater gifts in enlisting the people to sacrifice for the material needs of the new church and preparing the people's hearts for a cash offering on the day they make the commitment to 5/52.

With a proper vision-cast about the new work and how it will be funded — through a weekly sacrifice everyone can afford — the pastor needs to let the people know what the costs will be for the new work. Planting a church today can quickly run into several hundred thousand dollars in just a few years by the time rent, salary, promotion, evangelistic activities, and church needs are factored in. One thing the pastor can do as a lead-up to 5/52 is allow the congregation to know what the new work will have to buy and the approximate costs so that God may touch someone to give that amount of money. That way, it won't have to come out of 5/52 funds.

One example is a good sound system. It would be a mistake to say the new work needs a sound system, because if you do some well-intentioned brother will bring the latest system from Radio Shack. Instead, list the items and their cost such as a Sure 24 channel mixing board model # 4567321QA which we can purchase for \$1,437.24. (To my knowledge there is no such thing as a Sure 24 channel mixing board.) By being specific, you get what you need instead of what someone wants to throw away.

On other smaller items, 5/52 can be the launch for creative activities such as a ladies' baby shower. I know of one church sponsor that used the baby shower idea to get the church's nursery materials purchased according to exacting specifications, along with other items needed for worship. This also gave the ladies of the church a fun way of embracing and expecting what God would do.

For a successful emphasis, consider these ideas.

First, give at least six weeks from the time you announce the stewardship emphasis until commitment Sunday. Allow people to prepare. On the day you announce the campaign, meet with your church leaders in the afternoon and thoroughly go over the emphasis. Seek out questions and readily give answers. This is called "working the grass tops." As leaders, these are the people the rest of the members of your church will follow. Their opinions count more than you know. When I meet with the grass tops, I meet with anyone in any position of service. Grass tops include Bible study leaders, committee team members, and every other person who serves. As a matter of fact, I open the meeting up so wide that I say, "If you consider yourself to be a leader, then you are invited."

If the pastor will share his heart, his vision, and the power of giving small amounts weekly by a large number of people, the people will join him. At the leadership meeting

I prepare a handout that includes a place for people to submit questions they may be afraid to ask and a place for them to commit to pray, commit to promote, or commit to give to the campaign. I have them check all the boxes that apply. That way the next Sunday I can say, “Seventy people have committed to give already and we are still five weeks away.”

The next idea is to send out three letters. Research has been done that shows that three is the magic number before the law of diminishing return comes into play. In the first letter, I set the stage and make the case for the new work. In the second letter, I ask them to make the commitment in their heart and to attend one of the special events as well as prepare a cash offering. The third is the most time-sensitive letter; it needs to hit the week before the offering with an envelope and commitment card. The letter needs to remind people of the cause and prepare them to visualize success.

Keep the emphasis simple by keeping the theme of 5/52. A \$10-a-week donation may throw people off at first. Five dollars is non-intimidating, and that is one reason it is well-received. Seven dollars may account for inflation, but all of the sudden the numbers become more confusing; we are society with a number system based on fives and tens. However, on the commitment card, have a place for \$5 a week, \$7 a week, \$10 a week, \$15 dollars a week, and other. People aren’t limited to giving \$5; it is just a theme for the stewardship emphasis. Be sure to clarify this at your leadership meeting. Also, use the term “stewardship emphasis” over “financial campaign” and you’ll be much better received.

On the day of the offering, it is always a good idea to ask for cash along with the 5/52 commitment. It is a good idea to have a testimony from someone whose life will be impacted by the new work, along with someone who has been behind the giving aspect of the promotion since inception. Finally, it is always good to have a “come forward, drop your gift in the box” kind of collection. In the church of 300 mentioned earlier, 5/52 actually raised over \$100,000 with the pre-gifts, cash offerings of that Sunday, and the annual commitment. The reason is because you can spend cash much easier than you can a commitment.

5/52 doesn’t end there. As soon as the finance team can deliver the addresses, I send out a thank-you note to everyone who gave. Stay blind to what they gave, but thank them for giving. It may be that you send three letters to the same home, but one of those may be to a student who is just discovering giving; saying thanks will keep the commitment alive.

Finally, develop a newsletter, for members only, as to the progress of the work. Give the task to the staff of the new work as their way of saying thank you in an ongoing way for the sacrifice of the people. Remind the staff that each year their support comes up for election. The election is not through the budget process, but through what people will give to 5/52 next year.

For smaller churches only.

The majority of Southern Baptist churches run 100 or less each Sunday. So you may be wondering how 5/52 can help your church be involved in church planting. There are plenty of ways if you will be creative.

First, you can partner with two or three churches your size and together win a great victory for the kingdom. This will take an exceptional partnership between the pastors and the people, but it can be done.

Second, you can raise the money each year and put it in a fund to help one church get started. Three years of savings could amount to a large amount of money, which may be enough for a church in a less-populated region where rent is cheaper and the planter may be bivocational. (The high-cost church planting is usually in the newest suburbs where rent, even at a school, can run over one \$1,000 a week.)

Third, you can send the money raised through 5/52 to your state and designate it for church planting. It may be that there is a plant on the other side of the state that needs your partnership and sacrifice and without 5/52, they wouldn't receive the money.

Why churches should use 5/52

There isn't anything magical or mystical about 5/52. As a matter of fact, it has its roots in the sports world, where a coach of a major football team told the alumni he could produce a better team if they would each give so many dollars a week for 50 weeks. From there, I saw it successfully used to fund a mega-church's media ministry. Then, as the need for dollars for church planters rose, I began to wonder whether it could be used to plant churches, and God has blessed us.

The beauty of 5/52 is that each week, the membership makes a decision to support church planting. It puts church planting where it belongs, back in the heart of the people of our great convention. And who can't cut back just \$5 a week to change their community or their world?

Suggest to people that they drink water one night when they go out to eat at their favorite restaurant, buy the smaller container of popcorn at the movies, or go down one name brand in tennis shoes. That way they will always have the \$5 that is necessary, and state conventions won't have to turn down requests for a needed church plant due to budget constraints.

Five dollars a week can't do much on its own, but when combined with a mighty number of passionate people, it can change the world.

Greg Penna is a strategic resource associate with the North American Mission Board.

*He is an experienced church planter and stewardship pastor.*²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Greg Penna, "How Any Church Can Sponsor a Church Plant," The Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/atf/cf/{087EF6B4-D6E5-4BBF-BED1-7983D360F394}/5-52-Any%20church%20can%20sponsor%20a%20church%20plant%207-27-05.pdf> (accessed August 1, 2009).

APPENDIX TWO

7 STEPS TO ADOPT A PEOPLE GROUP

1. Pray for God's guidance

As in any spiritual endeavor, your search for an unreached people group to adopt must begin with prayer. The International Mission Board wants God's best for your church, and only God can show you what that is.

2. Discover your church's natural affinity (DNA)

As you pray for God to show you the unreached people group He has for your church, be alert to what he may be showing you:

- Do you already have a connection to an IMB missionary? Have you sent out a missionary from your church? Do you have a parent or children of missionaries who are members? Has a team been on a mission trip where they felt a connection to the people group(s) they served?
- What are the skills and spiritual gifts of your church members?
- What people groups live near your church or its members? Who do you meet at local hotels, gas stations, fast food or convenience stores? What about the physicians of your members? Check the web site www.peoplegroups.info to find people groups in your area.

- Does one place keep coming up in your corporate prayer times? Does one place keep coming to mind?

3. Determine the church's expectations for adoption

- Is your desire to adopt an unreached people group for prayer? Are you ready to pray consistently and continually? To pray that God will send workers? To pray that He will prepare people's hearts to hear the truth of the Gospel and that the message will spread unhindered? If prayer only is the commitment your church is ready for, call (888) 462-7729 or go to CompassionNet and sign up for PrayerPlus. We praise God for your prayers.
- Is your church ready to pray AND to connect with a missionary on the field to join their strategy for reaching a people group - going on multiple volunteer trips, engaging in their strategy, praying specifically for their needs?
- Is your church ready to pray AND to "become" the virtual missionary to an unreached people group that has no missionary assigned to them? Are you ready to study the people, develop the strategy and take ownership of an unreached people group that may never hear unless you go?

4. Work with church leaders and identify a mission "champion"

- Has God laid a particular part of the world on the heart of one or more church leaders?
- Are they ready to find ways to take the Gospel to those who have little or no access to the Gospel?

- Who among your laity will become the “point person” to communicate with the field?
- Is this person willing to be trained in security measures to allow communication to restricted areas?
- Can this person help influence the congregation to focused prayer for your UPG?
- Are they willing to lead teams and work with the leadership in the church and the regional leadership on the field to reach your unreached people group?

5. Investigate opportunities

- Do you feel led to reach a megacity or a rural area or something in between?
- Are there volunteer opportunities available that might help you discover the region of the world where God is leading? Look for volunteer opportunities.
- Has your state convention or local association adopted a UPG?
- Assign teams or individuals to research various regions/people groups and then join together to pray for God’s direction. Go to “Where we work” and peoplegroups.org.
- If you feel led to a specific region, but have not yet discovered your people group, ask your mobilization specialists or mobilization consultant to get in touch with the personalizer for that region to connect you to the field.

6. When God directs you to a specific unreached people group, pray and celebrate God’s direction

- Prayerfully agree to follow His leadership

- Find ways to bring the whole church into the process.
- Meet with church leaders and find a way to publicly celebrate the direction.

7. Communicate, follow through and keep your commitments

- Learn from field personnel in your region.
- Connect with other churches to multiply your efforts.
- Communicate with field personnel as your team trains and prepares.
- Do what you say you will do! If you make commitments to the field (or to other churches on the UPG team), keep them. Building trust is vital.
- Follow-through will lead to more opportunities.
- Evaluate your role every year. If God leads you in another direction, find ways to communicate this to the field and other churches that have joined in this effort and develop a strategic exit plan.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ International Mission Board, “International Mission Board: Lead your church,” Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.imb.org/main/lead/page.asp?StoryID=4518&LanguageID=1709> (accessed August 1, 2009).

APPENDIX THREE
PASTORS' SURVEYS

Ronnie Floyd – Pastor of First Baptist Church of Springdale, Arkansas and The Church
at Pinnacle Hills in Rogers, Arkansas

1. *Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?*

We went to multi-site to expand the reach of our church. We felt due to a small city and two county separatist mentality, it was imperative we did it to insure the future of this ministry. We also did it due to a lack of an outstanding easily accessibility to our Springdale Campus.

2. *Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?*

I believe both existed in the New Testament, plus I just think both contribute to the fulfillment of the Great Commission regionally, nationally, and globally. Our missional vision as a church is reaching Northwest Arkansas, America, and the World for Jesus Christ. Following an Acts 1:8 model calls to a strategy that is regional, national, and global. Both multi-site and church planting are essential to seeing this fulfilled.

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

It has helped us expand our reach. It has resulted in an additional campus being created that has the potential to outgrow the original campus. It has insured our future due to its proximity on the interstate and has opened many opportunities for the future. This additional location has also been used to move our church really up and out into corporate America and the small business community.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

Remember, once it is created, he has to live with it. He will have to think in twos, threes or fours, rather than just one. It is a challenge financially and he does not need to under-estimate that. However, if God has spoken to his heart about doing it, make it all about fulfilling the mission of Christ. Be visionary. Be clear. Keep it simple. Get started. Watch and see what God does.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

Yes, we are planning over the next seven years, to invest in and plant 70 new churches internationally, as well as begin five additional sites.

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

We were one of the first churches to ever do it, especially within our denomination.

Ed Young at 2nd Houston and I were very similar in our beginning time and I learned

from him as they began just before we did. It is all still a new adventure, especially if you add church planting to multi-site or multi-site to church planting. I believe both are needed.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

(1) Financially it is a challenge. One cannot underestimate the costs, but money moves towards great vision and this is a great biblical vision of the church being the church.

(2) Leadership. You have to become a “farm club” using a baseball term, in order to serve these new works you are beginning. You have to equip leadership, once you find them within your church or outside of it.

(3) Practically it is a lot to stay on top of it. Your Ministers in charge of it will need help in the support roles, but they also have to let some of it go, in order to let the entire church become stronger in fulfilling its mission.

Aaron Coe – Pastor of The Gallery Church in New York City, New York

1. Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?

It was strategic and necessary. It was strategic because New York City is made up of hundreds of “smaller” neighborhoods. It makes the most sense to have a neighborhood approach to church instead of a city wide or regional approach. It was necessary because it makes sense for churches to share as many resources as possible in this city. So, instead of each congregation having its own overhead to maintain, each congregation can share the overhead expenses, etc.

2. Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?

For us, there is really no difference. Multi-site, by our definition, is church planting with shared services (overhead). There are times though, when it is necessary to plant autonomous churches. We planted one church in the city with a leader who had a unique vision. We determined that it would be healthiest for him to plant outside of our church structure and plant an autonomous church.

3. How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?

We are not tied to one model. We can share resources when appropriate, but we can also plant autonomously when that is necessary.

4. How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?

I would say go multi-site if you can, but if you have a gifted, called and competent leader who does not fit your DNA send him out to plant autonomously.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

Yes, we have actually set up SendNYC as a church planting network that is committed to plant 100 churches over the next decade. We set this up so we could focus on a high level of church planting with our being an unrealistic burden on our current congregations. We have learned that a churches missional output needs to be directly proportional to its size. For instance it is unrealistic for our congregation of 150 to plant 100 churches in the next 10 years, but setting up SendNYC allows us to raise additional money and develop leadership without becoming a disproportionate burden on the current congregations (www.sendnyc.com).

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

Not really. I feel like we are learning as we go in the big city. We have a lot to learn about reaching the cities.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

- Knowing when to go with a new site verses planting autonomously. We made a mistake by launching a new campus when we should have sent the planter to plant autonomously.
- Resources. It is expensive to do either in the city.
- Leaders. We need the right kind of leaders who are committed to living in the city.

Curtis Cook – Pastor of Hope Fellowship Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts

1. *Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?*

We went multi-site because we felt like we were at the stage where we really needed to begin to do some church planting and this seemed like a way to take a first step.

We felt it was more economical financially but also in the use of our staff. Without adding the full-cost of an entire church planting staff and with the experience that we had already acquired in the area we felt that this was a wise way to begin.

2. *Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?*

Our second site is currently in the process of moving away from being a site of Hope to becoming an autonomous church of it's own. We feel like for the long-term health of this site and for greater impact in that community that is the best way to go. We also feel like the people can be "pastored" more appropriately by the local pastors. So, as we move forward we will likely focus most of our efforts on church planting rather than planting sites. It is possible that we might do another site at some point and we might try the same model again of starting a site that would eventually spin off.

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

We think that using the site model enabled us to begin to do church planting sooner in the life of our church than we might have otherwise been able to do so. It would have taken us longer to accumulate the people and financial support that would have been

necessary for church planting. We have learned a number of valuable lessons through planting the site that we hope to be able to share with future church plants as well.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

For us, it was very difficult to do the multi-site well. Our two sites were in two different communities and both are skeptical to the gospel and to evangelical churches so building credibility in the community is important but it also takes time so we faced some roadblocks in the second site because it was a new community. Had we planted a second site in our same city it might have been different in a variety of ways.

If we were to plant a site, we would probably go with some sort of a site pastor which we didn't do the first time. I would just say, "it's hard." It's worth doing. But it's hard.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

We plan to invest most of our efforts in the next 5-6 years to planting churches. In our context, I think this is probably the wisest way forward for the long-term viability of the churches, their credibility in the communities and so that they can be appropriately pastored at a local level. It is our plan to try to plant a new church every 2 years.

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

We looked at Redeemer Presbyterian in Manhattan and The Journey Church in Manhattan.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

It is costly. I don't mean just money, but time, energy and focus. It's worth it but it's costly. It will likely be confusing at times to your people who aren't consisting thinking about church planting to understand the difference and how they will play out. How do you appropriately pastor the people in the church?

Kevin Ezell – Pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky

1. *Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?*

We were growing and were faced with the issue of expanding at our original location or relocating. We studied and prayed and decided to do both. We felt the best way to reach our city was to have several sites to connect with people. The majority of our people lived very close to our original campus and therefore we felt this campus still served a very important need as well.

2. *Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?*

We feel the best way to reach our country is through the major cities. We developed a strategy to start churches in major cities and currently are supporting seven church plants. One in Philadelphia, Atlanta, Boise, New York City, Cleveland and two in Indianapolis. Our multi-site strategies are for locations within the Louisville area that will remain under our immediate oversight and supervision.

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

Multi-site has helped keep the Great Commission in front of our people and given them the opportunity to participate first hand. To be apart of the birth of a campus and to watch it grow has been an incredible experience for our leaders and members. The church plants have allowed our people to see beyond Louisville and have a heart for our entire country. To be able to pray for specific locations and church planters had enabled a bond that contributes to their spiritual growth. Adult Bible Fellowships

taking weekend mission trips to many of the cities has opened their eyes to the opportunities. We have had couples relocate to some of the cities to assist the church planters.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

I would make certain that the original campus is healthy. If so, plant some of your best people at the new campus launch. The key is getting the right leaders in the right positions. They must be willing to invest a great deal of focus to ensure the success: Pulpit time, personal connection and financial resources. In planting churches we look to connect with the right leader, not a particular city. We are focusing on major cities, but are looking for young leaders that we believe in and support them in the city they feel called to.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

We currently have 7 campuses and are launching the eighth campus in November. We have three targeted areas that we are studying the demographics and considering the potential leadership pool. All of our campuses have live preaching so it is vital we have the right Lead Pastor. We do not have a set number of campuses that we are striving for at this time. Our hope is to add one church plant every year. To always have as many church plants as we have campuses.

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

We looked at Second Baptist in Houston and Hickory Grove in Charlotte. We started eight years ago and they were the only SBC churches at the time that were trying it.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

- 1) Resources – the need is so much greater than the resources we have to meet them.
- 2) Leadership – having people who share our same DNA and that understand ministry in this context. It has been hard bringing in staff who do not comprehend the ministry strategy as a whole. We have started promoting primarily from within.
- 3) Connectivity – I miss not preaching in every service. For our people to hear the same message and vision from one person can be a challenge.

Jonathan Falwell – Pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia

1. Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?

Our church has been a church planting church since its inception. In fact, there are thousands of churches around the country that were founded out of the TRBC ministry (LU, etc.) However, we realized that in Virginia, we had a number of people who watch our services on television live each Sunday morning in the Danville area. While we were encouraged that they would contact us often during the week after the services, we felt as if this wasn't best since they weren't being able to be discipled and grow in their faith. After much prayer, we felt that God was leading us to do this. Further, in our first multisite location, there is a 70% unchurched study which lead us to build on our already well-known ministry ID and plant a multisite.

2. Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?

Because both have a vital role to play in fulfilling Matt. 28 and Acts 1 in the local church. We have planted two churches in the past few months that are within twenty miles of our main campus. We felt planting was a better model in those communities. In Danville, we felt that a multisite would work best even though it is sixty miles away.

3. How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?

The benefits of church planting have been evident for decades at TRBC. However, the benefit of the multisite is yet to be fully realized since the launch date is still three

weeks away. However, we have seen much excitement in our members over this new campus. And, we have over seventy individuals in our church who are committed to serving in the new campus.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

First and foremost, PRAYER! Planting churches and establishing multi-sites take much commitment and a lot of money. It is important that the steps leading to these efforts are ordered and God-ordained. Second, I would advise talking with other churches of similar size and scope who have done it before embarking. It is important to count the cost, both financially and spiritually, before forging ahead.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

Absolutely!

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

Yes, we talked with Greg Surratt of Seacoast Church in Charleston, SC, Chris Hodges of Church of the Highlands in Birmingham, AL, Tom Mullins of Christ Fellowship in West Palm Beach, and Ed Stetzer of Lifeway for counsel.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

As always; finances, people and timeline. It takes a lot of money. It takes a lot of people. And, it takes a lot of time. We have to always make sure that our churches don't suffer neglect while expanding in these areas.

J.D. Greear – Pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, North Carolina

1. *Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?*

The gospel did. We kept our primary focus not on building a location, but reaching people. We had made some forays into offering services at other locations prior to going to Multi-Site. We offered a series of service in a restaurant near UNC and found that it allowed us to reach people who weren't going to go to a traditional church much less drive thirty minutes to do so. We were reading what other churches had been experiencing with multi-site and knew of some churches that had recently made the shift. Ultimately, circumstance helped us make the decision for ourselves. We were moving our primary campus to a new location twenty-five minutes away. We owned a facility for a campus near our original location. Everything seemed to be aligned for us to give this a try and so we launched our first video site on August 19, 2007.

2. *Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?*

Again, for the gospel. We have found the multi-site approach an effective way to extend the ministry of the local church in one region. Campuses had some of the advantages of both an established church and a church plant. They have a stage of newness where the entrepreneurial spirit of a church plant prevails. They bring the church closer to where people live and allow them to better reach their community. But they also have the stability of an existing church. Some of that is people and

financial, but we have found the greatest strength of being a part of an existing church is the established and matured leadership structure.

At the same time, the world is not going to be reached simply through multiplying campuses. Churches need to be planted both nationally and internationally. Some men are called and specifically equipped by God for this purpose. We feel the responsibility for training and supporting these men to be successful church planters. We don't believe every church has the calling to be a multi-campus church, but we do believe every church has a biblically based imperative to be a church planting church.

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

Three significant benefits of being a multi-campus church we've experienced are:

- Multi-site is an effective way to expand the ministry of the local church and therefore reach and disciple more people more quickly and effectively.
- A multi-campus approach multiplies leadership effectively. While some feel multi-campus churches are designed to promote the ministry of the lead pastor, we have found that they actually create opportunities for multiple gifted leaders to be identified and called into leadership. Each of our campus pastors have the opportunity to shepherd, cast vision and lead others in a way that wouldn't be possible in a single campus church. While they remain under the leadership of the Lead Pastor and elders, they have freedom to exercise much of their own leadership gifts and catalyze the church toward greater growth.
- The congregations of each campus feel greater ownership and responsibility for the growth of their campus than they would being a part of one mega-location.

The multi-campus approach has actually made the general congregation more aware of the need for church planting. Their experience with campus launches gives them a sense of what church planting is about. Additionally, not having a strong church-planting mindset could feed a sense of isolationism for us as a church, as if we are the only church advancing the kingdom. I'd add here that we are proactive in our support and desire to work with other churches in our community through especially through community ministry projects.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

We believe the healthiest church is a church-planting church. First, address your commitment to this prospect before taking the steps to become multi-site. That's not to say that you have to plant another church before launching a second campus, but we would advise that you are taking active steps toward becoming a church-planting church.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

Yes, we have a church-planting ministry that is actively training and working with current and future church planters. We plan to start one to two new campuses in new areas where we are currently reaching people within the next twelve to eighteen months.

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

Elevation Church in Charlotte, NC had just launched a second campus and we spent significant time with them to study the equipment and process they used to make it work. We read the book *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*. We read Leadership Network's study of 1000 multi-site churches and we spoke to leaders from both Seacoast Church and Life Church. We have also consulted with Jim Tomberlin who specialized in working with multi-site church development.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

The first challenge was one of buy-in. Some of our leadership questioned whether multi-site would compromise our commitment to church planting. Attending a conference on Multi-Site churches with several of our staff was helpful for them seeing the benefits of this approach. Other than that, we haven't experienced significant challenges with being committed to both multi-site and church planting.²⁰²

²⁰² Rick Langston, Senior Associate Pastor of The Summit Church also had input on this survey.

Eric Thomas – Pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia

1. Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?

The strategy was put into place in 2001 in order to facilitate future growth in an area where many of our members lived. One of the motivating factors was the lack of space at the Norfolk Campus, and we were also landlocked. We, therefore, determined a satellite would better reach the people of that area without losing connection with First Norfolk and her programming. We were no longer content with the attractional model that pervaded much of our history, but we did not want to lose connection with it either. We believed that sending an outpost into different areas of the metropolitan area would provide missionary movement of our members in their zip codes while offering an attraction to the ministries and DNA that First Norfolk had to offer.

2. Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?

Multiplication flows from the church on mission. The mission into the “city” is prior to the development of the “gathering” in a particular cultural context. As a result of the church on mission, other churches must be planted. This provides opportunity for more faithful cross-cultural engagement. We are therefore committed to plant churches among people-groups that are more readily reached by such a church plant (i.e., our planting Mosaic Church in downtown Norfolk).

But there is also great strength in providing a satellite in other areas of similar cultural context. The advantage of a satellite is that we send our members into the areas in which they live to connect with neighbors and friends who are more culturally connected to them than not. This maintains the connection we have with the attractional model.

[See attached Napkin Strategy and diagrams]

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

Believing that God intends His kingdom to grow (Matt 13:31-33), our goal is to do all that we can to facilitate that kingdom's growth. We believe strongly in the methodology of church planting and satellite. Being in an area with diverse cultures and geographic boundaries (Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay), we have discovered wonderful avenues for mission through both models of mission. There has been numerical growth, more individuals come to Christ for salvation, and more kingdom expansion. We have seen our church become MORE multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational. We have sent more people outside the walls of the church building on mission through plants and satellite. A renewed vision and purpose has been ignited so that every faithful follower of Christ is growing as a missionary follower of Christ.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

I would encourage every pastor to begin church planting today (a proven strategy with strong biblical foundation). If the church facilities / parking are at their maximum capacity, then I would encourage him to then consider a satellite (a relatively young strategy, although I believe Antioch provides a good biblical foundation as well). I would encourage the pastor to begin developing the leaders now for both strategies. Without the right leadership, neither of the strategies will be effective or faithful.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

Yes. We are currently involved in planting multiple churches around the world and here in Hampton Roads. And we also continue to pursue satellite venues as far away as twenty miles and as close as two city blocks. We begin the latter in January 2010.

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

Not when we began the multi-site.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

1. Maintaining the multi-sites' First Norfolk identity.
2. Developing leaders for multi-site and church plants.
3. Evaluating which strategy to employ in a particular setting.

Jack Graham – Pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas

1. *Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?*

To fulfill the Great Commission in our region. To expand the witness of Christ and the church utilizing members who live in the new locations.

2. *Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?*

Both are valid strategies for expanding the Kingdom.

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

- Raised awareness of un-churched people who lived beyond us.
- Keep us on mission.
- Increased membership and ignited evangelism in formerly inactive.
- Involved many new people in service and leadership.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

- Give strong confident leadership
- Build consensus
- Share the vision multiple times
- Engage the new site personally

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

No on Multi-site, Yes on plants

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

- 2nd Baptist Houston
- 1st Baptist Springdale

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

- Financial
- Maintaining Oneness principle
- Staffing

John Cope – Pastor of Keystone Community Fellowship in North Wales, Pennsylvania

1. *Why did you lead your church to go multi-site and church planting?*

It all started with a 20-year vision to see 50,000 people churched through a KCF type church. In order to accomplish that we need to be diverse in methods and decentralized as far as location. We had a home community group that kept branching out and reaching many people. This group lives 30 – 40 minutes from the church. People kept asking about me coming out and starting a service. I also believe we have young guys who can be good preachers but don't have strong leadership skills yet. This allows me to lead them while they develop pastoral skills. Our goal is to become a network of like-minded churches and multi-sites.

2. *Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?*

We are driven by the vision not the method. We watch and see what God is doing in our city and join Him. We watch and see what kind of leader God brings. Some don't want to be a campus pastor, so we make it a pure church plant and couch them. Multi-sites cost less in the start up phase.

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

The obvious is it has allowed us to fulfill the great commission in a larger way. It has our people focused on advancing the Kingdom. We have no time to get content, comfortable, and thus turn inward. It's allowed our small groups a place to do service while starting these new works. It has allowed us to become decisive in people groups

reached. It keeps prayer out in front at all times and has allowed us to be strategic in our internship program.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of ministry?*

That pastor needs a passion to reach his region for Christ. He needs to be people driven, not church growth driven. It's much easier if your small groups meet in homes. Prayer walk weekly with his staff and see where God is working. Set goals and develop an equipping journey that leads his people to start new works. Don't focus on the method, focus on the leadership God brings and utilize what fits the lead pastors God given gifts.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (More campuses, plants, etc.?)*

Yes. We know over the next 20 years we will need to start 50 – 75 new works to accomplish our goals. This drives us to think outside of the box. It forces us to become an equipping church. This allows me to lead much longer since I don't have to always be the Sunday morning preacher.

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

Yes. Seacoast, North Coast, City Church, North Pointe, and Willow Creek.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

Finances, Leadership, and Facilities

Matt Chandler – Pastor of The Village Church in Highland Village, Texas

1. Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?

I was adamant against the idea. Thought multi-site would kill church planting. We planted 2 churches and lost 300 people. Space immediately filled up. I was preaching 6 services live and had a physical breakdown. We turned 2 Sunday night services into video venues. Those services took a little hit, then went forward. We had NO SPACE! I called the church to 8 weeks of prayer and fasting. During that time Grace Temple Baptist contacted us, a church with UNT across the street in Denton. They were down to 40-50 people and UNT had filed imminent domain on the building. The Village had already considered planting in Denton and had a small core of about 30 who wanted to do it. We had to ask the question, “Do we give a \$5 million building to a church plant or create a site?” We decided on a site and launched September 14, 2007. We saw they were able to engage the city missiologically. We hired full-time church planting guy to run an in-house church planting program. We also decided to plan for a video venue in Dallas but not pursue it. Dallas Northway contacted us and wanted to merge. We sent 200 people from The Village to teach them our philosophy of ministry. 2,000 people showed up the first day.

2. Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?

Multi-site – (1) We get to be a large church with an emphasis on pastoring not managing. Guys get to really pastor people. (2) Staff was effective with 1,000-2,000

people but struggled at 4,000 people. It has given us a place to shift guys to their giftedness and bandwidth. Stay small while growing larger.

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

Church planting gets your eyes off of yourself. It builds the Kingdom, not The Village. Helps us teach the people to missionally engage in their community.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

I would encourage them strongly. It's two different things. It's like two pieces: An orange and a pork chop.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

We are ferociously committed to church planting. Multi-site – we are planning but not pursuing. We are planning on a 4th site...not seeking it. We are one church in multiple locations – one group of elders. We have a weekly prayer time called Restore from 9 am – 1 pm for prayer, worship, and communion. With multi-site, we have built some stop signs. A campus can't be so far away that they can't drive in to meet at Restore. Someone who calls and says, "Can we use the video for this..."
NO.

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

Larry Osborne on the video venue. Mark Driscoll at Mars Hill. Hill Country Bible on church planting.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

- Organizational complexity
- Maintain Unity
- We have to tap into the Holy Spirit – for instance a video venue will always be cheaper but is it the right in that situation?

Al Gilbert – Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina

1. Why did you lead your church to go multi-site?

When God called me to Calvary, I realized that I needed some time to understand the ministry challenge and the potential of our church. I deputized a staff team to conduct a quick study we called, “The Waffle Project.” (Illus. when you pour syrup on a pancake it flows freely to all parts...but with a waffle, you have to work to get the syrup into every block! So it is with Gospel. We must recognize the barriers and find ways to cross certain walls, barriers, etc.) The purpose of this study was to answer: “where is the Gospel moving? Where not? Why?”

This study, and the resulting mind-set change, would prove to be pivotal in our thinking about how to spread the Good News beyond our Central Campus. A couple of years later we gathered a group of leaders we called the Growth Planning and Property Acquisition Team (GPPAC). Terrible name—but we wanted everyone to know exactly what we were doing. This group considered all adjacent properties to help develop a time line and consider an immediate plan for the Central Campus.

Two kinds of properties were purchased:

- (1) A mission house and acreage that will be used to expand the Central Campus in the future
- (2) Office building and two small lots across the street...allowing us to expand parking and move all of our support services across the street...we then were able to change offices back to Bible Fellowship space.

Two other things were considered.

(1) Purchase of two homes on adjacent properties needed to complete the land required for further expansion.

(2) Purchase of shopping center and/or large grocery store across the street that would allow construction of permanent site for contemporary service and expansion.

Both of these two proved to be the wrong direction and/or wrong time. While the GPPAC was hard at work, we simultaneously had a Multi-Site Research Team considering ministry models from around the country. When the GPPAC came to a stand-still, the Multi-Site Team was ready to report their findings. It became evident that God had aligned these teams and brought us to a moment of finding His direction.

We could not immediately expand on the existing campus and we were saturating the strategies for multiple services and multiple Bible Fellowship hours on one site.

Although we thought the multi-site approach would come into play about 5 years later, it appeared that God was flipping our strategy to do multi-site strategy first.

2. *Why show a commitment to both multi-site and church planting?*

While considering the multi-site strategy we had to face serious issues in Ecclesiology. We asked the hard questions about governance and pastoral care and leadership in leading a church body meeting in different locations. We came to the conclusion that we would not have sites separated by too great a distance hindering proper interaction, governance and leadership. We know there is some point (yet to be defined) the distance would be too far to do these things correctly. And, therefore,

in good conscience we cannot establish another campus but should in fact start a new church. We are clarifying where one ends and the other begins but we must do both.

We also believe that there are many places, outside our immediate area, that need new churches. As we continue to lead our people to have a missional and multiplying mindset, we have led them to participate in planting churches with differing levels of partnership....most recently we are parting in church planting in Baltimore.

3. *How has this commitment to both been a benefit in your church?*

Everything we do to cast vision for lostness deepens the roots of our people. We have challenged them to “drive the pegs deep so that we can lengthen the rope” (see Is 54:2). Since the 2nd Campus (Calvary West) started meeting in May of this year, we have averaged 500-600 people in attendance. About 200 of them were previously at the Central Campus. So we have had a net growth of 300-400.

4. *How would you advise a pastor considering taking his church towards this kind of both/and ministry?*

There is a tremendous challenge to bring leaders along on the journey. We (the Sr. Assoc. Pastor/Teaching Ministry and I) set up breakfast meetings with our deacons in small groups (3-4 at a time) and walked them through the journey and answered their questions in a non-threatening setting. This took a few months. We publically set aside a Second Campus Workgroup to work with me to identify the where and when for the second campus.

Then, We gathered the adults during three Sunday morning Bible Fellowship hours and I (and a couple of other leaders) walked them through the process and gave a handout to explain why a Second Campus. I would suggest that any church settle the issues of Ecclesiology relating to governance and leadership and determine how they should express One Church—in multiple locations.

I would also suggest doing the homework of examining other models to learn from mistakes and best practices. However, I would warn against copying someone else's model without understanding the unique culture that you are addressing in your own area.

5. *Are there any long-term plans to continue being committed to both? (more campuses, plants, etc.?)*

Yes. We are considering the where and how of multiple campuses realizing that they probably not be like Calvary West...that is, we may meet in schools, other public venues, buy existing church buildings of dying congregations, etc. Also, some of the ethnic congregations that are needed will require a close analysis for determining church plant vs. another campus.

6. *Were there certain churches that you looked at in your journey towards multi-site and church planting?*

Many were considered and initial consideration was via internet, phone calls and some informal visits by individuals gathering data. We specifically deployed team

members to FBC Springdale/Pinnacle Hills, Bethlehem (Minn.) Highview (Louisville) and Second Houston. Our particular approach is most similar to Highview, Louisville, KY. Therefore, we made multiple visits there and took a large number of staff to visit with them for a couple of days.

7. *What are three main challenges with being a church committed to both multi-site and church planting?*

- Timing and Resources
- Education and building a Guiding Coalition among leaders
- Keeping priorities clear while doing more than one thing at a time.

APPENDIX FOUR
CITY UPRISING 2010



2010
CityUprising

Propel the Church. Prosper the City.

visit www.cityuprising.com for more information

New York City, NY
Raleigh-Durham, NC
Baltimore, MD
Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam

www.cityuprising.com

City Uprising 2010

Vision: To Propel the Church and Prosper the City.

Verse: Jeremiah 33:9 - 'Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.'

Voice: City Uprising is a unique opportunity for people to unite in the world's great urban centers in order to 'propel the local church and prosper the city'. Through an intensive worship and service experience City Uprising hopes to inspire resolute commitment to the local church, raise awareness of the need to reach the world's major cities with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ through new churches, and build a bridge into the heart of the city through love and service.

Dates: City Uprising

New York City (NYC)	March 7-10
New York City (NYC)	June 27-30
Raleigh/ Durham (RDU)	July 14-17
Baltimore	July 18-21
Ho Chi Mihn City, Vietnam	December 12-15

Ages: 9th Grade and Up *

* The vision of City Uprising is to ‘propel the church’ and therefore our events are appropriate for anyone who has completed the 9th grade and up, but because our largest group of attenders are college students and young adults, we have chosen to intentionally focus our worship gatherings and service projects toward that age group.

Event Details:

City Uprising combines worship experiences with unique service opportunities.

Worship Experiences: The worship experiences at City Uprising are designed to help our participants develop a theological framework for applying the gospel to our service (good deeds). Our desire is that each participant in City Uprising would leave with an emboldened faith, that propels them to make a Kingdom impact with their lives. Each worship gathering will be navigated by musicians and pastors/teachers who are passionate about seeing the church come alive and the Kingdom of God advanced.

Service Opportunities: Though the specific service opportunities will vary from city to city, each city will focus its efforts in the following three categories:

Community Revitalization: With these projects we will be partnering with local non-profits, churches, parks, schools and health clinics in an effort to help with their building, painting, organizing and cleaning needs.

Community Health Care: With these projects we will be partnering with community health clinics to help provide for basic health needs. In the past City Uprising has

specifically worked with HIV clinics in order to provide free HIV testing for community residents.

Evangelism/Church Planting: It is the goal that EVERY project participated in during City Uprising would connect people to the local church and ultimately Jesus. Some projects however, will have that as its ultimate aim. These projects will allow participants to be directly involved in building relationships that result in sharing their faith. These projects will include servant evangelism, art projects, sports camps and block parties.

Event Cost (costs DO NOT apply to Vietnam):

Super Early Bird	\$99 (Rate good from September 15-20 or for the first 500 registrants only. Must be paid in FULL) .
Early Bird Registration due by April 30, 2010)*	\$195 (\$100 deposit due by December 31, 2009 balance
Regular Registration April 30, 2010)*	\$245 (\$100 deposit due February 28, 2010, balance due by
Late Registration 2010)*	\$295 (\$100 deposit. Full registration due by April 30,

*If the balance is not received by April 30, 2009, a \$25 charge per registrant late fee will be applied. All Payments are Non-Refundable, but Registrations are transferable.

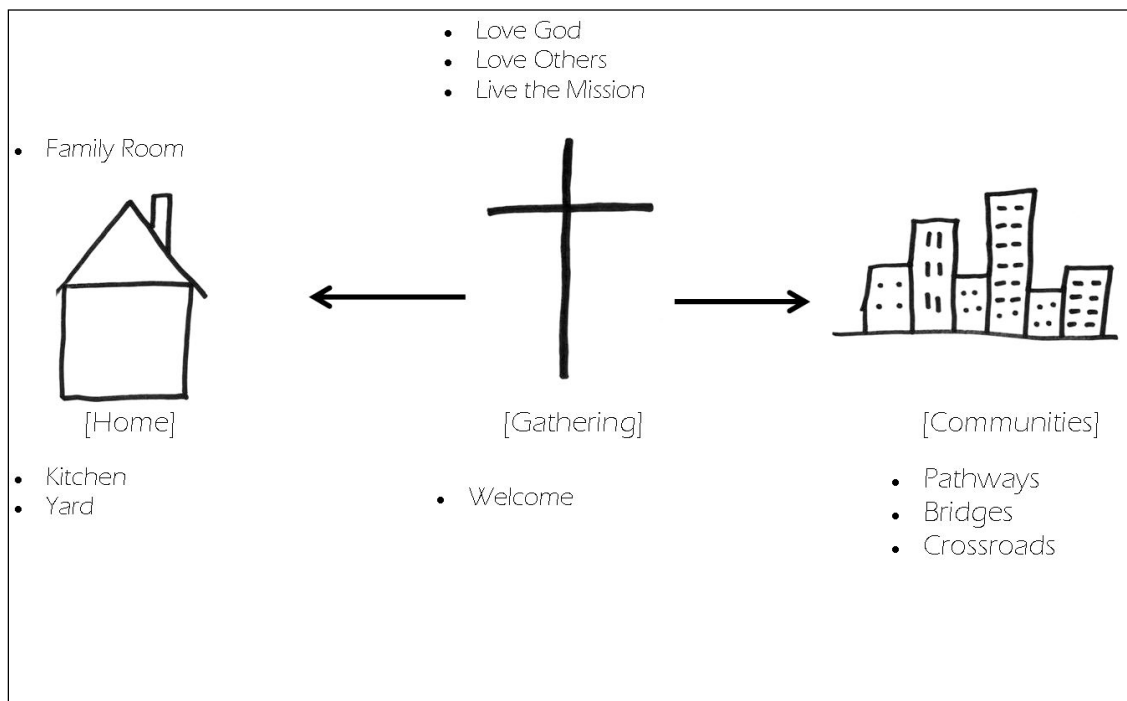
City Uprising Registration Includes:

Worship Sessions
 Training Materials
 T-Shirt
 Ministry Project Coordination
 Ministry Project Supplies
 Ministry Training
 Pre-Event Training DVD's (for the entire group)
 Wristband
 City Uprising Survival Kit
 Provide suggestions on local accommodations and travel information
 Exposure to World-Class Cities
 An Unforgettable Experience

APPENDIX FIVE

THE NAPKIN

First Baptist Church of Norfolk



The Gathering. Coming together weekly around the cross of Christ with our church family.

- Missionary followers of Christ grow to Love God, Love Others, and Live the Mission.
- **Welcome.** Showing hospitality and kindness to those who visit in the Gathering.
- **Home.**
- **Family Room.** Spiritual growth for you, your family, and others who are like family.
- **Yard.** Creating new connections and finding common ground with neighbors.
- **Kitchen Table.** Moving from small talk to spiritual conversations.
- **Communities.** Where others live, work, and play.
- **Pathways.** Ministering to others along life's routine.
- **Bridges.** Connecting people outside of our pathways to Christ.

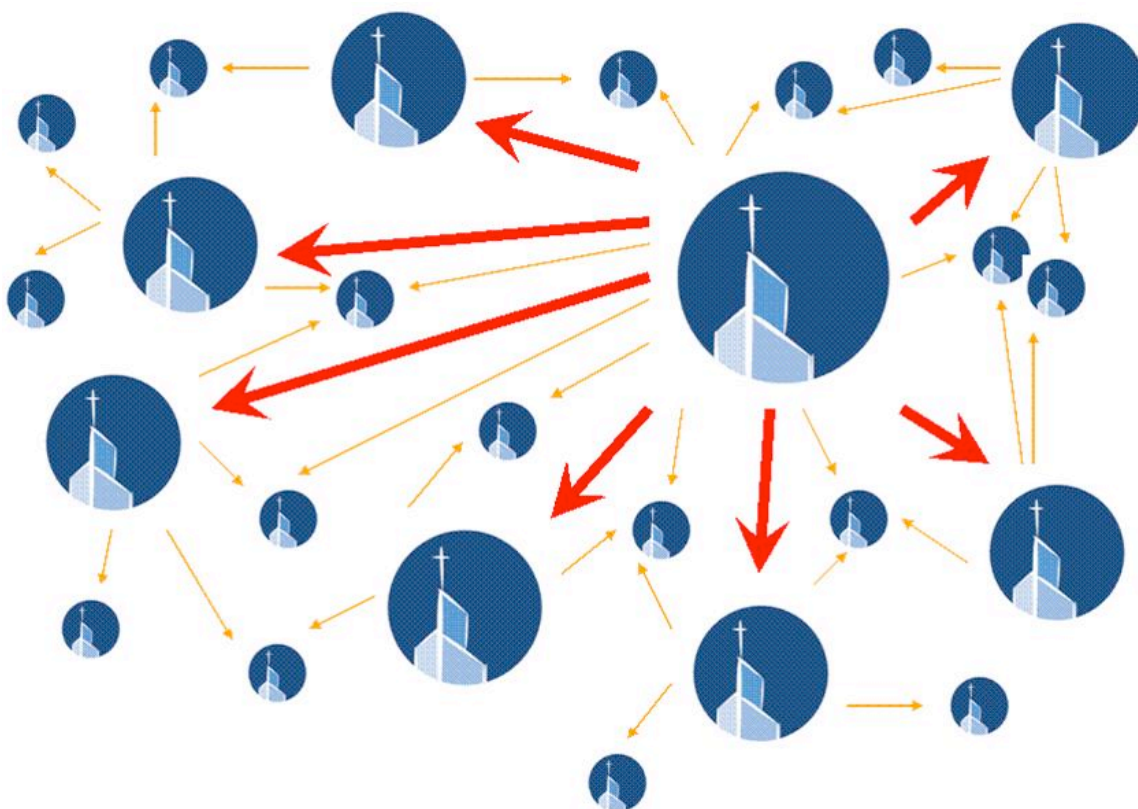
- **Crossroads.** Multiplying works which produce missionary followers of Christ.²⁰³

²⁰³ Eric Thomas, e-mail message to author, September 15, 2009.

APPENDIX SIX

ANTIOCH STRATEGY

First Baptist Church of Norfolk



In the graphic, each logo with a steeple represents a gathering for Bible Study and Worship. The larger logos are either church plants or satellites with the largest being the Norfolk Campus. The arrows represent the Bible studies, Satellites, and Church Plants that will be developed over time out of each gathering.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ Thomas, email.

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