



Multisite Is Multiplying

Survey Identifies Leading Practices and Confirms
New Developments in the Movement's Expansion

Warren Bird and Kristin Walters

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Multisite Is Multiplying: Survey Identifies Leading Practices and Confirms New Developments in the Movement's Expansion

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Imagine being on the leadership team of a church extension about to meet in a new location. There is a strong buzz in the neighborhood, but it's not a mysterious one. Instead it's word of mouth from people who have previously experienced and truly understand your church's "DNA." You are also approaching the opening Sunday at your new campus with a confidence that you've already seen God bless the ministry, even though it hasn't actually happened yet at the new location. You also view your launch not so much as the beginning of an outreach, but as a continuation of God reaching others in your community.

For hundreds of churches following a multisite approach (one church in two or more locations), the experience of opening a new site has been a delightful reality. The experiences include all kinds of variations. As one person in that situation said, "We were plateaued at the original campus – around 600 to 700. When we planted the satellite campus in 2007, it grew to 200 in about 2 years. The original campus grew to 1,000 in the same period. The original campus is rural, the satellite is in the city."

There are an estimated 3,000 multisite churches in the United States according to the book *Multisite Church Roadtrip*.¹ Leadership Network has a database of almost 1,500 such churches and recently invited many of them to be part of the nation's largest and most comprehensive survey of multisite churches.² The idea was to gain further insight into the phenomenon and to discover how churches are making it work. A number of findings surfaced, all detailed in the following report. Highlights include:

- > **Multisites now outnumber megachurches.** There are approximately 1,500 U.S. churches with worship attendance of two thousand and higher, known as megachurches. But there are now more multisite churches than that. And the number of multisite churches is growing faster than the number of megachurches.
- > **Multisite is mainstreaming.** Efforts at being one church in two or more locations, once dominated by very large churches, continue to inch downward in average size. Attendance at multisite churches – all campuses, all services, counting both adults and children – currently ranges from the low 100s to over 20,000. The most common size (median) between those extremes is a church with an attendance of 1,300. Further, two thirds of multisites are connected with a denomination, nearly half utilize in-person teaching, and a third form through merger with an previously existing church.



Many multisite churches, such as the campuses of Christ Fellowship all in the region of West Palm Beach, FL, provide everything the original campus offers.

*There are
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3,000 multisite
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United States*



Some multisite churches, including Northland in Orlando, FL, use technology to sing together across campuses.

- > **Multisite is birthing.** A respectable number of multisite campuses are in turn birthing campuses of their own. At the same time, multisites are planting other churches. This means that multisite and church planting seem to go hand in hand.
- > **Multisites reach more people and mobilize more volunteers.** The evidence seems to strongly confirm these healthy outcomes. These are two very important reasons why many churches become multisite.
- > **Multisites have a 90% success rate.** Only 10% of surveyed churches report that that they've had a campus closure.

The biggest news of this report may be the simplest: the overall message of affirmation and overwhelming support of a multisite strategy. “We fully buy in to multisite,” one multisite pastor told us. “We have seen tremendous growth in attendance, salvations, and deeper follower-ship.” Others echoed similar positive outcomes, such as reaching new people while seeing revived growth at their main campus. Most reported that leadership skills have grown as volunteers and lay leaders have stepped into new roles. Unique communities of faith have been created as large churches branch out into smaller campuses. Excitement seems to permeate most of them. As one survey participant said, “We are pumped to be serving the purposes of God and working to build His kingdom.”

Today’s Face of a Multisite Church

If the stereotype of a multisite church is that of being independent or nondenominational, the reality is somewhat different. Only one-third (34%)³ of the surveyed churches are unaffiliated with a denomination, not counting relationships with such networks as Willow Creek Association, Acts29, etc. The other two-thirds (66%) of the surveyed churches belong to mainline and other denominations. The most represented denominational identifiers used in multisite church names are, in descending order: Baptist, United Methodist, Christian Church and Lutheran. Many other denominations are represented as well, such as Christian and Missionary Alliance, Vineyard Fellowship, and Assemblies of God.

Incidentally, very few multisite churches have a geographic identifier in their name such as “Smithtown Church” or “Oak Street Church.” The most common words in their name besides church are, in order of popularity: *Community, First, Life* and *Fellowship*.

The scope of today’s multisite trend may be new with 99% of surveyed churches going multisite within the last 10 years – the average launch date for the first additional campus is 2006 for all sizes except 100-499, whose average launch date is 2008. However the first campuses have been around for awhile. Their founding dates range from 1744 to 2009. They have an average (median) founding date of 1964.



Some churches have developed campuses in other countries such as Living Hope just outside Portland, OR, which has 6 campuses locally and also campuses in Hawaii, New Zealand, and Mexico.



Most campuses of Seacoast Church, based near Charleston, SC, meet in movie theaters with an on-site campus pastor and worship team, and then teaching by video.

Two-thirds (66%) of the surveyed churches belong to mainline and other denominations

The vast majority made their foray into multisite at their original site first (see Table 1), offering different venues within their facilities, such as a gym or fellowship hall. Perhaps they were testing the concept and when they saw these venues could succeed, they added other new campus locations. The majority of multisites (85%) have 3 or fewer geographic campuses – and 7 services total. Table 2 looks at this same information in a different way.

The majority of multisites (85%) have 3 or fewer geographic campuses – and 7 services total

TABLE 1

Most Multisite Churches Launch On-Campus Venues First

Combined attendance at *all* campuses

	HAD VENUES FIRST	HAD OFF-SITES FIRST
100-499	62%	38%
500-999	67%	33%
1,000-1,999	64%	36%
2,000-2,999	63%	37%
3,000-3,999	56%	44%
4,000-5,999	64%	36%
6,000-9,999	60%	40%
10,000 and higher	67%	33%

TABLE 2

The Larger the Church, the More Campuses and Services It Has

Combined attendance at <i>all</i> campuses	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CAMPUSES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF WEEKEND SERVICES ACROSS ALL CAMPUSES
100-499	2.1	3
500-999	2.2	4
1,000-1,999	2.5	5
2,000-2,999	2.6	7
3,000-3,999	2.8	8
4,000-5,999	3.3	7
6,000-9,999	5.4	14
10,000 and higher	4.0*	30*

*This number excludes one church that has 400 locations. If included the average would be skewed much higher.

The surveyed churches were asked where their results in certain areas were stronger – at their original (first) campus, at their additional campuses, or about even in all campuses. Several clear differences are evident – see Table 3. Satellite campuses tended to show faster growth. The original campuses were generally stronger when it comes to student ministry, older adult ministry, per-person financial giving, baptisms and children’s ministry. Campuses were judged to be about even in strength in several areas including community service, missional attitude, and lay leadership development.

Satellite campuses tended to show faster growth

TABLE 3

Newer Sites Excel in Faster Growth, Original Campus Excels in Student Ministry, Both in Community Service

Where results are stronger, generally speaking

	NEWER CAMPUS(ES)	ORIGINAL CAMPUS	ABOUT EVEN
Faster growth	45%	27%	28%
Student ministry	11%	63%	26%
Older adult ministry	5%	61%	34%
Per-person financial giving	17%	58%	26%
Baptisms	11%	51%	39%
Children's ministry	9%	49%	42%
Community service	25%	22%	53%
Missional attitude	30%	17%	53%
Lay leader development	29%	25%	46%
Small groups	20%	38%	42%
Evangelism	31%	27%	43%
Drawing single adults	24%	35%	41%
Drawing unchurched newcomers	32%	26%	41%
Drawing young adults	34%	29%	37%

Launching a New Campus: Funding and First Year Growth

The widespread explosion of the multisite movement across North America is evident by the fact that multisite churches can be found in 47 U.S. states (including Washington D.C.) and 6 Canadian provinces, according to Leadership Network’s database of almost 1,500 such churches. For this current survey, 416 multisite churches participated.

Multisite churches can be found in 47 U.S. states

One set of questions asked about finances for their *most recent* satellite site. As seen in Table 4, the primary funding for new sites largely comes from existing campuses – whether it was through the general budget (40% of churches were funded this way) or special offering (an additional 12% of the churches were funded this way). In capital campaigns, many of the churches (24%) raised funding by allocating a portion of the fundraising to multisite initiatives.

TABLE 4

Most Launch Funding Comes from Other Campuses

Source of funding	TOTAL RESPONSE	2 CAMPUS CHURCHES	3 CAMPUS CHURCHES	4-20 CAMPUS CHURCHES
One or more existing campuses, through general budget	40%	56%	33%	75%
Capital campaign – portion was for a new campus	24%	31%	0%	0%
One or more existing campuses, through special offering	12%	6%	33%	0%
Other	10%	0%	0%	25%
No launch funding	8%	6%	33%	0%
Denominational funding	5%	0%	0%	0%
Launch pastor or team raised outside support	2%	0%	0%	0%

Interestingly, a sizable number of new campuses launched during 2009, indicating that despite recent economic challenges, churches are still finding a way to go multisite. “Our church made the decision to start our satellite campus at the beginning of the downturn of the economy,” one survey participant said. “When it was time to follow through, we were way behind budget. God raised \$150,000 for the start and we made it the first year. We had to increase our budget to include the new site.”

That person continued: “We are currently about \$60,000 ahead of budget, carrying the larger budget, and our attendance has grown at the existing campus past what it was before we took our launch team to start the second campus. God has done a lot!”

As far as the breakdown of where the money goes when a new site is launched, the bigger share goes to technology costs (see Table 5). On average, the churches we surveyed allocated the biggest portion of their budget to technology costs, followed by facility costs, and then advertising costs.

TABLE 5

Technology Is Highest of Three Typical Costs Associated with a New Campus

Average (median) upfront costs for latest campus

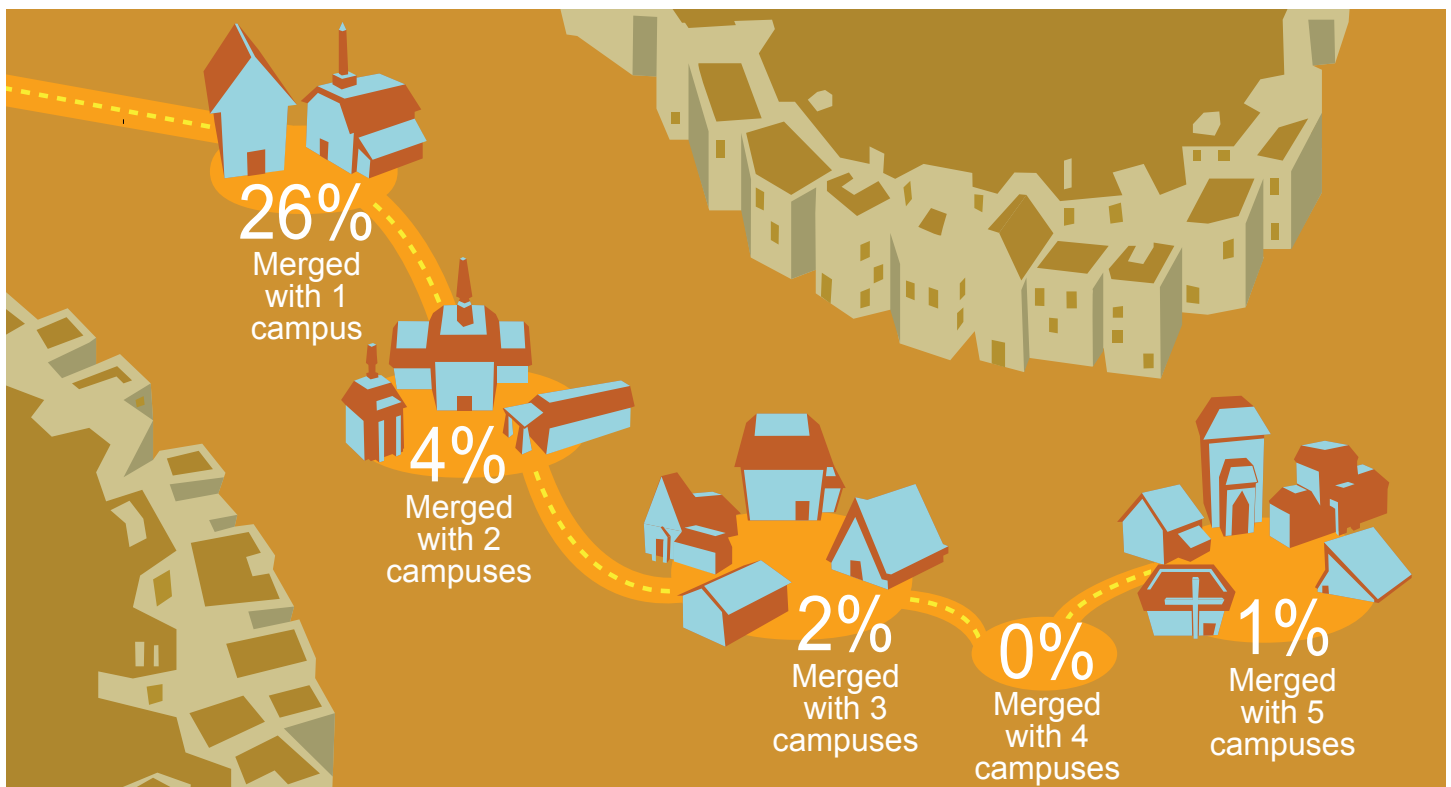
Combined attendance at all campuses	TECHNOLOGY	FACILITY	ADVERTISING
100-499	\$7,750	\$4,250	\$1,350
500-999	\$20,000	\$32,000	\$4,000
1,000-1,999	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$5,000
2,000-2,999	\$52,500	\$40,000	\$5,000
3,000-3,999	\$66,000	\$15,000	\$5,000
4,000-5,999	\$100,000	\$60,000	\$5,000
6,000-9,999	\$100,000	\$90,000	\$4,000
10,000 and higher	\$175,000	\$250,000	\$8,000
averages	\$71,406	\$64,531	\$4,669

Actual questions: For your most recent campus, what were your technical costs upfront, facility costs upfront, and your advertising costs upfront?

What kind of facility do multisite churches use for a new campus? A previous Leadership Network report showed the overwhelming popularity of schools, with other locations ranging from storefronts to movie theaters.⁴ The current survey asked about one particular source that Leadership Network had observed as rising in popularity: mergers. A surprising 33% said they had added a campus through a merger or acquisition with an existing or recently closed congregation.

33% said they had added a campus through a merger

1 in 3 Multisites Added a Campus through a Merger



Initial Growth

Even more strategic than the funding, however, are the people who join in to help. Starting with an average core launch group of 174 people (median is 75), a sizable number of the surveyed churches experienced more than 50% growth at their satellite sites in the first year, as Table 6 indicates. The growth was not as rapid for the second year, with only a little over a quarter experiencing growth of 50% or more. (For insights on typical growth of church plants, see Leadership Network’s *Church Planting Overview: State of Church Planting USA*⁵ and also the book *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* by Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird.⁶)

Currently, average attendance at satellite sites across all the surveyed churches is 361 people. This is good news, considering the churches say they need 100-150 people in attendance to be fully functioning and self-sustaining (see Table 7 below).

TABLE 6

**First Year Growth at Newest Campus Is 43%,
Second Year Growth Is 16%**

Combined attendance at <i>all</i> campuses	FIRST YEAR GROWTH OVER 50%	SECOND YEAR GROWTH OVER 50%
100-499	40%	21%
500-999	37%	8%
1,000-1,999	49%	23%
2,000-2,999	45%	16%
3,000-3,999	36%	0%
4,000-5,999	44%	15%
6,000-9,999	53%	33%
10,000 and higher	41%	9%
averages	43%	16%

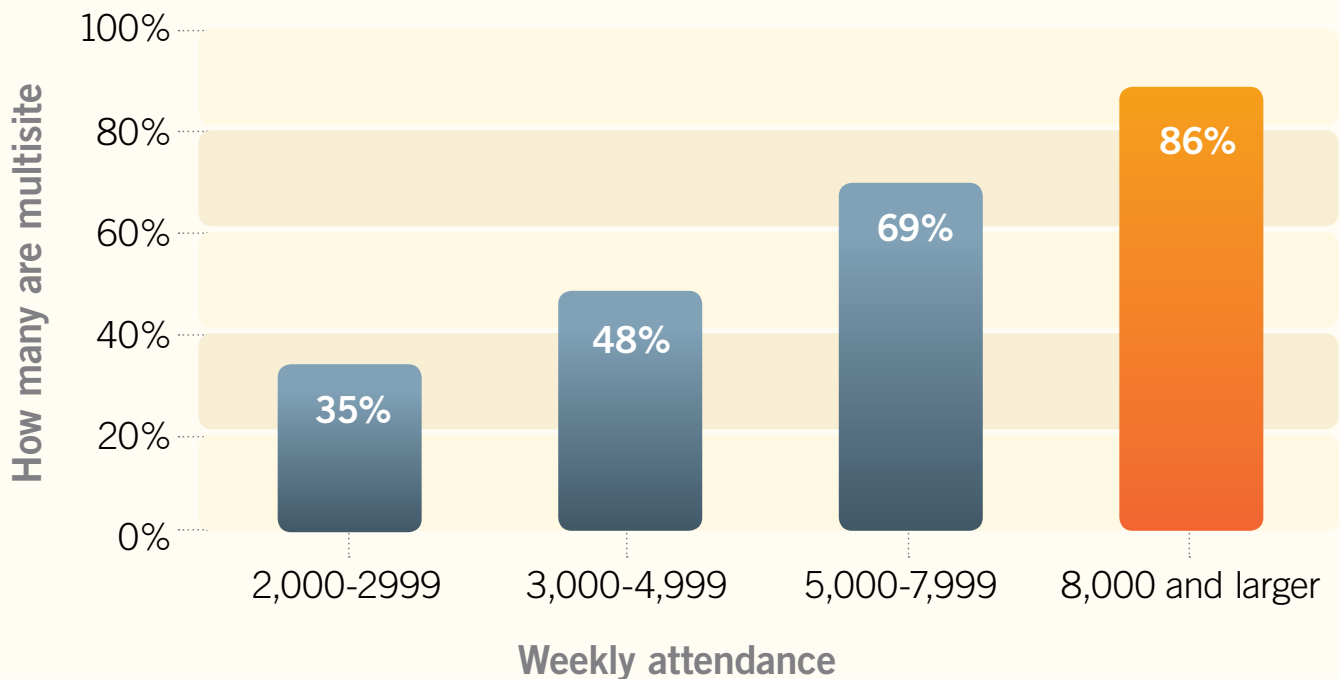
Attendance and Size

Originally, multisite churches were predominantly the domain of megachurches (churches with weekly worship attendance of 2,000 or more adults and children). To this day, the bigger the church the more likely it is to go multisite, according to a study by Leadership Network and the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.⁷ See bar chart for its findings.

The bigger the church the more likely it is to go multisite

The number of megachurches continues to grow, as several other studies have shown. By best estimates, there are some 1,500 such Protestant churches in the U.S. today. But the number of multisite churches now exceeds that number and continues to grow. In small part this is due to an ever growing percentage of megachurches that become multisite. In much larger part, it is due to the increase of medium size and smaller churches becoming multisite – a size group with tens of thousands of potential candidates for becoming multisite. In this survey, over 1 in 4 responders were in churches whose total worship attendance at all campuses is less than 1,000.

The Larger the Church, the More Likely It's Multisite



Source: *Changes in American Megachurches* by Scott Thumma and Warren Bird

Another important finding documented by this survey is that the average size range of churches doing multisite keeps getting smaller. Today the median size for a multisite church is 1,300 including all of its campuses. They range from a few churches in the 100s to a few over 20,000. For 93% of the surveyed churches, the original campus has the highest attendance each week. Table 7 looks at those numbers, breaking them down by size. It shows that attendance can vary greatly between a satellite site and the original church campus. It also shows various site sizes needed to achieve viability.

Today the median size for a multisite church is 1,300

TABLE 7

Multisites Typically Need 100-250 to Be Viable

Combined attendance at <i>all</i> campuses	HIGHEST ATTENDANCE CAMPUS	LOWEST ATTENDANCE CAMPUS	ATTENDANCE AT MOST RECENT CAMPUS	Minimum number of attenders needed to be both fully functioning and financially self sustaining*
100-499	247	72	81	100
500-999	533	137	163	150
1,000-1,999	987	246	248	200
2,000-2,999	1,906	178	301	150
3,000-3,999	2,471	283	374	200
4,000-5,999	3,948	543	532	250
6,000-9,999	5,332	524	802	250
10,000 and higher	9,312	893	954	250
averages	2,430	304	361	200

*For this question, participants were limited to preset answer options in multiples of 50.

Leadership and Structure

In order for multisite strategy to succeed, good leadership is essential at satellite sites. The site leader's role goes by many names. This person is most often known as the campus pastor. Their average age is about 40 years old (and from other surveys we know the average age of the senior pastor is about 51 years old⁸).

Good leadership is essential at satellite sites

Where do churches find the kind of person who can fit in this unique role? The good news is that most of these leaders (7 out of 10) are being found within the original campus. Before becoming the campus pastor, half (50%) were first staff members, while others (24%) were lay leaders at the original campus.

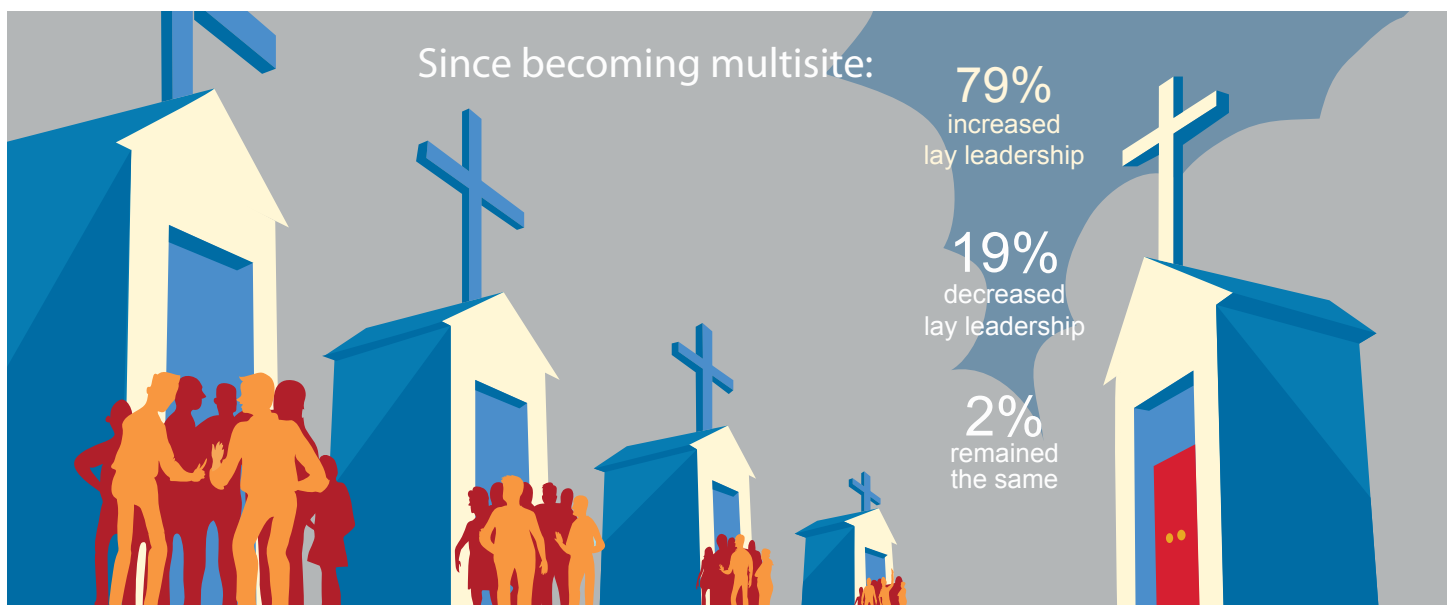
What about those churches that have been multisite long enough to have needed a successor campus pastor at one or more of their campuses? In the surveyed churches, if there was a pastor previous to the current one, in even more cases that pastor also came from within the church (67%). In some cases, this has helped the churches involved to step up their levels of lay leadership as well. “Almost all our [volunteer] leaders were not involved at our original campus at all...but while spotty there, they have been rock solid for us at the satellite,” said one survey participant.

Other churches agreed that choosing to go multisite has affected the leadership development of their lay leaders. Nearly a third of the churches we surveyed (29%) called the impact significant, and another half (50%) said leadership development within their church had increased “somewhat.” This adds up to an impressive amount: 79% said that since their church became multisite, leadership development through lay mobilization has increased either somewhat or significantly. And only 2% said it has decreased, the remaining 19% saying it has remained about the same. As one survey participant remarked, “Interestingly, we really grew most in our original campus in the months following the launch. We sent people to the new site and while we gained new people there as well, we almost immediately filled those vacated seats in our original campus.”

These responses provide solid evidence to those who wonder, “Will going multisite increase or decrease the role of lay participation?”

79% said that since their church became multisite, leadership development through lay mobilization has increased

4 in 5 Multisites Report an Increase in Lay Leadership Development



How do reporting structures within multisite churches work? Survey participants had three options: ministry leaders report to their campus pastor; ministry leaders report to a ministry leader at the original campus; or ministry leaders report to a leader in a central support role (not specific to a certain campus). As seen in Table 8, the majority (57%) chose the first option: each ministry leader reporting to the campus pastor.

TABLE 8

At Most Satellite Campuses, Ministry Leaders Report to Their Campus Pastor

Combined attendance at <i>all</i> campuses	EACH MINISTRY LEADER REPORTS TO THEIR CAMPUS PASTOR	EACH MINISTRY LEADER REPORTS TO A MINISTRY LEADER AT THE ORIGINAL CAMPUS	CORE MINISTRY LEADERS REPORT TO A LEADER IN A CENTRAL SUPPORT (NON-CAMPUS SPECIFIC) ROLE
100-499	33%	43%	23%
500-999	45%	33%	21%
1,000-1,999	57%	24%	19%
2,000-2,999	61%	21%	18%
3,000-3,999	70%	20%	9%
4,000-5,999	63%	18%	18%
6,000-9,999	58%	17%	15%
10,000 and higher	68%	29%	3%
averages	57%	27%	16%

Crossing Cultures with Multisite

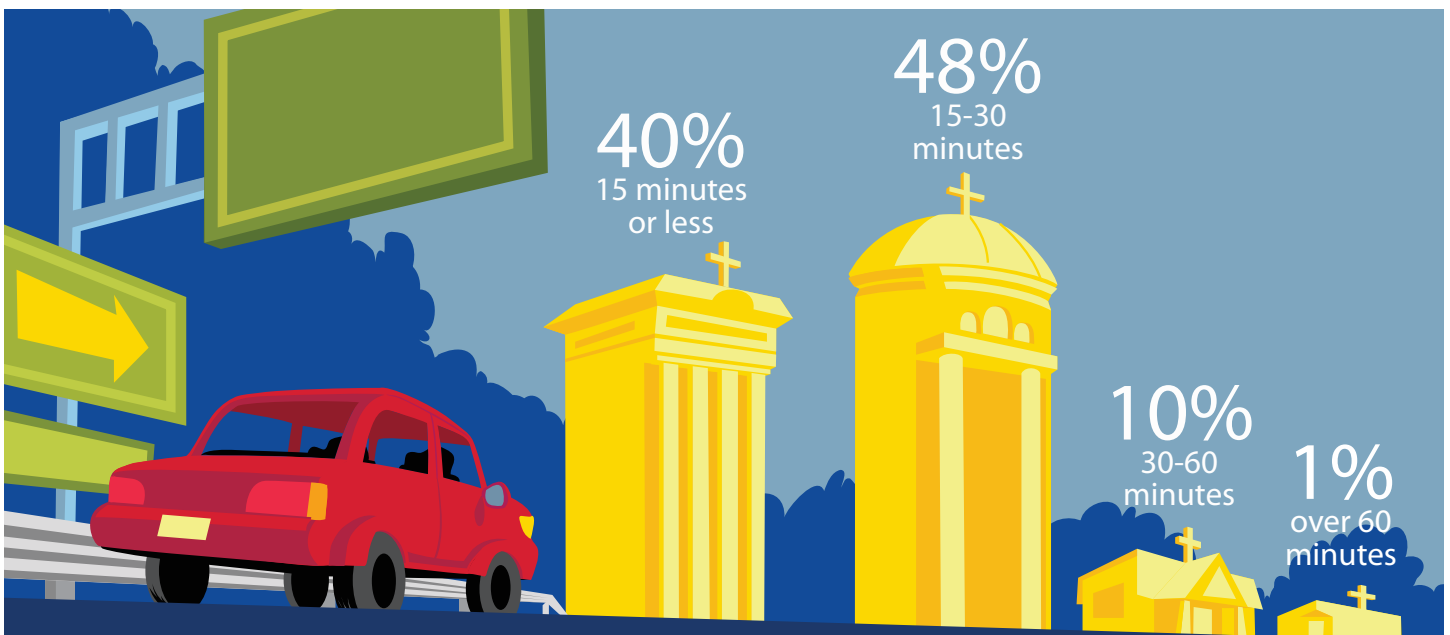
A common myth held about multisite churches is that they are a mostly “white” phenomenon. But this survey found that 15% of the responding churches are other than white. Most of those describe themselves as multi-ethnic, defined as a context in which no single group comprises 80% or more of the church’s population.

“Our original campus has a Hispanic campus on site, averaging 150 [people per weekend],” said one survey participant. “Our satellite campus, 20 minutes away, now averages 650 [people per weekend] after 2.5 years.”

A church’s various locations aren’t necessarily that far away from each other. Over 85% of the surveyed churches said their nearest campus was less than 30 minutes away from the first campus. Forty percent of those said travel time is 15 minutes or less.

Over 85% of the surveyed churches said their nearest campus was less than 30 minutes away from the first campus

Many Campuses Are within a 15 Minute Commute of Each Other



Even with this geographical proximity, some churches are also using multisite to reach out to people who speak other languages. Nearly a quarter (23%) of the churches we surveyed are now offering worship services in languages other than the one spoken at the first campus.

Churches are also using multisite to reach out to people who speak other languages

1 in 4 Multisites Have a Campus in Another Language



In addition to crossing cultural barriers in the U.S., some churches are choosing to go international. Of the churches we surveyed, 6% have expanded into other countries.

One surveyed church said, “We’re planning to launch 3 other sites in next 12-24 months, one of which in South Africa, where our lead pastor is from.”

Said another church: “We will be launching an international campus in Bangkok, Thailand, this year and another international campus in Brussels, Belgium, in 2011.”

“We’re planning to launch 3 other sites in next 12-24 months...”

Technology and Multisite Churches

Is your impression that virtually all multisite churches feature the teaching by video at their offsite campuses? Actually, the survey found that in-person teaching is probably more widespread than video, except in very large churches.

The survey asked several types of questions. The first deals with teaching/preaching across all a church's campuses. The most popular answer is that it's "almost all in-person" (46%). However, these numbers do change significantly by church size as Table 9 shows.

The survey found that in-person teaching is probably more widespread than video

In-person Teaching Is More Widespread Than Video Teaching



TABLE 9

The Larger the Overall Attendance, the More Likely to Combine Video with In-Person Teaching

Combined attendance at <i>all</i> campuses	ALMOST ALL IN-PERSON	COMBINATION OF BOTH	ALMOST ALL VIDEO
100-499	73%	20%	7%
500-999	72%	24%	4%
1,000-1,999	56%	23%	22%
2,000-2,999	41%	37%	21%
3,000-3,999	32%	35%	32%
4,000-5,999	14%	62%	24%
6,000-9,999	13%	46%	41%
10,000 and higher	18%	50%	32%
averages	46%	34%	20%

Among those that offer video at *any* campus, the survey asked whether or not the video is live. Almost half (48%) said that a teaching pastor in one location is videoed and shown other campuses. Table 10 details the four options given, and breaks them down by church size. It shows that video teaching is for larger churches, and the commuting option is for smaller churches with fewer campuses.

TABLE 10

Most Teaching and Campus Pastors Stay in One Place, Even if Videoed

Teaching method	PERCENT WHO USE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CAMPUSES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CAMPUSES	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE ALL CAMPUSES
A teaching pastor in one location is videoed and shown other campuses	48%	3	4,352
Each campus features its own live in-person teaching from the campus pastor or a teaching pastor	25%	3	2,171
A teaching pastor commutes and speaks live in person at each service at our various campuses	16%	2	1,455
No dominant pattern, but rather a combination of the above	11%	3	3,236

Actual question: "Which best describes your overall approach to teaching/preaching? (Select only one)"

Among churches that use video *at their most recent campus*, we then asked about the mechanics of how it is done. The lion's share (60%) have the video delivered by DVD, 15% use video delivered via the internet, 4% use video delivered by satellite, and 19% use video delivered in some other way. Options for this "other way" were not identified.

How does video teaching impact effectiveness? For churches that describe their teaching approach as "almost all video," we compared the first campus where teaching is usually in person with the satellite campuses where teaching is more likely to come by video. For all the values listed in Table 3, which asked churches to rate whether they're stronger at the original campus or the satellite campuses, those with heavy video teaching tended to select "about the same" for most of the comparison values.

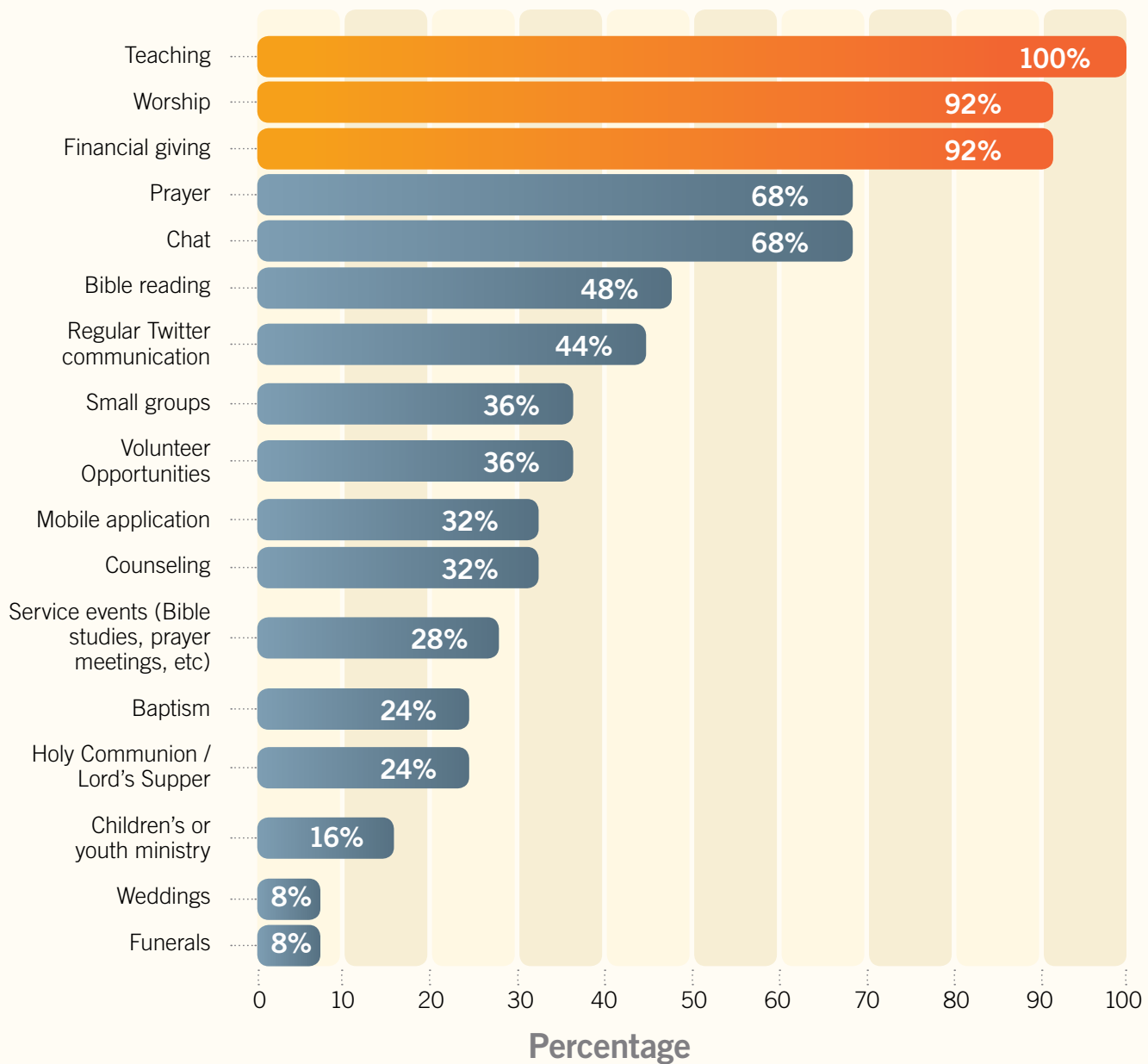
Technology has also affected multisite strategy by creating the opportunity for internet campuses. Of the surveyed churches, 11% currently sponsor an internet campus. One-third of the churches hope to do this in the next three years.

Of those who offer an internet campus, a broad range of features are included – from teaching, worship and financial giving, to prayer, chat, Bible reading, and more. Some internet campuses even feature life events like baptisms, weddings, and funerals.

Technology has also affected multisite strategy by creating the opportunity for internet campuses

Churches with internet campuses are having a wide range of experiences, as the bar chart illustrates. Some find that giving is very low while attendance is very high – yet others find that their internet campus has the largest percentage of tithes per capita. The majority of these churches said their internet campuses are self-supporting, while others are not and may never be. One church mentioned that they do not see it as a campus model, but rather a spiritual community model. Another called the internet campus its second-most effective evangelism tool, behind approaches of in-person invitation.

Internet Campuses Emphasize Teaching, Worship and Opportunities for Financial Giving



Does Multisite Help or Hurt Church Planting?

Several of the participants in this survey expressed concern about the impact of a multisite strategy on the starting of new churches. “I hope you are still thinking about church planting aside from multi-site,” one person wrote. (In terms of definition, the chief difference between the two is this: for multisites the different campuses are all part of one church under one senior leader, while church plants represent a new congregation with a separate board and budget.)

First, multisites show a healthy commitment to replication within their congregations. Despite the fact that most multisite campuses are less than 10 years old themselves, 1 in 5 of these satellite campuses have already birthed a “grandchild” campus. Eight percent of that group has launched 2 to 9 campuses. And impressively, 1 percent of the multisite campuses who took part in this survey have already started 10 or more additional campuses.

1 in 5 Multisites Have Already Birthed a “Grandchild” Campus



This survey, however, found that churches who participate in multisite strategy are actually more inclined to plant churches as well. Survey participants were asked two questions about the extent to which their church has been involved in church planting. One asked their level of church planting *prior* to becoming multisite, and the other asked how it has changed *subsequent* to becoming multisite. They indicated an increase of 7% for their few years as a multisite church. And it’s not just the first campus that’s starting new churches. In some cases, it’s the satellite campuses that are doing the church planting.

Churches who participate in multisite strategy are actually more inclined to plant churches as well

What results does that commitment generate? Eight percent of satellite campuses have planted a new church.

In at least one instance, the commitment is both to adding more sites and to planting other churches. “Our plan is for [all of] our campuses to eventually become churches,” said one survey participant. “Seven of them have transitioned to independently functioning churches. The three we have as campuses now, will soon transition to become churches and new sites will be started in their place.”

The survey participant continued to comment, “We call our model multi-church because these ten churches still cooperate with each other and see themselves as a part of a network or larger whole.”

Another survey participant said, “Our region has been a 16-year cemetery for church plants. Multisite has allowed us to spread into new neighborhoods without risking resources and momentum.”

Table 11 compares multisite churches that are also very heavily involved in planting new churches with those who are less involved in church planting. It shows qualities that differ the most between the two. Those who are very heavily involved in church planting have indeed planted more churches. They have also launched more campuses, they have more venues at their original campuses, they have more additional site campuses, they have a higher growth rate and attendance at their most recent campus, they have a higher overall attendance – and yet they were founded more recently.

A different Leadership Network report,⁹ which focused solely on megachurches, found that megachurches with satellite campuses are the most likely class of megachurches to plant other churches. This is one more evidence that multisite supports and even fuels church planting.

“We call our model multi-church because these ten churches still cooperate with each other and see themselves as a part of a network or larger whole”

TABLE 11

Differences Are Striking When Multisites Are Very Heavily Involved in Church Planting

Multisite qualities	THOSE INVOLVED "VERY HEAVILY" IN CHURCH PLANTING	THOSE WITH LESSER LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH PLANTING
Campuses that have planted one or more churches	21%	7%
Campuses that have launched other campuses (thus "grandchildren" of the first campus)	32%	19%
Current number of venues at their first campus	2.3	2.0
Current number of offsite campuses	3.2	2.8
First year growth rate of most recent multisite campus	68%	54%
Current attendance at most recent multisite campus	300 (median)	200 (median)
Current attendance all campuses	2,850 (median)	2,000 (median)
Year church was originally founded	1989	1977

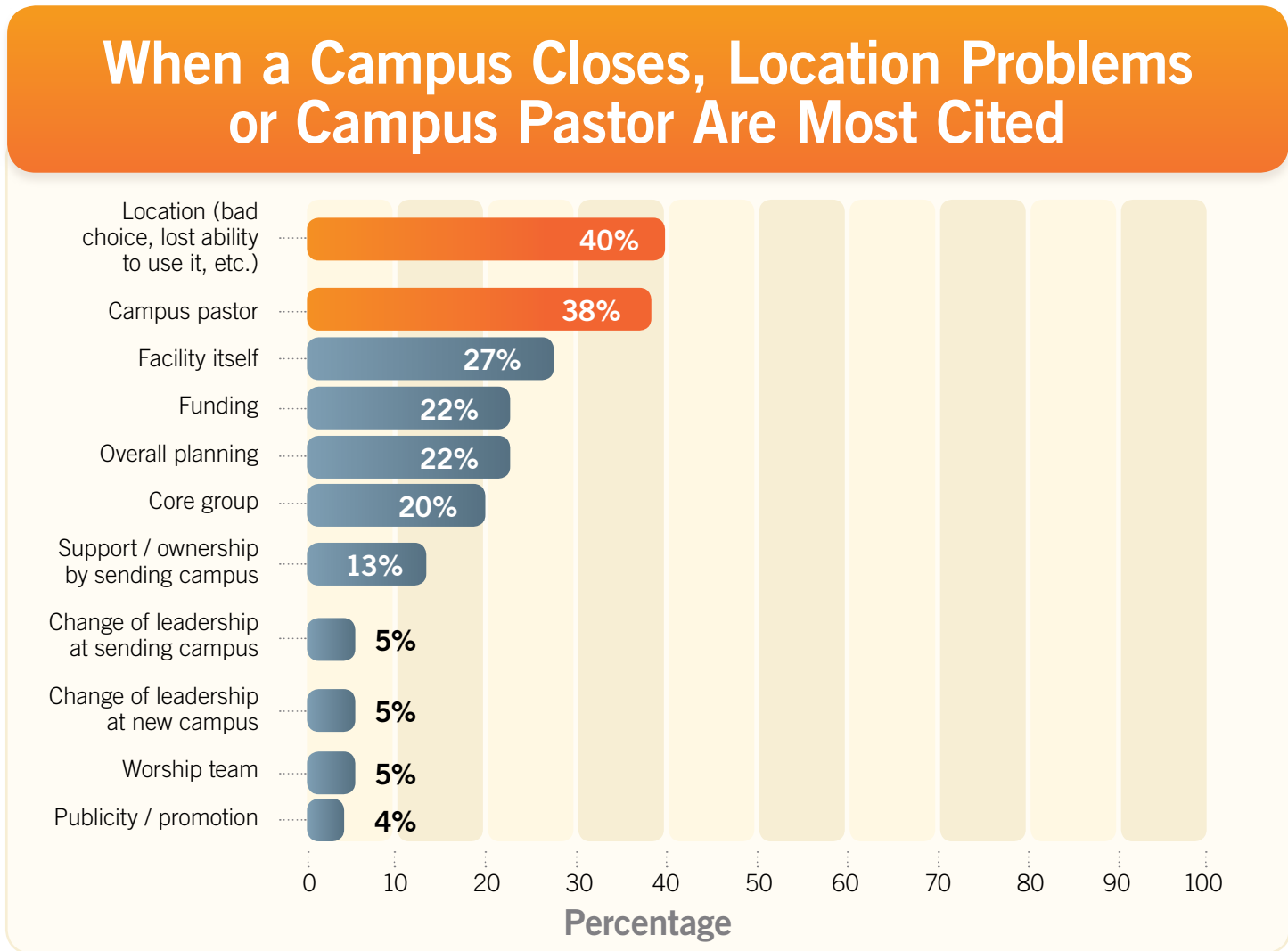
Comparison question: "Since becoming multisite, to what extent is your original campus now involved in church planting?" Responses were on a four-point scale from "none" to "very heavily"

What's Ahead for Multisite?

The multisite strategy is a trend that won't be slowing down anytime soon. Nearly all the surveyed churches said that their first campus will be involved in launching more campuses in the future. Over half of the surveyed churches said they would be "very heavily" involved in multisite strategy down the road.

And why not? As other Leadership Network surveys have affirmed,¹⁰ the primary motives for going multisite are to increase evangelism or to take church closer to a target group of people, which usually also increases evangelism.

Multisite as a strategy seems to be succeeding according to those on its front lines: only 10% indicated that they've closed a campus. That number suggests a very healthy "still open" rate of 90%. Thus 9 of 10 churches with multisite campuses are still pressing forward. Of those who have closed or are thinking about closing, the location and campus pastor were the top two reasons why. The bar chart lists all reasons given.



Aside from numbers, some churches see other measures of multisite success. “Our first multisite has joy, warmth and excitement. We don’t have the numerical growth we were hoping for, but we are healthy with great small groups and a great worshipful atmosphere,” another participant said.

The words of yet another survey participant seem to summarize it all: “Multisite is an awesome adventure that is God-based and God-maintained. It is our growing edge. We plan to launch several more.” Indeed, all indications from this survey – improved baptisms, growth in lay leadership development, and more – are that churches will continue to experiment with multisite and to find many positive results through a multisite approach.

Please direct comments and questions to research@leadnet.org. When possible, responses will be posted at <http://learnings.leadnet.org>. For additional multisite resources, see www.leadnet.org/multisiteresources.

About the Authors



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Multisite Resources from Leadership Network



REPORTS

Please visit leadnet.org/multisiteresources

Multiple Everything: Insights from Churches with Four or More Campuses

By Colleen Pepper

Leadership Network invited leaders from other U.S. churches with four or more campuses to participate in a survey that specifically targeted churches with four or more satellite, branch, or regional campus locations. This report includes eight ways that churches with four or more campuses are distinct, and some of the most significant perspectives they're discovering.

Selecting Locations for Additional Campuses...Whether It's Your Second or Fifteenth Site

By Pat Springle

In recent years, a number of visionary church leaders have joined the multi-site revolution to expand the gospel's reach into different parts of their cities, their states, and even to other countries. These leaders have developed innovative multi-site strategies that fit their particular cultures, their resources, and the opportunities God has given them, and they have developed their own criteria for selecting sites for new campuses



PODCAST

Please visit leadnet.org/podcast

Launching Satellite Campuses with a Community-Minded Focus

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

Endnotes

¹ Surratt, Geoff, Greg Ligon and Warren Bird, *Multisite Church Roadtrip: Exploring the New Normal*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009, page 217.

² Unless otherwise noted, all information in this document comes from 416 completed responses by U.S. Protestant multisite churches. There were additional survey respondents from outside the United States: 13 from Canada and 6 from various other countries. This response level was too small to conduct meaningful comparisons. The survey was publicized both by individual emails and by publicity in various blogs, Twitter announcements and conference announcements, so the exact number of invitees is impossible to calculate.

³ Here and throughout the document, not all statistics will add up to 100% due to rounding.

⁴ See “Survey of 1,000 Multisite Churches: A Dozen of the Most Significant Findings” by Warren Bird, page 7, www.leadnet.org/multisiteresources.

⁵ Available for free download at www.leadnet.org/churchplantingresources.

⁶ *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers*, by Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.

⁷ See “Changes in American Megachurches” by Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, www.leadnet.org/megachurch.

⁸ See “Teacher First: Leadership Network’s 2009 Large-Church Senior Pastor Survey” by Warren Bird, www.leadnet.org/megachurch.

⁹ See “Changes in American Megachurches” by Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, www.leadnet.org/megachurch.

¹⁰ See www.leadnet.org/multisiteresources.

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Leadership Network fosters church innovation and growth through strategies, programs, tools, and resources consistent with our far-reaching mission: to accelerate the impact of 100x leaders.

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Leadership Network’s mission is to accelerate the impact of 100X leaders.