

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Best of 2022: The Core Issues of Multisite (Replay) - Episode 274

Our Best Episodes of 2022

There is a right way and a wrong way to approach multisite. In other words, not all multisite strategies produce the same results. Some multisite approaches increase the odds that we will have a healthy, thriving ministry that reproduces disciples of Jesus. Other multisite approaches increase the odds that we will create more complexity, overburden our existing staff and volunteers, spend more money, foster division in our church, create confusion about who we are in our community, and get off mission.

In this episode, we'll walk through some of the **core issues in popular multisite models** that we've seen lead to dysfunction and disunity among campuses.

CORE ISSUE: *Should multisite churches use video to deliver messages to all locations, or should multisite churches have in-person live teachers at every location?*

At The Unstuck Group, we believe that you increase the odds of success with your multisite model if you use **video delivery of messages** as much as possible. This is true for many reasons:

- Every campus needs to hear from the senior pastor as the primary teacher.
- Every location hearing the same message every week helps maintain unity of mission, vision, and doctrine.
- It streamlines the efforts of your creative arts team to support the teaching series at every location.
- You can still build a teaching team—and you can also guarantee that every location is hearing from the most gifted Bible teacher on any given Sunday.
- It's the best stewardship of financial resources in the long run.
- Most importantly: **You avoid splitting your church.**

There are predictable outcomes to having campus pastors as the primary teachers at their locations. When the CP teaches every weekend, they become the primary voice that the congregation hears. Over time, this allows the CP to shape the vision and direction of the campus, which leads to more independence and the desire for more autonomy. Soon, the tension between

the campus and the sending location grows... especially when it comes to staffing and managing finances. Before you know it, the campus desires to become an independent church—or the senior pastor decides to un-multisite.

We typically hear three objections to the video teaching model, so let's address them:

1. **“It doesn't create opportunities to develop other Bible teachers.”**

This argument assumes that the teaching gift can only be developed on Sunday morning, and that's just not true. And if you require campus pastors to teach, you're limiting their opportunities to develop other ministry leaders who *aren't* teachers.

2. **“We prefer a teaching team because we don't want to become a personality-driven church.”**

The video teaching model allows for the use of a teaching team. We just know the advantages of having that team teaching through video delivery in every location—among other things, to maintain unity in the church at every location.

3. **“Our context is unique. People don't want video teaching because our community is rural, suburban, urban, etc.”**

When it's good, Biblical teaching that helps people apply God's truth to everyday life, we've seen video teaching work in every ministry context.

CORE ISSUE: Can any strong leader be a campus pastor?

You need strong leadership in all areas of ministry... but you especially need the right, strong leader to be the campus pastor. However, just as there are certain gifts, personalities, and experiences that prepare people for specific roles and leadership within the Body of Christ, the same is true for the campus pastor role. In other words, you increase the potential for success with your multisite model if you **hire the right strong leader to be your campus pastor:**

- The campus pastor should be more **vision-carrier** than **vision-creator**
- The campus pastor should be more **builder** than **entrepreneur**
- The campus pastor should be more **galvanizing** than **invention**
- The campus pastor should be more **empowering** than **controlling**
- The campus pastor should be more **missionary** than **preacher**

That's right—you can be a successful campus pastor leading a healthy, thriving campus and **never** teach a message on Sunday morning. (In fact, if you feel like you need to preach in order to lead, that's a clear indication that you *shouldn't be* a campus pastor. You should be a student pastor, a senior pastor, a church planter, or in some other ministry role where you can develop your teaching gift while you continue to develop as a leader.)

CORE ISSUE: It sounds like multisite comes with a lot of issues... why would a church even consider multisite?

Multisite comes with a lot of challenges. But when multisite ministry is done right, it produces significant Kingdom results. **In fact, multisite churches are growing faster and reporting more faith conversions than other churches (including new church plants).**

If we're on a mission to help more people say "yes" to Jesus and take their next steps toward Christ, multisite is a proven ministry strategy that has proven results. So, when you hear a pastor say "multisite isn't working for us," that doesn't mean the multisite model is broken and won't work for *any* church. Instead, it may mean...

- They used the wrong multisite approach, and it didn't work for their specific church.
- The pastor decided it wasn't worth the investment of the leadership capital required to make and implement the tough decisions needed to leverage the full potential of the multisite model.
- The pastor learned that God didn't call him or her to lead a multisite church. That's not a knock on the model, it's an acknowledgment of God's call in that particular pastor's life.

Or, it's possible that the church did *everything* right. The church had the right model, but didn't get the results they desired. After all, the right multisite approach doesn't *guarantee* the outcome. At the end of the day, **the Lord builds the church.**

If you're a church that has the right multisite strategy, but you're getting the wrong results, there are two next steps:

1. **Celebrate.** You took a risk—and we need more churches making bold moves to reach more people for Jesus. Trying multisite and not getting the desired results isn't a failure. It's an indication that you are fully committed to God's mission for the church... and that's worth celebrating.
2. **Un-multisite.** Regardless of our good intentions, we are still called to be good stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to us. That includes being good stewards of people, leaders, money, and most importantly, our mission.

It may seem harsh, but our time is too short and our mission is too big to continue pouring resources into something that's not doubling our Kingdom returns.

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