

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

How Large Churches Are Leveraging a Multisite Strategy - Episode 283

What's Working in Large Churches Now (Pt. 3)

I recently sat down with friends from four large, growing churches across the U.S. to hear what they're learning in this season: [Christ Fellowship](#) in Miami, [Transformation Church](#) near Charlotte, [Sun Valley Community Church](#) in Phoenix, and [North Point Community Church](#) in Atlanta. After talking to leaders from each of these ministries, **four key themes came to the surface** and provided the basis for our current podcast series:

1. They are intentional about widening the front door and inviting people to follow Jesus.
2. They are encouraging people to engage next steps and connect with other people beyond Sunday morning.
3. **They are leveraging multisite strategy as a reaction to growth that enables more growth.**
4. They are focused on shaping a strong culture on their team that leads to a healthy culture in their church.

Our research has found that churches engaging a multisite strategy tend to be healthier in many key areas than other churches, and it's clear that more large churches are using the strategy to increase health and growth—2/3 of churches surveyed with 1000+ in attendance are multisite already, and 1/3 of large churches are planning to open a new location in 2023.

All four of the churches we've featured in this series are currently (or considering) multisite:

- Christ Fellowship has 5 locations in Miami and 6 locations in Guatemala, Costa Rica and Columbia.
- Sun Valley has 6 locations in the greater Phoenix area and one prison campus.
- North Point has 8 locations in the Atlanta area and partner churches around the world.
- Transformation Church is currently considering expanding via multisite.

Multisite Insights from Transformation Church

Pastors Derwin and Vicki Gray “view multisite as a missional mandate to reach more people for Jesus.” They recognize that getting locations closer to where people live makes it easier for people to invite their friends and neighbors and allows people to engage in ministry in the communities where they live, work and play.

Here are a few multisite insights from our conversation with TC:

- Engage multisite as a response to health and growth rather than an attempt to turnaround a declining church. (If your current strategy isn't working, don't try to launch a new location with a new strategy).
- Engagement decreases if a church is more than 20 minutes from where they live.

Multisite Insights from Sun Valley Community Church

One of the major reasons that Sun Valley is “winning” is that they don't respond to opportunities with multisite—they engage multisite with an intentional strategy.

- Healthy multisite churches are already experiencing growth and health, have strategically identified a location where hundreds of people are already connected to the church, have a strong leadership development and leadership culture that creates a pipeline of new leaders, and have an intentional strategy for launching a healthy church... not just a Sunday morning service.

Here are a few multisite best practices from our conversation with Sun Valley:

- The leadership at Sun Valley often go back to the principle of “Consistent faithfulness to their strategy to reach the vision God has given them.” They stick with their strategy—and that ministry strategy is working.
- They are already moving forward with plans for future locations and additional expansions of current locations. They continue to invest in this strategy, because this strategy is helping the church fulfill its mission.
- Their ongoing vision for continuing to expand into future locations causes them to make decisions today in a different way. They make different decisions about how they handle their finances, how they're engaging their discipleship strategy and their reach strategy, and how they're developing and empowering leaders—because they know in all of those aspects of their ministry, they need to be preparing today for new locations in the future.

Multisite Insights from North Point Community Church

The leaders at North Point explained: “For us, multisite has not been a growth strategy in and of itself, but rather a reaction to growth that enables more growth.” That's the common theme with these churches: They're not chasing opportunities or trying to use multisite to *create* growth. Multisite is a *reaction* to growth.

Here are a few multisite best practices from our conversation with North Point:

- North Point only started new campuses because their existing campuses were full.
- Atlanta is a growing metropolitan area—as large numbers of North Point’s people were moving to other parts of the city, it prompted them to open locations there.
- As they developed a growing core of people in other communities, North Point simply responded to a desire to have a local church now in that community.
- Their most successful locations have been ones that are 15 to 20 minutes away from an already full campus.

Final Thoughts

If you hear one thing from this week’s episode, let it be this: Multisite is working for these churches because they’re not using it as a strategy to create growth—it’s a reaction to growth.

Multisite works best when healthy, growing churches expand into new locations to reach more people and have a greater Kingdom impact. If your church is considering expanding with a multisite strategy, [we’d love to help](#).

Listen to the full episode on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode283.

Free Webinar: What’s Working in Large Churches Now

At this free webinar on February 23, Tony Morgan and Amy Anderson are sitting down with senior leaders Chris Hodges (Church of the Highlands), Omar Giritli (Christ Fellowship Church in Miami), and Miles McPherson (Rock Church) to discuss what’s actually working in their large churches now to reach new people and engage people in the life of the church a few years post-pandemic. [Register now to join us.](#)

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