

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Transitioning to Multisite: A Model for Transitioning Wesley United Methodist**

#### **Church to a Multisite Church**

by

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The purpose of this study was to develop a model for effectively transitioning Wesley United Methodist Church from a single site church to a multisite church. The multisite church movement has grown rapidly over the last decade and many churches are making use of this model of ministry. As with any large scale change within a church, it is of paramount importance to consider how the change is made and what the transition plan looks like. This study looked at ten larger (over five hundred parishioners) United Methodist Churches that have made the transition from single to multisite in order to glean some of the best practices for developing this plan. Additionally, the social science of change management was considered in order to adapt proven paradigms for transitions to help in the process of change.

The literature review looked at the validity of the multisite model and how it is best employed so as to effectively communicate the reasoning behind such a change. It also looked at prominent change management theorists from the business and church leadership literature. The review revealed a number of change paradigms such as the congregational change model, Kotter's change model, and the ADKAR approach to change. These could be applied and should be considered depending on contextual circumstances of each individual church and its leadership.

In order to understand how other churches have made similar transitions, this project used a grounded theory approach employing a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to learn from ten United Methodist Churches who have gone multisite. A number of key findings from these churches emerged: (1) the church should develop a plan for the transition; (2) communicating the transition well is a vital component of successful change; (3) having clear understanding of the model of multisite being used and having clear expectations for the site must be a part of the plan; (4) finding the right person to lead the new campus and having them involved in the change process is essential; (5) in order to ensure the best transition possible a change management framework should be applied. While none of the churches interviewed used a framework, it would have allowed the churches to plan more effectively the components of a successful change process. Change is always difficult and this study gives tools to make the transition to multisite more successful.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

**Transitioning to Multisite**

**A Model for Transitioning Wesley United Methodist Church to a Multisite Church**

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at

Asbury Theological Seminary

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Date

**Transitioning to Multi-Site**  
**A Model for Transitioning Wesley United Methodist Church to a Multi-Site Church**

A Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
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May 2018

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has been an amazing journey through the Beason Program. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this program, to have the incredible caliber of professors, and to learn together with people who are doing amazing things for the Kingdom of God. Special thanks go to Dr. Art McPhee and Dr. Bryan Collier for leading this cohort of easily distracted Church Planters. I am especially appreciative of Dr. Collier who coached me through this process and without who this project would not exist. Also, thanks go to Dr. Marmon and Dr. Lowe for creating this amazing program and ensuring that all of the details are in order for everyone to have a smooth experience.

It was an honor to interface with so many great leaders. Those in the cohort with me but also the ones who took time out of their busy lives to be a part of this study. They helped me to see a better way forward and encouraged me through their work.

I am eternally grateful to the people of Wesley United Methodist Church who have nurtured and loved me over these last seven years and made it possible for me to tackle this program. It has been and continues to be an honor to serve with Rev. Greg Porterfield, senior pastor of Wesley. It was his vision and his encouragement that made this project a reality. To the brave pioneers that make up Wesley West, you are the reason that this project exists and it was such a labor of love. I am thankful for the risk that all of you have taken to make a place for people to connect to God and real community.

Thank you to my family; my incredible wife Michelle, who pulled double duty during my travels, putting kids to bed, making sure everyone had what they needed, and helping to lead the church while I was away. There is so much of you in this work as

there is in all my work. I am thankful for a partner like you. To my children; Caleb, Selah, and Micah, thank you for sharing your dad for a little while. I hope you saw a perseverance that you will take into your own life. Remember, “We can do hard things!”

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Overview of the Chapter**

In his TED talk with over twenty-four million views, Simon Sinek makes a bold claim- beginning with knowing their “Why?” is the most important thing an organization, company, or project can do. This chapter reveals the “Why” for this project. It looks at healthy transitions as the main factor in the success of a church moving from a single site model of ministry to a multi-site model of ministry. This will include an introduction to Wesley United Methodist Church and the desire of this church to transition towards the growing trend of multisite churches. This chapter will also introduce the main purpose of this project which is to create a healthy transition plan to move Wesley UMC from a single-site church to a multi-site church. It will include questions that will guide the research of this proposal as well as assigning language to key terms that will be used. There will be an introduction to the rationale behind this project as well as a brief overview of relevant literature. Let’s start with “Why.”

### **Autobiographical Introduction**

Wesley United Methodist Church stands at a crossroads. Over the past twenty-five years, Wesley has experienced tremendous and consistent growth now averaging almost 1,200 in worship each week and a membership of 2,700. There are also large numbers of children in their own worship environments weekly. Three years ago the church completed a large six-million-dollar expansion that included an additional gathering space, a sanctuary to house traditional worship, and a renovation to create a contemporary worship space in the previously occupied sanctuary. This building project

was a rousing success and numbers in all five of the worship services have grown following this building project. With the growth however, come a number of challenges: the church is out of room for children's programming on Sunday mornings, there is no space for additional adult education opportunities, and the eleven o'clock contemporary service is already at 80% capacity which experts say is as full as a service should be (Rainer). If attendance exceeds this number, seats become scarce and people feel as if there is not a place for them.

Despite all of this good news, the reality is that growth at Wesley has not kept pace with the population growth in the area. Even though Wesley has wonderful programming, vibrant worship, and a welcoming atmosphere, the church plant is located too far from many of the fastest growing areas in the community. These areas have experienced and will continue to experience rapid growth with the expansion of the local military installation as well as the growth of the medical college and industry in town. Columbia County, where Wesley is located, was ranked in the top fifty fastest growing counties in the country and is consistently ranked in the top ten school systems in the state of Georgia. Thus, it provides a desirable place to live, work, and worship, and many people from the surrounding counties have moved into new subdivisions with affordably built new homes. While there is still growth in and around the church, this dynamic has left many at Wesley asking, "How can we best reach these new people moving into our area?".

A conversation began between the church leadership and the North Georgia Conference (the governing association for United Methodist Churches in this geographic area) around the idea of moving Wesley into the rapidly growing arena of multi-site

churches. The number of multi-site churches grows every year and seems to have a positive effect on both the new site and the original site in terms of outreach. Having served in this church for almost five years, I would serve as the staff person for this new effort that would seek to create a second site, ten miles away from our existing location, in the fastest growing area of the community. This site would create much needed space for Sunday morning worship and children's environments at the current location as well as creating convenience for those in these fast growing areas while extending the reach, programming, and essential DNA that has made Wesley a church focused on the Great Commission.

This is a massive change for a church like Wesley. While it is relatively young in terms of churches at only twenty-five years old, it has many parts that are well established and well rooted. Thus, a change like this could present problems for Wesley and its members. For this reason, I intended to develop a transition plan that would allow people to provide support and encouragement to this new effort to reach new people in new places with the Good News while maintaining the DNA that has made Wesley the incredible Church that it is.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Wesley United Methodist Church has a desire to move from a single site church to a multisite church in order to continue its outreach ministries in the local area. However, this is a rather large change and the way that change is dealt with in an organization is very important to the success of the change.

The multisite model has become more and more common in recent years. There are some eight thousand multisite churches in the United States which account for over five million people in worship on Sundays (Bird, “Multisite Church Scorecard” 3). While this phenomenon has become more mainstream, most of the literature involves the nuts and bolts of starting a new campus. There is very little about how to bring about such a change. Thus, there is a need for a transition plan that takes into account change theory and applies it to this rapidly growing movement of new ministries. As William Bridges states, “Getting people through the transition is essential if the change is actually to work as planned. When change happens without people going through the transition, it is just a rearrangement of the chairs” (3). Thus, a solid transition plan will help congregants with the change of becoming multisite.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this study was to develop an effective transition plan to move Wesley United Methodist Church in Evans, Georgia, from a single site church to a multisite church by evaluating how other large United Methodist Churches have made a similar transition.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions will guide the research and learning for transition planning for multisite change.



### **Research Question #1**

What defines an effective transition for moving from a single site model of ministry to a multisite model of ministry?

### **Research Question #2**

How have other United Methodist churches of similar sizes made the transition from single site to multisite models of ministry?

### **Research Question #3**

Are there change management or transition management theories that might be applied to such a change to make it more effective?

## **Rationale for the Project**

A project of this nature must be founded in Scripture. The primary reason for a project like this is a very specific statement made by Jesus in Gospel of Matthew.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19-20, NIV). This Scripture is commonly known as “The Great Commission,” and it is the moment that Jesus gives his disciples the plan for the future of the Church. All followers of Christ in all times and all places are commanded to be a part of this commissioning to go out and reach people with the Good News of God’s love for them through Christ. This is the call and purpose of all who follow Christ and thus must be the main reason for this project and for a transition to multisite ministry. The reason to create a second site is to reach more people for Christ; it is to fulfill the Great Commission. No other reason should be the foundation. In *The*

*Multi-Site Church Revolution*, the authors point to this scripture as a foundation. “The purpose of becoming a multi-site church is to make more and better disciples by bringing the church closer to where people are” (Surratt, Ligon, Bird 13). At the center of this project is this desire to create new places for new people to encounter the love and grace of God.

The second reason this study is so important is that multisite churches tend to grow faster and have a greater evangelistic impact than traditional church planting models. Additionally, the multisite approach tends to cost around half of a traditional church planting effort. Thus, if reaching more people is the prime goal then doing it in the most effective manner is a secondary goal. Bird’s research shows that fifty percent of churches surveyed claimed that the multisite model grew faster and forty-two percent stated that the multisite model was having a greater evangelistic impact (“Extending Your Church” 22). The transfer of healthy core values, sharing of staff, and a proven track record within a community allow a multi-site model to have these impressive outcomes. Additionally, much of the foundation for success is laid in the credibility of the church planting the new site. This allows for quicker growth and sustainability. The sharing of resources and staffing allow the multisite model to be much more cost effective than a traditional church plant. The multisite model also creates a proximity to a mission field that is not being reached by the current location of a church. It allows for the church to be taken to the people as opposed to the people coming to one central church. For all of these reasons, the multisite model is an excellent option for many churches and denominational agencies that are experiencing growth, wanting to reach a new community, and desiring to see more people become disciples.

The final reason this study makes a difference is that churches, especially denominational churches, tend to be slow to change and adapt. All people struggle on some level with change, but an organization such as the church that is complex and lead by varying groups of influencers will struggle even greater. Thus, it is of the utmost importance to create a transition plan that takes into account varying models of change theory and applies them directly to the change of single site to multisite churches through studying how other churches have gone through this transition and applying their methods overlaid with the foundational ideas of change theory. The reality is that the transitional models used in any change will determine the effectiveness of the change. If the transition model is not well thought through, than the change will be rejected by those asked to support it. “Transition is not a zone to move through quickly. It is the place where the imagination for God’s future can be born or, in the words of Hannah Arendt, the place that contains the moment of truth” (Roxburgh 37). The moment of truth is defined in many ways by how the transition is planned and implemented. Moving from a single site church to a multisite church is a massive change that must be well thought through and must have a healthy transition plan in order to be successful.

A successful transition plan for a large United Methodist Church such as Wesley will allow other churches of a similar nature to increase their outreach in a proven and effective way, while also using scarce resources in a pragmatic way. It will allow each congregation to maintain a sense of vision and purpose as they shift into a multisite ministry model. This model should provide tools for a more effective transition to this proven format for growing a church.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

The following key terms for this project will be defined as follows.

### **Multisite Church**

Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird define a multisite church as one church meeting in multiple locations- different rooms on the same campus, different locations in the same region, or in some instances, different cities, states, or nations. A Multisite church shares a common vision, budget, leadership and board. (*The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 18).

### **Change Management**

Change management provides an organizational framework that enables individuals to adopt new values, skills, and behaviors so that business results are achieved. Change management is about engaging the passion and energy of employees around a common and shared vision, so that the change becomes an integral part of their work and behavior (Hiatt and Creasey 7). Some authors draw a distinction between change management and transition management such as William Bridges who says, “Change is situational: the move to a new site, the retirement of a founder, the organization of the roles on the team, the revision to the pension plan. Transition, on the other hand, is psychological; it is a three-phase process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation that the change brings about” (3). However, for this project, change and transition will be defined in a similar way. Change clearly involves multiple transitions from any individual or organization.

### **Delimitations**

In order to establish a transition plan for Wesley United Methodist Church it is important to work within the United Methodist denomination of the Christian faith. There are some very unique aspects to the United Methodist Church that make transitions of this nature unusual. Thus, to take denominational authority, a lay leadership structure, and the itinerant system into account, this project will focus specifically on United Methodist Churches that are currently using a multi-site model of ministry and had an average worship attendance above five hundred when they made the change to multisite. There are other relevant literatures that look at churches outside of United Methodist Churches and these will be taken into account; however, the research will focus specifically on United Methodist Churches who are currently multi-site churches.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

This project consulted a wide variety of literature in order to address both the multisite aspects as well as psychological and sociological aspects of transition within a congregation. There was a great deal of work within the biblical narrative as well as consultation with the writings of theologians to make a case for the validity of the multisite model as falling within a biblical framework. A number of writers who have focused their work on multisite specific ministry models were consulted as well.

In the multisite arena, Leadership Network has done the most comprehensive work within the multi-site church arena. Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird have multiple books about multi-site ministry and have been practitioners of this style of church for many years. They also publish a great deal of their research and findings on

the Leadership Network website [leadnet.org](http://leadnet.org). These men are pioneers in the multisite movement and have written extensively about it.

Much of this project was dependent on the ideas around transitioning people, thus a great deal of the literature consulted revolved around change and transition. There are numerous works on organizational change and how to help people make smooth transitions into new ways of thinking and acting. Most of this literature is based in the business sector and explores the concept of change management from a for profit perspective. However, the theories of how people change within these complex organizations are also applicable to the complexities of the church. Many of the feelings and emotions are similar and can be dealt with in similar ways. Kurt Lewin, a social scientist of the mid 1900's, was a pioneer in exploring how people experience change. Most current literature on the topic owes a great deal to his work. In terms of modern literature, Harvard Business Review and Prosci are the two big names in developing change literature. Multiple methods have been proposed and were examined in broad strokes to come to some conclusions about necessary actions for change.

### **Research Methodology**

This project relied on qualitative research methods to find how other United Methodist Churches have transitioned to multisite ministry. This project relied on a grounded approach method of questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews with 10 United Methodist Churches that have made the transition to a multisite model of ministry. These churches had an attendance of over five hundred when they made the transition. A questionnaire was sent to a senior leader who was involved in the transition

from single site to multisite. Then interviews were conducted with the senior pastor or the campus pastor to learn what process or steps were taken in the transition.

The responses and interviews were then carefully studied to see if there were principles of change that were applicable in different environments. Clearly, each church is unique and does ministry in its own context; however, there were unifying principles that arose out of this research that were able to be applied to Wesley United Methodist Church's transition to multisite.

### **Type of Research**

This study was a pre-intervention because it created a framework for a transition plan that could be used by Wesley UMC as it moves towards becoming a multisite church. The research for this project was based on a qualitative study using grounded theory approach to interview ten United Methodist Churches that have transitioned to multisite. The grounded approach provides a relevant research strategy that assists in providing a description of phenomenon, testing a theory, or generating a theory (Ngulube 135). Specifically, the study will revolve around what a healthy transition looks like within a single site church that has gone multisite. One additional focus will look at what the planned steps of the healthy transition looked like. The research tools used in this research were a questionnaire followed by a semi-structured interview. This list of questions was developed out of the literature review and study of multisite churches.

### **Participants**

The research focused on ten United Methodist Churches that had made the transition from single site ministry to multisite ministry. The churches were chosen based on consultation with denominational leaders, web search, as well as word of mouth as to

what churches in the United Methodist community were currently using the multisite method. The reason for interviewing only United Methodist Churches is because of the unique governance structure associated with the United Methodist Church. As a “lay driven” church, it was crucial to discover how the church leadership helped the lay leadership at large through this transition. Each congregation interviewed needed to be over 500 in worship attendance at the time of the transition; the dynamics of a smaller church are vastly different in terms of change management. In a church of five hundred or more, communications, goal setting, and processes have to be very refined and structured. Comparative detail was able to be drawn from these larger churches.

### **Data Collection**

The main means of data collection involved a questionnaire followed by a semi structured interviews with the ten churches. As a qualitative project, this meant that the collection, “involved the participants in the data collection process, ensured that the data was collected in a naturalistic setting with researchers and participants interacting in a face-to-face manner, recognized researchers as the key data collection ‘instruments’, and tried to develop a complex picture the issue” (Anderson 89). The collection of data was done over a two-month period of with a questionnaire filled out followed by interviews that were set up in advance with the ten churches. The questions (see Appendix C and D) were posed to the leaders of the change process and responses were recorded as given. Making use of the interview method meant it was important to keep the concept of “reflexivity” at the forefront. This is the continuous process or self-reflection that researchers engage in to generate awareness about their actions, feelings, and perceptions (Darawsheh 561). Since in this method “the researcher is the instrument” (Patton, 14), it



was important to be aware of my own preconceptions of what was taking place in order to give an accurate account of what was stated by those being interviewed. Additionally, cross-referencing the questionnaire with the interviews as well as methodical coding allowed the research to yield proper results.

### **Data Analysis**

The research data, specifically the questionnaire and interview manuscript, was reviewed multiple times to notice trends and similarities in the descriptions of health and process for each church. Anderson describes the analysis process for this type of research as “inductive and must be interpreted” (89). Additionally, Jeff Johnson describes the grounded approach this way: “Data analysis in grounded theory can best be conceptualized as a series of coding steps conducted on the relevant data provided for the analysis” (263). Once the initial reading was done and similarities were noted, patterns began to develop and reveal themes that were overarching for the process of change. The first set was then analyzed further through axial coding that dug deeper into addressing the phenomenon of a change of this manner. The core categories are then used to guide application. Additionally, descriptions of healthy processes used similar verbiage that was noted and explored.

### **Generalizability**

This project focused specifically on how to create a process for transitioning a single site church to a multisite church. While this seems to fit into a very specific set of churches, one author predicts, “30,000 American churches will be multisite within the next few years” (Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-site Church Revolution* 11). The trend of multisite will continue to be at the forefront of churches from all denominations.

Thus, this research is important for any church that would desire to make the transition from a single site to a multisite. However, this research involved a major focus on change management in general, something that is useful in any church context. Change is a reality and the church must embrace change in order to reach a diverse mission field. Much of what is discussed in this project could be used in a more general way to lead change initiatives, whether that be a building campaign, staffing change, or multisite, change is change. This research is useful in many contexts, urban, suburban, towns, even in the country, and would be useful in any congregation that has a worship attendance of five hundred or more and is considering a multisite model of ministry.

### **Project Overview**

What follows this introduction is an in depth literature review in Chapter 2, that gives definition and parameters to the multisite church movement as well as looking at relevant change and transition leadership literature. Chapter 3 presents the way in which the research for this project was structured to reveal the best practices for transitioning a church to multisite. Chapter 4 analyzes the findings of the study through the interviews and questionnaires. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the study as a whole and a model for transitioning Wesley UMC from a single site church to a multisite church.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

Chapter 2 offers a review of the literature relevant to the goal of establishing a standard for a transition plan in moving from a single site church to a multisite church. First, the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for the multisite church model must be explored. This will not only be helpful in validating the model but will add credence to the proposed change during the transition period. Next, the literature that surrounds the multisite church movement in general is examined and discussed. While this is a relatively new phenomenon within the church world, there is a great deal of writing on the subject of multisite churches in general. Very little appeals specifically to the United Methodist context but much of it can be easily adapted and is therefore relevant to this process. Third, the prominent change management and transition management literature is analyzed to see if there are principles that the church can learn from the business world in terms of bringing about successful transitions. Finally, a discussion of how a research approach yields a more fruitful transition plan is discussed, and a summary of the literature is synthesized to move towards a cohesive transition plan.

#### **Biblical and Theological Foundations for Multisite**

In order to assess the validity of the rapidly expanding multisite church model, a biblical foundation must be laid. There is a great deal of conversation around this issue, and while Scripture does not definitively point to the current iteration of multisite church techniques, many would argue that there is a precedent, and more important, a reason

found within the Scriptures to employ the multisite approach. In order to move forward with a change model for multisite, it must be rooted and argued from a place of the guiding principles of the Church - the Bible.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge a Biblical mandate for change.

While it is clear that change and transition are a part of our daily lives, the question must be asked - is there a biblical basis that gives insight into a theology and practice of change? The United Methodist Church holds that, “The Bible contains all that is necessary for salvation” (*The Book of Discipline*, 64), and within the pages of Scripture is the story of people moving from darkness into light, from death to salvation. This section will look at examples of change within the Bible to note anything that might be helpful in implementing planned change.

### **Missional Imperative**

To discuss the biblical foundations for the multisite model of church is to discuss church in general. What is church? How is it lived out? Where does the multisite model fit within a scriptural understanding of church? The church in the modern world has taken on many different forms – megachurches, house churches, cell churches, town churches, country churches, and everything in between. Each of these congregations would describe themselves as “a church”. Why a church exists and what purpose it serves is the deeper and more elusive question. In order to adequately assess the multisite model, it is of paramount importance to know why it is that the multisite movement matters.

The reality is that the only reason to pursue a multisite strategy is to reach more people with the good news of Jesus Christ. This mission should be at the forefront of

every church but absolutely must be the starting point for any multisite church. Brian Collier says it this way, "...the only right answer for beginning a site - to reach people that no one else is reaching" (Collier 50). The reaching involves an ideal that is present throughout the scripture - a missional imperative. In other words, the whole of scripture points to God reaching towards God's creation in grace, love, and reconciliation.

Christopher Wright says this of mission, "It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission" (*The Mission of God* 62). The multisite movement seeks to find its place within the mission for which the church was made.

The words of Jesus in Matthew 28, known as the Great Commission, are not the beginning of the mission of God or God's people. God has always been pursuing a relationship with humanity, and it has looked different throughout the history of humanity. However, we need look no further for God's instruction to people to be about sharing this mission than Genesis 12:1-3. There Abraham is told to, "Go....be a blessing...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (NIV) Abraham is sent forward to a new land, a new place, in which he is told to be a blessing to the people there. This is the beginning of the missional imperative for the people of God - to go and be a blessing.

The covenant with Abraham is a clear prescription for what the mission of the church looks like. It is both universal and specific: "I will make you a great nation" and "all people on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:2-3). God's intention with Abraham involves a coming together, a making of a great nation, as well as a going out, all people being blessed. This example of God's mission for humanity surely fits the bill

of what a church is supposed to be, but it does not end there. God's first words to Abraham in chapter 12 of Genesis are to "leave your country... and *go* to the land I will show you" (Genesis 12:1, emphasis mine). Wright points out that, "God's mission required leaving and going. And of course it still does" (*The Mission of God's People* 78). The church is invited to engage in this mission that is both particular and universal as well as being a mission that involves going to a new place for the sake of others.

The mission God has for God's people continues to move from a particular to the universal. Throughout the Old Testament, the word of God to the people of Israel, God's set apart chosen people, is that they will be a witness to the nations. According to Richard Bauckham, this mission took place in this way, "YHWH delivered Israel from Egypt at the exodus, with acts of awesome power, in order, as the Hebrew Bible often says, to make his name renowned through all the earth, to make an enduring name for himself among the nations (Exodus 9:16; 2 Samuel 7:23; Nehemiah 9:10; Psalm 106:8; Isaiah 63:10, 12; Jeremiah 32:20; Daniel 9:15)" (37). Thus, the pinnacle activity of God's work in the Old Testament, the Exodus, is to bring a people out of slavery so that they can be a witness to the surrounding nations. God sends Moses to a people who are in slavery and is asked to bring them to a different place for a specific purpose. This is the reality of God's mission within the particular community of faith (in this case the nation of Israel) but is by extension the work of the church in the world as well. The church carries the good news of the new Exodus in Christ to the world around it.

The essence of the missional imperative is carried out in the life and work of Jesus himself. God's mission to redeem God's people becomes very personal in the incarnation. It is this "sending" that reveals the true nature of what God is hoping for

from the Church. God sends Jesus, and as the gospel of John states, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), or as Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* says it, “the Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood” (John 1:14, MSG). John’s Gospel repeatedly uses the word ‘sent’ to describe the activity of Jesus. The sent nature of the Son of God to humanity is for the purpose of calling humanity to redemption.

The sending of God’s Son is not simply an attractional event. Jesus continues the work of being sent by going to people of all kinds within the Gospels. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch pick up on this tendency of Jesus and describe it as, “a Go-To-Them mentality” (19). Jesus goes to the first disciples in Luke 5 and invites them to go to others as “catchers of people” (Luke 5:10). Jesus goes out to Levi (Matthew) on the road and invites him to “Follow me” (Luke 5:27). Frequently Jesus is questioned by the Pharisees and teachers of the Law about going to eat with “Sinners and Tax collectors” (Luke 5:29, Matthew 9:11, Mark 2:16) and about coming in contact with people from outside the religious establishment (Immoral woman- Luke 7; Syro-Phoenician woman- Mark 7; A leper- Luke 5; Zaccheus- Luke 19). Jesus follows this missional imperative into the communities all around countryside of Israel.

Jesus is not just sent; he also sends his first followers into this mission of sharing the good news in different areas. In Luke 8, Jesus encounters a Demon-possessed man who he subsequently heals of the possession. Following the healing, the man begs to go with Jesus, but instead “Jesus *sent* him away, saying, ‘Return home and tell how much God has done for you’” (Luke 8:38-39, NIV, emphasis mine). Jesus sends a man who has encountered him in a unique way to continue this work in a town nearby. In John 4,

Jesus has a fascinating conversation with a woman at a well. She comes to believe Jesus is the Messiah, and, although Jesus does not specifically send her, she goes back to her village in Samaria (people at odds with the Jews) and tells them about this encounter. Those people come to believe as well. There are also multiple accounts of Jesus sending the disciples out to share the good news through signs and wonders. In Matthew 10, Jesus sends the twelve disciples, and then in Luke 10, Jesus sends an even larger group—seventy-two people sent out two by two. Jesus is in the habit of *sending* people to share the good news in places with which they are familiar. Alan Hirsh describes this initiative in this way, “This ‘sending’ is embodied and lived out in the missional impulse. This is in essence an outwardly bound movement from one community or individual to another. It is the outward thrust rooted in God’s mission that compels the church to reach a lost world” (129). The multisite model follows this same impulse, as a sent group of Jesus followers going to specific places within a community that need to hear the good news of Jesus.

The four Gospels share the story of this Jesus, God incarnate, who is sent to proclaim the good news of salvation. However, Jesus’ work does not stop there. He gathers together a group of his followers and gives them explicit instructions, following his death and resurrection. “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation,” read the words of Mark 16:15. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...” are the words at the end of the gospel of Matthew (28:19-20). John’s gospel puts it more simply, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (20:21). Finally, Luke carries this directive of Jesus into his



second writing, the book of Acts: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (1:8). This is all to say that the missional imperative moves well beyond Jesus and is shared with his disciples. This imperative includes the church today; the church must be about the mission of God through Jesus Christ. Christopher Wright says that, “The very word ‘apostles’ means ‘sent ones’” (*The Mission of God’s People* 211). To be about God’s mission is to be sent, and the church is to be sent to communities that need to hear the good news proclaimed in appropriate ways for each community. This is the strength of the multisite model, because it allows effective, mission-oriented churches to be sent to reach people in contextually specific ways.

The mission becomes far more evident in the book of Acts. The Holy Spirit is poured out on the disciples in Acts 2, and they share the good news with all the people gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover. People from all over the world were gathered in that space and about three thousand people come to believe in that one day. It is likely that some of them stay with “the believers,” but many head home to their own towns all across the country and the near east. Those believers gather together in Jerusalem but are scattered throughout the region; they become an incarnate gospel to those with whom they come into contact. Hirsch says, “By acting incarnationally, missionaries ensure that the people of any given tribe embrace the gospel and live it out in ways that are meaningful to their tribe” (138). These believers are all sent as missionaries to share the good news in specific places in contextually specific ways. This is the work of the early church as the Apostles work to share this good news everywhere they go.

The missional imperative is taken so seriously by the early church that in a very short time, groups of believers begin “in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)” The apostle Paul and the mission to the Gentiles is truly a turning point in how the early church spreads. Paul travels throughout the Near East and parts of Europe sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. This results in groups of believers who begin meeting together in each of these towns. Paul tailors his message to fit into the context of each mission field, writing in 1 Corinthians 9:22-23, “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.” While each of these churches develops their own leadership and a contextually specific way of gathering, they look to Paul for overall guidance. Paul’s letters are guides on how to live out the Good News in each of these specific locales. Clearly, Paul sets up a leadership structure and often leaves a pastor to guide the fledgling churches, but he also remains an important part of the church’s life, giving guidance and oversight. This is very much the same model proposed by multisite church advocates. Collier writes, “Multisite lets a church address the specific gaps in proclaiming the gospel in any given community by tailoring the expression specifically to that community” (21). Multisite churches provide what Paul does - an opportunity to be intentionally contextual while also providing the support and guidance that a centralized structure and leader provides.

The missional imperative is a central biblical theme and one that must be present for a church to be effective. This imperative is at the core of the multisite movement. Churches that have effectively transitioned to a multisite structure have kept the mission

of Christ at the forefront and have stepped into the biblical mandate to make disciples as the reason to create contextually specific sites in communities both near and far.

### **Ekklesia**

To engage the mission of the church is relatively straight forward, but the definition of what a church *is* in the scriptures is far more elusive. Often our modern definition of a church as the building down the street in which people worship or the gathering that takes place on a certain day and time falls immensely short of the dynamic community the scriptures describe. The beginning of the Church is complex, takes on many different forms, and is itself formed by different cultures as the church spreads throughout the world, accomplishing the mission of God.

In order to understand what a church is, it is important to know from the New Testament how the term comes about. Jesus first utters the word “church” at Caesarea Philippi to a group of his disciples gathered around him (see Matthew 16:18). The Greek word employed by the gospel writer in this case is *ekklesia*. This Greek word literally means ‘assembly or gathering’. J.H. Marshall points to the idea that, “It (*ekklesia*) can refer to a local group of pious people, equivalent to a ‘synagogue’” (Green and McKnight 123). Jesus appears to be drawing on a commonly understood practice in the Jewish world in which each community would have its own synagogue in which they worshiped and prayed.

The synagogue seems to be what Jesus was drawing from when he used the Greek *ekklesia*, as it is closely related to the Greek *synagogue* as the term for Jewish assemblies of worship (likely from the Hebrew *qahal* which literally means ‘called out ones’). The synagogue becomes the center of daily Jewish life in the time of the Exile and especially

following the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 (Butler 1312). The Talmud claims that there were as many as 480 synagogues in Jerusalem before A.D. 70 (Green and McKnight 782). It is of special interest to note that there were numerous synagogues within the confines of Jerusalem where the Temple itself was to be the center of Jewish worship. Jewish sources indicate that a synagogue was established wherever there were as many as ten Jewish men (Butler 1312). While many synagogues arose out of disagreements on how to understand the Law, it is not a far cry to imagine that, especially in the exilic period, these “houses of prayer” sprung up out of necessity and crisis. There is a sense in which the modern multisite movement is a solution to current crises within growing churches.

Whatever the reason for the advent of the synagogue model, it is clear that Jesus is familiar with and comfortable with this mode of worship and gathering. Matthew 9:35 says that, “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.” Jesus appears frequently in synagogues and even heals the daughter of Jairus, who is a “leader of the synagogue” (Mark 5:22, Luke 8:49). Thus, when Jesus tells the disciples that “upon this rock (Peter’s confession) I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18), he seems to be drawing from a common understanding of assembly of the ‘called out ones.’ The Jews had long since understood their place in the world as ‘called out ones,’ even in the Diaspora, and continued in their faith in local and contextual ways. Jesus pushes this model and metaphor forward, giving it new life and new focus as Christ’s body, over which he is head.

The Apostle Paul is also familiar with the synagogue and uses the synagogues scattered across the Roman empire as bases for his missionary endeavors. The scriptures reveal Paul's regular habit of coming to a new town to share the good news, beginning at the local synagogue. The book of Acts shares Paul's work in Damascus, Salamis, Iconium, Berea, Athens, and Ephesus (Acts, 9:20, 13:5, 14:1, 17:10; 16-17, 19:8). Davis points out that, "These synagogues became the seedbed for Christian faith as missionaries took the message of Christ to new places. Nearly everywhere the missionaries went they found a Jewish synagogue. Eventually, as persecution developed, the believers were forced out of the synagogues" (1313). Paul lays claim to the missional imperative through the use of a scattered Jewish population worshiping in locations all over the Roman empire. This is the impulse and activity of the multisite church as well.

Though *ekklesia* draws heavily on the synagogue model and early church missionaries made use of the synagogues as a starting place for the mission, *ekklesia* takes on a new life in the pages of the book of Acts. Following the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the church grows rapidly with many new converts. This rapid growth requires a new style of meeting. Acts 5:42 says, "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news." The church rapidly grows from meeting just in the Upper Room, to meeting in the temple courts, to meeting in homes throughout the area. Additionally, the church grows beyond the walls of Jerusalem, and we see *ekklesia* used to describe gatherings in Acts in Jerusalem (5:11), Antioch (13:1), and Caesarea (18:22) (Bromiley 219). The necessity for space, as well as the missional imperative, quickly moves the church to gather in

multiple locations within cities and surrounding areas. Often, as discussed before, these gatherings had their beginnings in synagogues throughout the dispersed Jewish populace.

The persecution of Christians following the stoning of Stephen spreads the early church even further from its home base in Jerusalem. Acts 8:1 says, “On that day (Stephen’s stoning) a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” Surratt, Ligon, and Bird say of this event;

You might say that the idea of "one church, many locations" began with the persecution of the first Christ-followers in Jerusalem. When Stephen was put to death and the believers scattered, a new congregation was formed in Antioch. The Antioch group was not seen as a separate body but as an extension of the Jerusalem church and functioned under the authority of Peter and the apostles in Jerusalem. Barnabas effectively became the first campus pastor when he was sent to Antioch to care for the new congregation. As the good news spread throughout Asia and into Europe, new congregations were formed, but they were all connected back to the church at Jerusalem as evidenced by the council that was held in Acts 15. (*The Multi-site Church Revolution* 92)

The early church sees itself as modern multisite churches do, as an extension of the mission that began in Jerusalem. Paul continues this work in his missionary endeavors but maintains the connection to the seat of authority in Jerusalem. Multiple times, the scriptures describe people meeting together in homes for worship and prayer (Acts 19:9; 20:20, Romans 16:3-5, 1 Cor. 16:9, Col. 4:15-16). Thus, “[m]eeting in multiple locations and still being considered one church appears to have been normal for the early church” (Reavely 125).

While there is a great deal of scriptural evidence to support the multisite movement, there are also detractors that would argue that the scriptures do not point to this type of church structure. Grant Gaines, in his dissertation, argues that the literal intent of *ekklesia* is “the assembly” and, therefore, multisite ministry splinters the

intention of what this Greek term implies. Gaines cites the assembly of Israel, or the people of God, from which he thinks that Jesus is pointing back to in his statement in Matthew 16. Gaines states, “that understanding the people of God as the ‘assembly of the Lord’ (Num 16:3; Deut 23:1, 2, 3, 8; 1 Chr 28:8; Mic 2:5) is central to understanding the nature of Israel in the Old Testament” (9). This understanding is carried forward into the New Testament, and thus, it is normative for the church to assemble in specific locales as opposed to splintering throughout the city. Thomas White and John Yeats agree with this assessment and point out that the early Church was solely gathering in large spaces for worship and smaller spaces simply to eat and fellowship (176). These arguments may carry some weight but seem to miss an overall contextualization that takes place throughout the history of the church.

This contextualization is important in understanding how to apply *ekklesia* in a modern understanding. Kevin Nash argues convincingly:

Contextualizing the word *ekklesia* reveals more than just assembly in a single location. It is used in a variety of manners: in several meetings of Christians in houses (Acts 12:12), the church in a city (1 Cor. 1:1-2; 1 Thess. 1:1), all the believers in a region (Acts 9:31), the universal Church (1 Cor. 10:32), and even the saints already in heaven (Heb. 12:23). Additionally, in Acts 8:1, *ekklesia* cannot be understood as an *assembly* because the church was clearly *scattered* due to intense persecution. Defining the word *ekklesia* as solely meaning *assembly* commits a lexical error. (14)

Additionally, J.D. Greear points to the idea that “assembly” is not the uniting principal of either Old Testament or New Testament gatherings; rather, the guiding principal is that of “covenant body” (*Is Multi-site Biblically Sound?*). He goes on to say in his blog that “The new congregation in Jerusalem, for instance, is frequently referred to in the singular, ‘one church’ (Acts 8:1, 11:22, 15:4). However, they obviously met in different times and locations, at least on a weekly basis” (*Is Multi-site Biblically Sound?*).

Greear's argument is based on archeological as well as biblical sources and brings a large point to the forefront. Although there is not direct evidence for multisite churches, there are clearly uniting factors within the different houses in which the early disciples meet. A similar stance is taken in most modern multisite churches, where although they do not meet together regularly, they are joined together as one "covenant body" that holds certain things in common under one leadership structure.

### **Theological Foundations**

Theologically, the multisite model fits well within a United Methodist understanding of ecclesiology (the study of the church). The United Methodist Church, along with Christians from all over the world, make a claim regarding the reality of the Church - it is one, holy, apostolic, and catholic (*The Book of Discipline* 71). This claim involves four distinct parts pointing to the same reality. The church is one; in other words, it finds its center in the same truth as all other churches, that Jesus Christ is head over the church whether that be Baptist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, or any other church that claims the truth of Christ as revealed in the scriptures. The church is one, as Paul says in Ephesians 4:4-6, "There is one body (the church) and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." To say that there is one church, with one head, Jesus Christ, is to make all churches everywhere, to an extent, a multisite church. The church as one already exists in many places, in many languages, and in many denominations but maintains a unity in Christ. The logical step to a



multisite model of a specific church does not make the one-ness any less true for that unique gathering of churches.

Jesus places a great value on this understanding of the church as one and as a part of the catholic (universal) church. Just before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, he prays for his disciples in this way, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:22). The church is one under Christ, and, therefore, expresses itself to the world in unique ways while remaining one. Thomas Oden describes this nature this way, "The local, visible *ekklesia* is the whole (holy, catholic, apostolic) church expressed locally in a particular time and place.... The congregation does not merely belong to the church catholic, it is the church catholic celebrating the good news in some specific location" (705). The universality of the church does not take away the unique expressions necessary to reach people groups in specific contexts. In a very real way, then, contextualization is a necessity. Alan Hirsch talks about this in saying, "The church is a dynamic cultural expression of the people of God in any given place" (143). The church, and for that matter any church, can remain "one" while expressing itself in different ways, places, styles, and languages.

The fact that the church is also holy and apostolic only adds credence to the need for the church to contextualize. When something is deemed 'holy,' it is set apart for a specific purpose. The Church is deemed a holy people as they are gathered together and set apart for the worship of God. At the same time, they have an apostolic nature, which literally means "sent ones." Thus, the church is called together for worship *and* sent out in mission. Thomas Oden says it this way, "The church is called from the world to celebrate God's own coming, and called to return to the world to proclaim the kingdom

of God” (698). The church today, just as it has been throughout history, is gathered and scattered, it is here and going there. The multisite model draws deeply on this nature of the church, providing opportunities to draw together in worship in places that the church feels it is being sent. This model allows individual churches to be both gathered and scattered at the same time.

### **Historical Foundations**

The theology of the United Methodist Church is not the only thing within this denomination that points towards an ability to effectively employ a multisite ministry; its history does as well. There is a strong sense that the mission of the church, the missional imperative, as well as the theology of church, point to a system that *must* reach out and take on many different forms. This sense of mission is clearly evident in the early days of the Methodist movement through John Wesley’s practices and formation of small groups, as well as the early practice of circuit riding in the United States. Even the structures of the current church, with its connectional nature, make it ripe for employing the modern multisite model.

The Methodist movement was, in and of itself, a reform movement within the Anglican Church led by a number of people, most notably John Wesley. His invitation to others to meet together and build societies, classes, and bands in multiple locations for mutual edification, prayer, and study built a strong foundation for a movement that quickly grew into a church.

John Wesley called on the practice of the early church as justification for his organizing followers into societies, classes and bands. ‘Upon reflection, I could not but observe, this is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity.’ In the earliest times, those whom God had sent forth preached the

gospel to every creature. ...But as soon as any of these were so convinced of the truth, as to forsake sin and seek the gospel salvation, they immediately joined them together, took an account of their names, advised them to watch over each other, and met these 'catechumens' ...apart from the great congregation, that they might instruct, rebuke, exhort, and pray with them, and for them, according to their several necessities. (Norwood 53)

The societies into which early Methodists belonged functioned much like a church.

Norwood points out that, “tying the whole together was the network of circuits served by Wesley’s lay preachers. The basic grid was the sturdy triangle which marked the leader’s own regular itineration: London, Bristol, Newcastle-on-Tyne” (35). The societies in these areas functioned much like a church would and were spread out under Wesley’s consolidating leadership. Though Wesley never desired to break with the Anglican church, this model became the foundation by which a new church structure was born.

The concept of the circuit rider was built on this regular habit of Wesley to visit these different societies all over England, but it was in America that this practice took on new life. As the burgeoning nation expanded at a rapid pace, the Methodist movement was there, reaching people in their new contexts. Across the United States in 1784, “there were 84 preachers, 46 circuits and 14,988 members in the Methodist societies” (Ludwig 142). The rapid expansion required a great deal of creativity and development of new models for church. Churches were set up in towns all along the frontier and circuit-riding Methodist preachers would serve numerous congregations, providing teaching, direction, and leadership. Craig Groeschel, the pastor of Life Church and one of the pioneers of the video venue multisite model, compares this early system to a modern system: “the move from horseback preacher to satellite broadcast is simply a shift from circuit rider to closed-circuit rider!” (Surrat, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-site Church Revolution* 91). A correlation clearly exists between the paradigm of circuit riders visiting multiple churches

under their centralizing authority and that of a central pastor or team giving guidance and direction to a group of churches united under one umbrella. Collier is quick to point out that there is a difference between the early circuits traveled by the circuit riders and the modern phenomena of circuit ministry in the United Methodist Church. He states, "Multisite, like parish or circuit ministry, ties congregations together, but it ties them together around mission not necessarily around geography" (37). It is true that modern circuits look very different, and the difference truly is around the perspective of mission.

Not only did the structure of the early Methodist movement have a great deal of similarity to the modern approach to multisite church, but the missional imperative was also at the heart of the early Methodist movement. Although Wesley was an Anglican Priest and felt that the church should be conducted in an orderly, sacred way, he found himself drawn to the revivalist preaching and practice of contemporaries such as George Whitfield. John Wesley frequently preached in fields, near coal mines, and anywhere where a crowd would gather. This practice of field preaching, "reduced to its very essence, is simply stated, 'Taking the Gospel to the people in a new way, while meeting them where they are to address their many concerns and ultimate need for the love of Christ - the sacred offering of the church'" (Copeland 13). Wesley felt the need to take the gospel to the people that most needed to hear it, in a location where they could hear it, in a way that they could hear it. This is the essence of the multisite model - to take the gospel to people who might otherwise not have the opportunity to hear it.

The United Methodist Church has a wonderful history and structure that should aid and encourage it to be a forerunner in the multisite movement. The idea of connectionalism is at the core of Methodist polity and practice. As Bishop William

Willimon points out, “At our best, our connection has been a marvelously resourceful means of deploying clergy where they were most needed to help accomplish the mission of the local congregations bound together in United Methodism” (46). The connectional makeup of the United Methodist Church as a whole is a larger representation of what the multisite movement seeks to offer. Each United Methodist Church is in relationship with all other United Methodist Churches in a geographic area as well as worldwide. There is oversight, governance, and vision given to the individual churches. This same model can be applied to a single church seeking to replicate a healthy pattern for ministry in other areas to engage more people with the gospel.

### **Why Multisite? A Review of Relevant Literature**

The church as a whole, and especially the United Methodist Church, finds itself at a crossroads. Many churches are declining as the world around becomes less and less religious. As Bob Farr describes, “The truth is that if we don’t renovate we’re going to die. Many people would already say that we United Methodists are already an endangered species...If we don’t renovate, we will watch our church fade into the history books” (6). Many authors in recent years have pointed to the demise of the mainline denominations and even to the church at large. Perhaps the renovation that is needed is a replication of healthy churches through multisite ministry models. Statistics show that eighty-five percent of multi-site churches are growing at a rate of fourteen percent per year (Bird, “Multisite Church Scorecard” 4). This represents a huge departure from the “endangered species” that many churches have become. Even though the numbers point to some of the successes of this model, the numbers, however, do not reveal all of the

strengths that this way of doing church offers. While there is not much literature that is explicitly written for United Methodist Churches, most of what is written is easily customizable to that context. This section will explore some of the literature around this growing trend in church.

### **Advantages**

There are numerous advantages that proponents of the multisite movement put forth that give credence to this model. Numerous lists exist: Lyle Schaller lists six (*Innovations In Ministry*, 116); Warren Bird lists thirteen (*Extending Your Church* 13); and likely the most complete and succinct list comes from Dave Ferguson and the power of the word ‘*and*’:

Grow larger *and* grow smaller; Brand-new *and* trusted brand; Staff with generalists *and* specialists; Less cost *and* greater impact; New-church vibe *and* big-church punch; Move there *and* stay here; More need *and* more support; More outreach *and* more maturity. (Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution* 47)

There are numerous advantages to the multisite model, and many are worth highlighting; however, the best reasons seem to coalesce around three main themes - contextualization, growth potential, and the cooperative nature of the model.

### **Contextualization**

Perhaps the key dynamic that makes multisite ministry so effective is the ability to take the gospel to new people in new places and make it relevant to the context. Schaller describes this opportunity in this way, “This (multisite) is one means of making a fresh start in identifying a new constituency and designing a package of ministries to

reach and serve that new constituency who will not come to the present site” (*Innovations in Ministry* 116). The multisite model acknowledges the limited reach of the single site church, which works under a “come to us” mentality. Many factors may be considered impediments for people coming to the single site church, including distance, language, worship style, geographic or perceived boundaries, and identified affinity groups, just to name a few. All of these impediments can be overcome by using a multisite model that harnesses a missional mindset.

To take on a missional mindset is to understand the prevailing culture within a set geographic area or demographic group, and then contextualize the message and the medium to reach the people within that group or area. By taking church to a proximity that is closer to people that are not being reached currently by any church, the multisite church seeks to create contextually specific, missional gatherings that are connected to one another through a common oversight. Alan Hirsh describes how the focus can be kept on specific people groups in order to contextualize the message, “What drove us to this conclusion (missional outreach) was asking *missionary questions*, namely, ‘What is good news for this people group?’ and ‘What would the church look and feel like *among* this people group?’” (37). These questions allow a multisite church to tailor a message and experience to a specific group within a specific location. The effect is a church that can reach across a region in cities, suburbs, towns...it can reach people from all walks of life by contextualizing its offerings in different sites. Brian Collier makes this point in this way, “This is the amazing opportunity of Multisite. Multisite lets a church address the specific gaps in proclaiming the gospel in any given community by tailoring the expression specifically to that community” (21).

Additionally, the multisite movement is making use of many different models of church that allow for even greater reach and more contextualization. Geoff Surratt describes five main models of the multisite movement:

1. Video-Venue Model - makes use of the latest video technology to allow a pastor to preach in multiple locations simultaneously. Often provides different places or worship styles.
2. Regional-Campus Model - replicating the experience of the original campus in other places in order to make church more accessible to other geographic communities.
3. Teaching-Team Model - Leveraging a strong teaching team across multiple locations.
4. Partnership Model - Partnering with a local business or nonprofit organization to use its facility beyond a mere “renter” arrangement.
5. Low-Risk Model - Experimenting with new locations that have a low level of risk because of the simplicity of programming and low financial investment involved that have the potential for high returns of evangelism and growth. (*The Multi-site Church Revolution* 30)

The varying ways in which a church can become multisite make it easier to contextualize for specific communities. These five models are usable, interchangeable, and may be leveraged in creative ways to engage any certain demographic or location. Often, the worship style will be a main component of the contextual nature of the site, with the preaching being very similar across campuses. This provides for a unity of message and teaching, while still focusing on a particular context.

### **Growth Potential**

A frequent reason cited for moving to a multisite model is that the existing facilities of a particular church cannot keep up with the growth of that church. To harness the overall growth potential and ability to reach new people for Christ, the multisite model is then employed. The most recent report from Leadership Network revealed that multisite churches are seeing their numbers increase at rapid rates. The



report shows that eighty-five percent of multisite churches are seeing growth, and the individual sites grow quickly – twenty-eight percent in the first year and twenty-five percent in the second year (Bird “Multisite Church Scorecard” 5). These growth trends have to do with the ability to take something that is effectively reaching people for Christ and transport its already healthy habits to other locations in a contextually specific way.

Part of the advantage of this model is that multisite allows for a continuation of momentum that is already taking place in terms of evangelism at a specific church. When growth occurs, it is important to continue to push that growth forward. Jim Collins describes this as “The Flywheel,” and when the flywheel begins moving, it is important to maintain that momentum (165). Multisite allows growing churches with momentum to deal quickly and decisively with space and building issues. “Besides space, the other barrier that several churches faced or anticipated facing was the financial barrier of building bigger buildings to accommodate growth” (McConnell 10). Multisite allows for growing churches to continue the growth that could be stalled by facilities that don’t allow for more space for people coming to hear the gospel. Instead of taking on a costly building program, the church can rent a space or build in another location to provide opportunities in other areas while alleviating space concerns. Ensuring that there is adequate space at appropriate times allows people who are invested in a church to invite their friends to church. People more readily buy into the vision of growth through invitation as the church provides multiple options for worship in locations that make sense to a greater group of people.

Another factor that helps this model of church to grow and be effective is the ability to promote a small church feel but with the programming and ministry

opportunities of a larger church. While some people seem to prefer the anonymity of a larger church, others desire the intimacy available at a smaller church. Additionally, a multisite church that has larger locations can provide ministry opportunities that a smaller, independent church could not offer. One example of a successful multisite church offering both large and small environments is Seacoast Church in South Carolina. They have campuses of eighty, one hundred, three hundred, eight hundred, one thousand, and five thousand. Their pastor Geoff Surratt claims that, “One size does not fit all” and that “Being one church with multiple locations has allowed Seacoast to grow larger and smaller at the same time” (*Multi-site Church Roadtrip* 24-25).

Likely, the greatest advantage in terms of growth is that multisite replicates the DNA of a healthy church into multiple locations. Dave Ferguson says, “Becoming multisite is not about being a megachurch or getting huge. It is about taking who you are, reproducing the ethos or quality experience of your church, and bringing it to more people” (*The Seven Most Important Questions*). What is at the core of a church is what will be replicated in any additional sites so it is important to only replicate healthy DNA. When a church *is* healthy, the replication of a known name within nearby communities adds an element of legitimacy that is difficult to attain for brand new church plants. Surratt points out that, “While each campus shares an intentional sense of ‘brand identity’ and resembles the original campus in some profound way, few multisite churches come across an exact duplicate of the initial church” (*The Multi-site Church Revolution* 29). This way of doing church creates a trusted name that has specific DNA. It is similar to what Michael Gerber describes as the “Turn-Key Revolution” in business. In his book, he states that, “this revolution provides the franchisee with an entire system of doing

business” (Gerber 83). In many ways, the multisite model of church looks similar to the turn-key or franchise model of business. They both provide a trusted brand that has specific character and values. This legitimacy provides the multisite campus with tremendous growth potential; even when locations don’t all look the same, they operate under the same principles and practices and the same DNA is present.

### **Cooperation**

One church in multiple locations provides unique opportunities for growth while also making the most of resources, staff, and volunteers. The different sites share so much in common that it allows for cooperation among a larger pool of people. The interesting reality is that opening new campuses ends up involving more people and expanding the leadership pipeline within a church. Some multisite experts suggest there are some key elements of the movement that contribute to the feeling of unity and cooperation, including a variety of shared resources such as trained workers, a common vision, a network for problem solving, and a team of like-minded people from which to learn (Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-site Church Revolution* 40).

In terms of sharing financial resources, multisite provides opportunities for new people in new places at a fraction of the cost of a typical church plant. Bryan Collier says, “Multisite can be launched in a community where a church plant doesn’t make sense fiscally” (24). He continues, “Sites are more economical in many instances than church plants, and they can be started and become self-sufficient in areas where we would not normally consider planting a new church” (32). Warren Bird reports that the

median cost for starting a site is around \$145,000 (14). This is well below the overall costs of starting a new church, which can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars to simply get off the ground. Some multisite campuses become self supporting, whereas others continue to be a mission of the central church location and retain a great deal of umbrella-type funding. This depends on the purpose and expectations laid out from the beginning; however, with lower costs and more cooperative staffing, multisite campuses are often a more cost effective alternative to traditional church planting.

One of the reasons for multisite being a more economical approach is the ability to share staffing resources. A majority of multisite churches develop what Warren Bird describes as a “central support” model to manage many different aspects that can overlap between campuses. This can include: human resources, accounting, communications, missions projects, preaching/teaching, worship arts, and even youth or children’s ministries (Bird, “Extending Your Church to More Than One Place” 15). Distributing these staffing costs and allowing economy of scale to provide better pricing on purchasing makes this an incredibly economical way to partner for growth. Not every site needs a full staff to perform centralized support items. One person interviewed by Bird stated, “We have been able to leverage funds, people and skills. Together we make a great team and each campus steps up to the plate when we start a new campus, or comes together to meet needs in one of the communities our campuses are trying to reach” (15). The multisite model allows expansion with only limited additional staff while creating a cooperative staff environment that is founded around the healthy DNA and core values of the original church.

One of the more interesting results that have been noted by multiple multisite practitioners is the increase in lay involvement and volunteerism. One survey found that eighty-eight percent of churches reported an increase in lay participation (Bird, “Multisite Church Scorecard” 11). This is a staggering number and something that Jim Tomberlin, founder of multi-sitesolutions.com, discovered “when people drive more than 30 minutes one way to church, their involvement drops off dramatically.” Tomberlin notes, “More than one-third of Willowcreek attendees were driving that far and were simply not plugging into small groups or any ministries” (qtd. in Smietana 62). A local multisite option gives these same people a closer, more manageable option in which to engage.

Some multisite churches have even embraced the increase in volunteerism as an opportunity to train and develop new lay leaders. Wayne Cordeiro comments, “Our goal for satellites is not necessarily to add locations. It is to develop new leaders. It is to edge these emerging leaders into their own teaching, where one day we can realize them as stand-alone churches” (Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-site Church Revolution* 55). To that, Bryan Collier adds, “Stating a multisite creates a brand new leadership opportunity for those who, now knowing that you need their gifts, begin to use them” (27). The need for leadership and involvement is noticed by people who may not have been leading in their current church setting because leadership spaces were already filled. Additionally, Collier points to the fact that pioneering leaders from one site may move to another, thus creating a need in a formerly occupied role at an existing campus. Again, this creates opportunities for people to step into a role where they can fully utilize the gifts that God has given them. The cooperative nature of multisite allows more people to engage in church and be involved with using their God given leadership gifts.

As this project has presented, the multisite model is an effective way that growing, healthy churches can continue to fulfill the great commission and harness a missional imperative. The multisite model provides an incredible capacity to contextualize ministry to specific environments and people; it harnesses growth potential and creates a cooperative spirit that allows more people to become deeply involved in a church setting. Additionally, this model should have a clear home within the United Methodist Church as it mirrors much of the historical roots of the movement as well as practical structure of the church. However, the question remains, how can a church which has been a single site, attractional church make the transition to a multisite, missional church? This will be discussed in the next section regarding change management.

### **Biblical Foundations for Organizational Change**

Greek Philosopher Heraclitus is quoted as saying, “The only thing that is constant is change.” We see this reality all around us - technology changes, the world changes, life changes, and yet the church seems to encounter a great deal of difficulty when it comes to the concept of change. This propensity of the church to resist change becomes even more interesting when held up to the light of scripture as it relates to the idea of change and, not just change, but purposeful change.

The God of the Bible is consistently concerned with change. Change becomes the norm of life following the events of Eden as a change in the relationship between God and humanity makes for broken reality that necessitates change. God consistently calls people to a changed life, a life that looks different than that of those around them, a life

with purpose and meaning. Often this new life necessitates change—change in location, change of habits, changes of identity, and change of purpose.

Following the change in Eden in which humanity first experienced separation from God as well as the Garden, God seeks to reconnect with humanity through a holy nation. As discussed previously in this project, Genesis 12 is a pivotal point in the story of Scripture. God comes to Abram and invites him to make a change. “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). This is the command that God gives to Abram, a massive change within the life of this man...but there is a reward, a blessing if he is obedient. Christopher Wright says, “Only Abraham’s obedience releases the nation’s blessing” (*The Mission of God* 202). It is only in Abram’s willingness to make the massive change of leaving his country and going to the place that God will show him that the blessing occurs. Much of change management in the church requires a willingness to venture out with some sense that God is leading the church to a better place, a place of blessing.

This change of location and purpose for Abram, to go to new land and create a new nation that will be a blessing, must have been quite overwhelming. As Abram’s story unfolds, we see him try all sorts of techniques to manipulate the process of God making a great nation out of himself and his descendants. God in turn reminds Abram of the covenant, that if he will be faithful in the change, God will bless him and the nations. These reminders can be read in Genesis 15:1-21 as well as 17:1-27, where the change takes on a new form in chapter 17 as God changes Abram’s name to Abraham, which literally means “Father of a great nation.” The promise is once again asserted in 22:15-18 following Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac. There is clearly a volitional nature to

the massive change that takes place in Abraham's life. God's original command has an "implied conditionality" to it, as if to say, "*if you will go...*". This implied conditionality allows Abraham to make a choice regarding the change being proposed by God (Wright, *The Mission of God* 206). Thus, Abraham's obedience and willingness to make the proposed change results in the blessing that is promised. This change has implications throughout the story of God's people and sets a course for the nature of change amongst God's people.

The penultimate moment of change within the Old Testament comes when Moses leads Israel out of Egypt. God again invites someone to be a part of a change initiative, to bring freedom to the people of God. Constant change becomes the norm for the people in the Exodus. But it is change guided by principles and a covenant. Exodus 19:5 invites the Israelite people into this new way of life guided by the covenant of the Law: "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possessions." In this moment, "Israel as a whole is called and chosen to be the servant of God and all people" (Wright, *The Mission of God* 331). If Israel is willing to make the changes that God requires of them, then God will continue to keep covenant with them. Unfortunately, this proves harder than expected and Israel wanders for years and years before entering into the promised land.

The literature of the Law and Prophets is a consistent invitation for people to change. God calls people to "Be holy, because I am holy" (Lev. 11:45), and the Prophets are a consistent reminder to change and return to a covenant relationship. The Wisdom literature not only tells of the goodness of God within the covenant but also gives practical tools for planning and implementation. In fact, Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where



there is no vision, the people get out of control...” (Common English Bible). In other words, people desire people to lead change and show them a direction to go. Andy Stanley describes it in this way:

Leaders provide a mental picture of a preferred future and then ask people to follow them there. Leaders require those around them to abandon the known and embrace the unknown - with no guarantee of success.... We all know the fear associated with walking into a dark room or traveling an unlit path. Leading into the future conjures up many of the same feelings. Leadership requires the courage to walk in the dark. (*Next Generation Leader* 52).

Vision is the proposed picture of what *could be* in the world; it is an invitation to change. This is why the writer of Proverbs is so insistent that vision is important. It reminds people that change is not a bad thing—in the middle of the dark places it points towards the light.

The concept of change moves into the New Testament with the incarnation and presence of Jesus. Mark’s Gospel records, “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ‘The time has come,’ he said, ‘The Kingdom of God is near. *Repent* and believe the good news!’” (Mark 1:14-15, NIV). The message of Jesus is one of repentance. This English word for the Greek *metanoia* means, “a change of mind or thinking” (Green and McKnight 669). The essential message of Jesus is one of change, a reorientation of thinking which leads to a re-centering of action around the Kingdom of God. Mark’s gospel follows this message of repentance with the calling of the first disciples into a changed life. “Come follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). The call is a missional invitation to change the focus of their lives.

In most of Jesus’ encounters with people, he invites some sort of change in their lives. When he converses with Nicodemus, he says, “Unless a man is born again, he

cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). “Jesus is here demanding from Nicodemus a thorough going change of life, a turning around as the precondition of seeing the kingdom of God” (Michel 185). In other places, he tells people to “sin no more” (John 8:11), “sell all you have” (Luke 18:22, Matthew 19:21, Mark 10:21), and even encourages people to “change and become like little children...” (Matthew 18:2-4). The words of Jesus in Mark 16:15 also initiate change, “Go into all the world, and preach the good news to all creation.” Jesus’ command sends a new initiative into motion, a missionary spirit amongst the disciples who now have the opportunity to adopt the change. This change will shift their location as well as their vocation for the rest of their lives. The message of Jesus is a constant invitation to change and to realignment with a kingdom perspective.

Perhaps the most strategically thought out change initiatives of the New Testament come in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Paul’s life and name change one day following an encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). After that experience, Paul begins a massive mission to the Gentiles that involves evangelism and church planting. However, it is Paul’s letters to these churches that he had helped to start that stand out as true change initiatives. As one author notes, “Paul’s letters are evidence of his attempts to diffuse the innovation revealed to him...Paul was a Jesus-group change agent of a distinctive sort. As a rule, a change agent is an authorized person who influences innovation decision in a direction deemed desirable by a change agency” (Malina and Pilch 20-21). Malina goes on to say, “The change agent (Paul) functions as a communication link between two or more entities - that of the receivers of the

communication, the clients, and that of the change agency, the one(s) sending” (53).

Paul’s life and work reveal a pattern of change that is present throughout the scriptures.

Paul’s letters are in and of themselves change management material for the early church. The letters generally follow a specific form: an opening or greeting, an introductory thanksgiving or blessing, the body, and finally the closing. Often Paul will point to the present situation that he plans to address during the introductory remarks and then invites the change in the body. This is done most often through the “*parakaleo* sentences; ‘I urge you my brothers’ (1 Cor. 1:10, 1 Thess. 4:1, Rom. 12:1), and the disclosure formula; ‘I/we want you to know’ (Rom. 1:13, Gal. 1:11, Phil. 1:12)” (Hawthorne and Martin, 552). These informational statements push the readers to make a change from the present situation that has previously been described by Paul. Bruce Malina claims that Paul’s letters do seven things that all change agents do:

Develop the need to change; create an information-exchange relationship; diagnose problems in the present situation; create an intent to change; translate the intention into action; stabilize and prevent discontinuance; and finally terminate the relationship. (55)

Paul’s letters and missionary journeys clearly fit into these parameters for change management and give credence to the process of change management within the church sphere.

### **Organizational Change Literature**

Much has been written in recent years regarding change. Change is an ever-present reality and, in many cases, something that should be encouraged. Today, change happens at a much faster rate than ever before. This is likely due to the increase of technological advances. John Kotter, an expert in change management, writes, “By an

objective measure, the amount of significant, often traumatic, change in organizations has grown tremendously over the past two decades” (*Leading Change* 3). While most organizations seek a sense of equilibrium and naturally seek to protect that state, change can be a good thing when managed well.

The church as an organization has traditionally been slow to adapt to changes in the world around it; however, in this world of rapid change, “[i]t is the opportunity to try new things to reach new people that must drive the church who would be fruitful for Christ’s kingdom” (Collier 9). The church needs to be able to adapt and institute change at a similar rate as its surroundings. Herrington, Bonem, and Furr claim that, “Many Christian congregations in America today need to experience life-giving transformation.... (some) conclude that we can’t change - we’ll just have to make the best of it” (1). Lyle Shaller says it this way, “The need to initiate and implement planned change from within an organization. That is the number-one issue today for most congregations, denominations, theological seminaries, parachurch organizations, and reform movements” (*Strategies for Change* 10). Roxburgh and Romanuk point to the fact that, “Unless an organization (specifically a church) learns to address its transition issues, it will never create an effective change process” (58). To move a church from a single site to multisite church is a large undertaking, one that involves massive change and will require a great deal of change management and process. This section will look at organizational change models to create a tool box from which to manage this change within the church.

The basis for most organizational change management models in recent years has been Kurt Lewin, a social scientist in the 1950’s who proposed a simplified change

theory. Lewin proposed a three-stage change process through which all changes must go through in order to be adopted by an organization. These stages are Unfreezing (identifying when change is needed), transition or change (the initiation of change), and finally Refreezing (when the change is made permanent in the minds of the adopters) (Helms 1). This process has been the basis of a massive amount of literature that has been written in the business world on change management. It will become the basis for the different models explored in this project as well. Other models, with more steps, will be broken down into the three-step process proposed by Lewin to develop cohesive themes that should be used to create a large scale change within a church moving from single site to multisite.

### **Unfreezing**

Organizations, especially churches, have a tendency to seek equilibrium with the goal being to maintain the status quo. Often, people become entrenched in what has been, what has worked, and what “we’ve always done.” This is why change is so difficult, because it often plays on peoples’ fear of the unknown; it invites them to shift from the way that they have done things time and time again. The unfreezing process takes seriously this reality and invites people to engage the current reality as well as the possibilities of what could be through change.

To begin to unfreeze an organization is to begin an honest self-reflection of the current state of affairs. Andy Stanley states it this way, “Designing and implementing a strategy for change is a waste of time until you have discovered and embraced your current reality. If you don’t know where you really are, it is impossible to get to where you need to be” (73). Reality has to play a part in the change conversation, because to

unfreeze an organization is to identify what is actually happening within the organization itself. As has already been discussed, the change to multisite should only be orchestrated by a church that is healthy and willing to reach out to those who have not been reached by a church. Oftentimes people errantly believe that change begins with proposing a vision, but Jim Collins contends, “Leadership does not begin with vision. It begins with getting people to confront the brutal facts and to act on the implications” (89). William Bridges’ book on transitions describes unfreezing as an ending, a losing and letting go of old ways and identities in order to understand new ones (Bridges 4). This is not an easy process but is necessary for any change to be effective.

John Kotter describes the process of unfreezing as “Establishing a sense of Urgency.” Urgency is what comes out of examining the current reality of the organization, when it looks at the general market as well as competitive realities and identifies potential crises or major opportunities within the market (Kotter, *Leading Change* 22). For congregational change, it is described as, “energy and motivation for change that is generated by contrasting between an accurate perception of reality and God’s ideal” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 34). Not only is this the time to take an inventory of the current situation, but it is also a very important time of communication within the organization. The communication piece should not be underestimated; in fact, the ADKAR model (A process for change—Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement) for change is based on “Awareness” (Hiatt 5). In order for people within an organization to undertake a large change they must understand and be aware of the current realities that are shaping the world around them and especially the opportunities that exist within that world. Kotter points out in another article that this phase is

incredibly difficult and that over fifty percent of companies fail within this first step of creating urgency often because they underestimate how powerful the ‘why’ must be to move people from the sense of complacency (Kotter, *Leading Change* 3-4).

Additionally, Hiatt and Creasey say, “Understanding the *why* makes you better at doing the *how*... If you do not understand the *why*, changes can fail even when standard processes are followed” (*Change Management: The People Side of Change* 14). The data and the opportunities must be presented in a way that stirs people to action. The presentation of the change must be clear and understandable, the change must have purpose and direction (Bevan 12). Clear communication will establish a sense of urgency which must exist for any change to be successful.

It often takes a special sense of urgency for a church to be willing to make a change. One must appeal to the emotions of the *why* and not simply the statistics. Often-times churches can be drowning in debt with shrinking attendance and still be unwilling to change simply based on statistics; the ‘why’ must then appeal to something bigger and deeper. Chip and Dan Heath, in their book *Switch*, develop a metaphor of change in the image of a person riding an elephant. They describe one aspect of change as “Motivating the Elephant”, where the Elephant is described as peoples’ center of feeling. Motivating this large animal often takes more than knowledge - it takes a feeling, a feeling that change is possible, that it is able to do what is being asked” (Heath, Chip and Dan, 175). The ADKAR model describes this as “desire”. The second step within this change model takes into account our personal situations as well as the motivations and perception of the ability to make the change (Hiatt 22). Desire follows well-thought-through sharing of information. Information that describes the current reality is important, but more

important is how that information is communicated to those being asked to make a change. The information must invite them to a future and a hope that reflects what “could be” for the organization if it is willing to adopt a change. A sense of urgency to do something great, such as reach a community that is not currently being served by the church, can motivate even the most complacent individuals.

### **Transition**

The transition stage is an in-between time, where the stage has been set, urgency has been created through identifying and clarifying the current realities both in and outside of the organization, and motivation to change has been harnessed through well-used information. The organization is now ready to hear from some guiding force about what the actual change will entail in order to deal with the opportunity presented. This portion of Lewin’s change model encapsulates numerous steps recommended by other authors and change experts, and the following is a synthesis of those suggestions.

Once the sense of urgency is real, Kotter says that a guiding coalition must be created. This team will create and guide the proposed change that will take place which deals with the urgency of the current situation. The creation of this guiding coalition is one of the most pivotal points in any change initiative. It is incredibly important that, “the coalition is always powerful - in terms of formal titles, information and expertise, reputation and relationships, and the capacity for leadership” (Kotter, *Leading Change* 6). These people must be selected carefully and thoughtfully as the guiding coalition can make or break the change initiative. A survey conducted by Prosci, Inc. shows that the number one greatest contributor to the success of a change initiative is “[a]ctive and visible executive sponsorship” and the number one obstacle is “[i]neffective change



management sponsorship from senior leaders” (Hiatt, *Best Practices* 15-16). The group must be able to provide leadership throughout the change process.

The church functions differently in this area of change. There is no board of directors or CEOs to drive the change initiative, but there are still people who have more clout than others within any congregation. To create congregational change, Schaller as well as Herrington, Bonem and Furr recommend creating a group that will plan and carry the change initiative forward. The latter describe this group as the *vision community*, and maintain that it must be “a diverse group of key members who become a committed and trusting community in order to discern and implement God’s vision for the congregation. The vision community should be a part of the change process from beginning to end” (41). People who are invested in the congregation must be a part of the vision group in order for it to be successful. Surratt, in *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, underscores this truth in saying, “people will support a world they help create... Selling the dream is a recurring task for leaders in all contexts, but especially in multi-site churches” (86). This group must contain both staff members as well as lay members who are opinion leaders and able to move other groups of laity into alignment with the change. United Methodist Churches often have a built in group known as the Church Council or Administrative Board that represents the leadership of the church. This is, therefore, often a natural place to begin the change process.

Once the guiding coalition is formed, it must go about the diligent work of discerning and deciding on a path forward. They must ask the question - what will this change look like? The coalition, in essence, creates a vision for change. Vision is “a clear, shared, and compelling picture of the preferred future to which God is calling the

congregation” (Herrington, Bonem, Furr 50). Andy Stanley describes vision as, “a clear picture of what could be and what should be done” (*Visioneering* 17). The vision that comes out of the guiding coalition must be clear and concise; it must provide hope, and it must point to a preferred future that will allow the organization to produce the desired results. Kotter says of vision, “Vision plays a key role in producing useful change by helping to direct, align, and inspire action on the part of large numbers of people” (*Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail* 8). It does all of this by creating a picture of a future that then allows for attainable goals, strategies, and plans to be established. The vision to create a multisite congregation as a change should include the why and the how of this change. This vision must provide a feasible path forward for the whole congregation to walk on together in order to have success.

This vision must then be communicated in an effective way to provide the general population with the information necessary to be involved in making the change a reality. This is what Dan and Chip Heath call “Directing the Rider.” The Rider on the Elephant is the rational creature that thrives on facts and figures and “is a clever tactician - give him a map and he’ll follow it perfectly” (98). The “map” for the rider is the vision, and must be communicated effectively and repeatedly. The Prosci, Inc. research lists “poor communication” (*Best Practices in Change Management- 2012 Edition* 16) as one of the biggest reasons for failure, and Kotter points to the fact that vision is “under communicated by a factor of 10 (or 100 or Even 1,000)” (*Leading Change* 9). The vision must be repeated frequently and in many different forms of communication. The ADKAR method sees this step as the Knowledge step. The Knowledge that is needed is of the vision itself, as well as what skills and behaviors are needed for the new process or

change. This step also includes detailed information on how to be a part of the change (Hiatt 23). The importance of communication during the change process cannot be overstated. The change agents must communicate the need to change as well as the vision for change in order for adoption of the change to take place.

In the church, communication of the vision is especially important. Often, “in the excitement to announce the vision and begin implementation, change leaders often forget that the rest of the congregation has not been a part of the intense dialogue and soul-searching that are a part of discerning and articulating the vision” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 62). It is vital to allow the congregation to have time to process the implications of the change that is taking place. Communication sits at the center of this process. Of communicating the vision, Hans Finzel says, “Communication happens when the person has finally heard what you have tried to get across...not simply when you have opened your mouth and spoken” (199). Another crucial part of the communication process is also listening to feedback. This not only helps to sharpen the communication technique but also allows people to feel heard and that they are engaged in the often overwhelming process of change.

Generally, when the vision is communicated, people will begin to put up roadblocks to the proposed change. Change requires action from large numbers of people, and even when presented with a desirable outcome from change, there still may be organizational or structural roadblocks in the way. This is why listening during the communication process is so important, because it allows those roadblocks to come to the surface so that they may be addressed. At times, organizational structures will need to change, job descriptions will need to be adjusted, and systems will need to be reinvented

to produce the change desired (Kotter, *Leading Change* 10). It is important that the change leaders have the power to make changes and shifts in all of these crucial areas for the change to take hold. Empowerment of leadership not only delegates some of these responsibilities but also allows a broader base of leadership who can reduce the barriers for change (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 77). This process of creating better environments or habits for an organization is what the Heath brothers refer to as “Shaping the Path.” They recommend that, “you need to tweak the environment to provide a free space for discussion...as well as building good habits” within the organization (Heath, Chip and Dan 248). These two dynamics can help the rider and the elephant to successfully navigate the change process. Additionally, it is important to ensure that people have the tools to successfully be a part of the change. The ADKAR method discusses the “Abilities” that are necessary to perform new tasks in the new process, these move people beyond desire and knowledge and give them the tools to participate fully (Hiatt 31) The guiding coalition must ensure that training takes place within the context of vision communication. People will not accept a change that they are unable to be a part of because of a lack of ability. Throughout the change process, it is important to have people that have permission to change procedures and systems so that the change can stay on track; this is what Kotter describes as “Aligning systems to the vision” (*Leading Change* 113).

The actual change involves a complex and dynamic process; it involves journeying through a neutral-zone where many things are in flux. Of the utmost importance in this process is creating strong team of people that create the vision for change, assist in the process of communicating that vision, and are able to remove

obstacles that might exist to the change. The final step in the change process is to ensure that the change takes hold through the process of refreezing.

### **Refreezing**

In order to make a change a permanent part of an organization's life and system, a process of refreezing must take place. This is when the implementation of the change is complete, and the organization begins to reinforce the change that has taken place.

Everett Rogers describes this as "Adoption, which is a decision to make full use of an innovation as the best course of action available" (177). This can involve multiple tasks, but the process must be monitored closely so that the organization does not slip back into old patterns that have a larger imprint in people's minds.

The final step of the ADKAR model is that of reinforcement. It is defined in this way, "Reinforcement includes any action or event that strengthens and reinforces the change with an individual or an organization" (Hiatt 37). A variety of opportunities exist in this stage of the change process. Kotter recommends the celebration of short-term wins as a way to provide evidence that sacrifices were worth it, reward change agents, undermine cynics, keep bosses on board, and build momentum (*Leading Change* 127). By celebrating along the way, people see that the change is working, as it becomes highly visible and people will become less critical of the change. Celebrating also gives an opportunity to re-cast and restate the vision in a positive way. This process of refreezing is vital to the change taking hold across the organization, "until new behaviors are rooted in social norms and shared values, they are always subject to degradation as soon as the pressures associated with a change effort are removed" (Kotter, *Leading Change* 14).

Within the church, the vision for change has taken hold when there is an alignment of ministries, people, and resources around the vision. People begin to function out of a clear understanding of what the vision is, and it seems as if everyone is “rowing in the same direction” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 85). It is important to continue communicating well, to point to the effectiveness of the change, and to align staffing and resourcing behind the change. In order for a church to move from a single site model to a multisite model, it is important that both (or all) campuses see themselves as one church pursuing the same vision to reach people for Jesus Christ. Continuous celebration must occur as the one church that exists in multiple locations makes strides for the Kingdom of God.

### **Research Design Literature**

The analysis of how to transition a single site church to a multisite church is a complex endeavor. Thus, a qualitative approach to the research was used. This approach allowed for more freedom of discovery. The research focused on ten large United Methodist Congregations that have gone through the change from single to multisite models of ministry. The research was done through a mixed method that employed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. As there is very little literature on the specific subject of this change within the United Methodist Church, it is important to glean from each church what process they used in order to bring about the desired change. The qualitative approach was a more dynamic approach to this end.

Qualitative research invites a variety of approaches to gathering information for the necessary research. Patton simplifies the process into three. He proposes that all

qualitative data collection “can occur through interviews, observation, and documents” (Patton 4). Qualitative research, as defined by Merriam, has five characteristics. First, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. Second, all forms of qualitative research involve a researcher who is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Third, qualitative research usually involves fieldwork. Fourth, qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy; that is, this type of research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than tests existing theory. Finally, the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive. Words and pictures are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon (Merriam 6-8).

The grounded theory approach is particularly helpful in taking note of the multiple structures that churches have used for change and drawing inferences from them. As Andrew Sutcliffe says, “grounded theory is...well suited to generating theory in complex social situations, whilst retaining rigour and being open to critical introspection” (45). This method allows different places and contexts to speak to the same issue. Sutcliffe goes on to say, “often the influence on the data of the perspectives, values and contexts of both researcher and participants are openly acknowledged, allowing a richer, more detailed picture to emerge” (45). While this method is not as precise as others, there are certain things that can help the observer or interviewer to be diligent in the process. Irving Seidman offers the following advice to those conducting interviews—

Listen more, talk less.

- . Follow up on what the participant says for clarification.
- . Ask questions when you don’t understand.

- . Explore, don't probe.
- . Ask real questions.
- . Avoid leading questions.
- . Ask open-ended questions.
- . Ask participants to talk to you as if you were someone else.
- . Avoid reinforcing your participants' responses.
- . Tolerate silence. (63-77)

These techniques will allow for a better interview that will produce usable results.

It is important to learn from these churches what has worked well for them in terms of transition techniques. The use of a mixed approach of the questionnaire and semi-structured interview will allow the research to gain a solid view of the sample churches that represent the larger group. Each interview and questionnaire will be closely examined for overarching themes and principles. The findings will then be filtered through what has been gleaned from the business world in terms of Change Management to produce a recommendation for a transition plan for Wesley United Methodist Church.

### **Summary of Literature**

Change is difficult, there is no doubt about that. It can be particularly difficult within the church. In order to think about the immense change of transitioning a single site church to a multisite church, this section has considered a wide variety of literature to make a case for an effective change.

First, the multisite model was considered from a biblical and theological standpoint. In order for something to be effective within the church, it must carry the weight of a biblical and theological perspective. Although there is no definitive text to warrant the use of the multisite model, there are plenty of scriptures that reveal churches



in all different places governed by a single structure. The early church bears particular resemblance to the multisite model. Additionally, the early Methodist movement had a structure that looked much like modern multisite churches. On a larger scale, the church is one under Jesus Christ and thus, the multisite model is an extension of this theological foundation.

The purpose of the multisite movement was evaluated as well. The missional imperative points to the necessity to take the good news of Jesus Christ to people in a contextually specific way. God has always moved towards humanity, and the multisite model seeks to extend the reach of God into communities that have not connected with this message. The literature surrounding the multisite church reveals the fruit of this missional focus. Multisite allows for contextualization in specific communities, which is incredibly inviting to those living in those areas. Additionally, the replication of a trusted brand or healthy DNA of a larger church allows a level of comfort within nearby communities that the site may seek to reach. For these reasons, the multisite movement has shown incredible fruit as more and more churches join this innovation.

Lastly, the necessity for managing change was evaluated. The biblical text reveals the necessity of change within each individual life and also within the church as a whole. Change is often difficult and thus must be properly planned and implemented. The Apostle Paul was incredibly effective in implementing change within the early churches he oversaw. His letter writing reveals a mastery of change management concepts and engaged people in a process of change.

The literature regarding change management is vast and generally focuses around the realm of business. However, there are principles of change that can be applied within

the church context as well. Three large movements of change were examined—unfreezing, transition, and refreezing. Within these larger categories, steps from different authors were provided that illustrated a number of key findings. First, a realistic assessment of the current situation of the church and the surrounding realities must take place. Are there communities or groups of people that the church is not reaching? Are there space issues that multisite might help to deal with? When the church is honest about their realities and opportunities, it can create a sense of urgency that is necessary for any change to take place.

The next phase involves creating a guiding coalition or vision community that has high levels of influence within the congregation. This group establishes the direction of the vision for change and begins to communicate it in effective manners. Communication is key in this regard. The vision must be crystal clear, the purpose must be stated and restated, and the vision must revolve around reaching more people with the gospel. A guiding coalition, or launch team, needs to be formed in order to facilitate the change. If a church desires to make the change to multisite, it is imperative that the coalition rally around this vision and that they use every means possible to communicate the change to the congregation at large.

Once there is some level of adoption of the change, it is important to cement the change through the process of refreezing. This can involve celebrations and re-casting of the vision. This step is incredibly important for the multisite transition as the church must constantly be reminded of the bigger mission that it is fulfilling. There must also be consistent communication as to the nature of the multisite dynamic, specifically, that this is one church with one mission in multiple locations.

In light of the literature, the success of the multisite model, and the nature of change, there still must be exploration into how other United Methodist Churches have successfully made this transition. Are there markers of a healthy transition within this context? Are there steps that multiple churches have taken to make the transition from single site to multisite? To discover more about these questions, I have conducted a qualitative study using a mixed method format to discover if there are guiding principles to make this transition for Wesley United Methodist Church.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

In order to create a working transition plan for a church to move from a single site church to a multisite church, it is important to understand how real life practitioners are dealing with this complicated change. To find out how other churches that have made this transition, there must be research done to study the stories of other churches that have made this transition successfully. This chapter will discuss how this research is to be done, how the research questions will be addressed in order to discover uniting principles that will make this transition more effective in the future.

#### **Nature and Purpose of the Project**

Change is one of the most difficult things that any organization can go through. The church is no different. The purpose of this study was to develop an effective transition plan to move Wesley United Methodist Church in Evans, Georgia from a single site church to a multisite church by evaluating how other large United Methodist Churches have made a similar transition. The research sought transferable principles that can be used for other churches to aid in this transition.

#### **Research Questions**

The Research Questions provide a guide for this dissertation. They give purpose and direction. In order to answer these questions, a Transition Plan Questionnaire (TPQ- Appendix C) and a Transition Plan Interview (TPI- Appendix D) were administered to the participants. The questions within those tools point back to each research question.

**RQ #1.** What defines an effective transition for moving from a single site model of ministry to a multisite model of ministry?

In order to better understand what an effective transition from a single site church to a multisite church, a series of questions were asked pertaining to how the change was implemented and what defines an effective transition. The TPQ questions six through nine, eighteen and nineteen and TPI questions one through six address this question directly. By understanding how other churches view and make effective transition to multisite, generalized principles can be gained.

**RQ #2.** How have other United Methodist churches of similar sizes made the transition from single site to multisite models of ministry?

To identify principles that would allow for a successful transition, it is necessary to understand how other churches of similar size and complexity made the change from single site to multisite. To that end TPQ questions one through five, ten through sixteen and TPI questions seven through thirteen deal directly with the processes and change dynamics at work within each congregation. While every congregation is unique, there exist certain common elements. Additionally, United Methodist Churches have a similar governance that may impact the transition process.

**RQ #3.** Are there change management or transition management theories that might be applied to such a change to make it more effective?

This question broadens the scope to bring in practical social science perspectives and management principles that were used by churches making this transition. To see

how other churches may have relied on these principles TPQ questions seventeen and twenty, as well as TPI questions fourteen through eighteen were used to see what principles, if any, were applied to the transition from single site to multisite.

### **Ministry Context(s) for Observing the Phenomenon**

The research for this project was done within the context of larger United Methodist Churches averaging five hundred or more in worship attendance before they transitioned to multisite. These churches have started at least one other campus and fall within the United States. While there are many churches currently using the multisite model, it is a newer trend within the United Methodist Church because of complicated policies from the denomination.

Each church represents a unique ministry context, from large urban centers, to suburban megachurches, to smaller towns and cities; each church represented their own local context. These churches also represented a variety of multisite models; new campus development, acquiring a struggling church, rented facilities, video venues, and everywhere in between. However, each church was still large enough to have to deal with complex change processes from within the framework of their own church governance as well as that of the denomination as a whole.

### **Participants to Be Sampled About the Phenomenon**

This section deals with the participants involved in the study. Each participant church was represented by a lead pastor or executive pastor that was leading the change effort of moving from single site to multisite.

### **Criteria for Selection**

The participants in this study came from purposive samples; these were United Methodist Churches that had at least five hundred in worship attendance at the time of beginning a new campus. Out of a list of fifteen churches that fit this criteria, ten were chosen to maintain anonymity. These churches have a general knowledge of multisite ministry and have themselves at least attempted to transition from single site to multisite. They were able to point to their own change processes and share their experience of transition to multisite. Grounded theory relies on theoretical sampling. “Theoretical sampling involves selecting sources with intimate and extensive knowledge pertinent to the research questions to inform the research process” (Johnson 263).

In order to identify these churches, multiple denominational agencies were consulted, including annual conference church development offices as well as expert practitioners within the United Methodist system. From the compiled list, different churches were selected from a wide variety of areas and demographics so as to achieve maximum variation sampling.

### **Description of Participants**

From each participant church, the Senior Pastor, Campus Pastor at the time of the transition, or Executive Pastor was asked to complete the questionnaire and participate in the follow up interview. The goal was to speak with the person who helped to shape the transition and lead the change. Because pastors are itinerant within the United Methodist Church, it was important to find the Senior Pastor who served each church at the time of the transition to multisite. These pastors will be highly educated individuals with a proven track record of successfully leading a church through a large transition.

**Ethical Considerations**

In order to protect all of the participants and maintain confidentiality, a number of considerations were taken. First, each participant received an email detailing why they were asked to take part in the study and sharing how they will be protected within the process of the research (Appendix A). This was followed up with a consent form that gave consent for the research to take place and again assured them of confidentiality within the process of the research (Appendix B). The information, including the audio recordings from the interviews and responses from questionnaires, was kept on a password protected hard drive that was kept in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home. Anonymity was maintained for all the churches through the use of a pseudonym—Church 1, Church 2, Church 3... Additionally cities were never mentioned and only pertinent demographic data from the churches were used.

**Instrumentation**

For this project two main instruments were used to gather the data: the Transition Plan Questionnaire (TPQ) and the Transition Plan Interview (TPI). These instruments represent a qualitative approach to ministry and both instruments were researcher designed. Based in a grounded theory approach to research, the TPQ will be considered to refine and focus the questions contained within the TPI. This design was focused around gathering specific information from individual cases in which a church moved from single site to multisite.

The Transition Plan Questionnaire (Appendix C) is a series of researcher designed questions that allowed the researcher to gain a lot of information quickly. The



questionnaire format made use of open ended questions as well as some standard demographic data questions to accomplish two things: building a base line for each church and building a rapport with each participant by helping them to re-engage a change process that took place sometime in the past. This twenty question questionnaire was emailed to each participant and the participant was invited to write as much as they felt comfortable for each question. Specific instructions were emailed with the questionnaire and each participant was encouraged to spend no more the thirty minutes answering the questions. This questionnaire provided helpful information to be used during the interview portion of the research.

Following completion of the TPQ, each participant took part in the Transition Plan Interview (Appendix D). This semi-structured interview followed a set protocol for each interview. The semi-structured approach allowed for a basic framework from which each participant could be assessed but also allowed the freedom to focus on specific information that was provided in the original questionnaire. This was a researcher designed instrument and relied on a series of open ended questions with the flexibility to follow up with more questions. Each interview was conducted by phone and recorded so that a full transcript could be analyzed.

### **Reliability & Validity of Project Design**

In order to ensure that the research for this project was valid and reliable, a number of steps were taken. While qualitative research does not tend towards the hard numbers of quantitative, it can be revealing in terms of sharing a broad picture of a problem and the solution. The grounded theory approach to research was employed with a mixed method of questionnaire and follow up interview, which allowed multiple

streams of data to coalesce around the topic of change and how to manage it in terms of moving to multisite ministry. Grounded theory allows the researcher to engage the data as they engage it to discover answers to real world problems. As Johnson points out regarding a grounded theory approach, “Contrary to many traditional research designs in which the collection and analysis of data are two sequential and discrete processes, collection and analysis in grounded theory are concurrent and intertwined. In grounded theory, collections and analyses occur in a lock-step fashion, each influencing the other” (263). The questionnaire was expert reviewed and allowed the participant the freedom to answer in their own words without further prompting. This information coupled with the follow up interview allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the processes of change within the organization with some prior information from the questionnaire. The semi-structured nature of the interviews used, “open-ended questions based on the study’s central focus which is developed before data collection to obtain specific information and enable comparison across cases; interviewers nevertheless remain open and flexible so that they may probe individual participants’ stories in more detail” (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 314).

Both instruments went through an expert review and were adjusted to produce the most usable data for the project. Each instrument had a specific protocol so as to be reliable and repeatable. All participants were informed of the protocol for each instrument before it was used. The questionnaire had a thirty minute time limit and the interview had a forty-five minute time limit. This kept the researcher and participant focused and on topic. An audio recording of the interviews was kept to ensure that the transcripts and interview notes were accurate.

### **Procedure for Collecting Evidence from Participants**

The grounded theory approach allows for multiple streams of data to be used and for the collection of the data to be a process that builds upon itself. This qualitative approach to collecting the evidence, “allows for a more discovery-oriented approach in conducting research and can be particularly useful in exploring phenomena where little understanding exists” (Johnson 262). The collection of data for this project occurred over the period of two months. After selecting the ten churches to participate in the study, I contacted their Senior Pastor by phone and then with a follow-up email formally inviting them to participate in the study (Appendix A). Once, the pastor agreed to participate, a consent form was mailed with instructions for returning it (Appendix B). Following the Transition Plan Questionnaire (Appendix C) was emailed to the pastor or each church. Once returned, an interview time was set-up to conduct the Transition Plan Interview (Appendix D). Following that, all of the data was collected and analyzed.

This project relied on a two-part qualitative approach to the research. The first portion being a questionnaire that each pastor filled out. They were sent to them via email and were returned to the same email address having been filled out digitally. These questionnaires included instructions to engage the open ended questions. The questionnaire became the bases for the remainder of the data collection process. Within grounded theory, “the analyst becomes more and more ‘immersed’ into the data, while at the same time developing ever richer concepts regarding the nature of the studied phenomenon. In other words, the data analysis starts at the beginning of the research” (Knežević-Florić 16). Often grounded theory employs multiple interviews, however, as

Sensing points out, “A questionnaire is a paper and pencil instrument for doing an interview” (123). The constant analysis of the questionnaires led to better use of the semi-structured interviews.

Following the return of the questionnaire, an appointment was made to conduct the semi-structured interview. There was a set protocol for each interview that consisted of a word of introduction and welcome as well as a statement of the time constraints of forty-five minutes; the interviews focused around a standard set of questions with room to deviate based on the analysis of the questionnaire for each participant. Some participants provided a great deal of information while others left room to further engage certain topics within the interview. This is why the semi-structured format worked so well as Merriam describes this format as one in which

...either all of the questions are more flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions. Usually, specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a highly structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic. (74)

It remained important to maintain the protocol for the interviews to maintain validity as, “The protocol in such semi structured interviews serves as a guide, a foundation on which the interview is built but one that allows creativity and flexibility to ensure that each participant’s story is fully uncovered” (Knox and Burkard 3). The data was collected through a digital recorder and then transcribed in order to be analyzed in partnership with the questionnaires. This revealed the story of each transition and allowed the grounded theory process of, “comparison of facts across cases to assess similarities and differences

to discover the generalizability and boundary conditions of a concept” (Johnson 263). This comparison yielded a great deal of information across very different participants.

### **Procedure for Analyzing the Evidence Collected**

When the questionnaires and interviews are completed, each transcript from these instruments was analyzed carefully. Within grounded theory, this analysis most frequently takes place through a series of coding data in different categories. The coding takes place around specific themes that come to the surface within the data. The coding takes place in three distinct steps: open coding, which breaks down data into themes and categories; axial coding, which makes connections between the themes; and selective coding which chooses a core category and explores its relation to the other categories (Sutcliffe 47). These comparative categories allow for data to be analyzed and link ideas together to create workable theories regarding the data. This process was used throughout the project. In order to limit researcher bias, an independent reader also read the questionnaires and interviews to compare and contrast patterns against those found by the researcher.

The analysis of the Transition Plan Questionnaire began upon receipt of the final copy from the participants. They were coded according to key words and themes to see if there were themes that needed to be further explained in the Transition Plan Interview. Each Questionnaire was read multiple times with an eye for patterns and processes that were relevant to change and change theory. They were color coded for so as to be easily searched and used following the interviews.

Analyzing the Transition Plan Interviews was a much more involved process. The data was more extensive and the transcript had to be read multiple times and coded more thoroughly. Although similar information was gleaned from the interviews, there was more depth and length to work through than the questionnaires. Key words or phrases around change and process were noted and categorized along with the previous categories.

All of the analysis kept in mind the comparison and contrast of the participant transcripts to observe themes and analyze how the process of change occurred in each place. These similar process cues created the framework for an understanding of how to create effective change in order to move from single site to multisite.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

Having a well thought through transition plan to enact change can drastically increase the effectiveness and the health of the change. To this end, this project seeks to create an effective transition plan for Wesley United Methodist Church to move from a single site church to a multisite church. To more fully understand what is involved with a transition from single site to multisite, ten churches of similar size and scope within the United Methodist Church were consulted. What follows in this chapter is an explanation of the findings regarding how these churches went through this change process in order to create an overall plan for Wesley United Methodist to follow.

#### **Participants**

This study involved ten different churches within the United Methodist Church from all over the United States. Each church has at least one additional campus that they have launched and were worshipping at least five hundred people at the time they launched their second campus. The average worship attendance before beginning a second campus of these churches ranged between seven hundred and forty-five hundred. All the churches have shown growth by starting a new campus; many have since started additional campuses.

Table 4.1

<b>RESEARCH CHURCH</b>	<b>AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE BEFORE LAUNCH OF SECOND CAMPUS</b>	<b>CURRENT AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>NET CHANGE</b>	<b>NUMER OF CAMPUSES (TOTAL INCLUDES MAIN CAMPUS)</b>
<b>CHURCH 1</b>	1600	2400	800	6
<b>CHURCH 2</b>	2000	2145	145	2
<b>CHURCH 3</b>	700	750	50	2
<b>CHURCH 4</b>	1000	1458	458	4
<b>CHURCH 5</b>	4500	6000	1500	3
<b>CHURCH 6</b>	2030	3777	1747	4
<b>CHURCH 7</b>	1600	2450	850	5
<b>CHURCH 8</b>	1200	1700	500	2
<b>CHURCH 9</b>	1050	1200	150	2
<b>CHURCH 10</b>	2600	2850	250	2

Each of the churches researched were of different ages and each senior pastor had a different tenure when the transition was made to begin multisite ministry. A total of 6 of the pastors were the founding pastors of the churches in the study.



Table 4.2

<b>RESEARCH CHURCH</b>	<b>AGE OF CHURCH</b>	<b>YEARS OF TENURE</b>	<b>FOUNDING PASTOR</b>
<b>CHURCH 1</b>	19	19	Yes
<b>CHURCH 2</b>	127	28	No
<b>CHURCH 3</b>	11	11	Yes
<b>CHURCH 4</b>	13	13	Yes
<b>CHURCH 5</b>	102	15	No
<b>CHURCH 6</b>	18	18	Yes
<b>CHURCH 7</b>	21	21	Yes
<b>CHURCH 8</b>	15	15	Yes
<b>CHURCH 9</b>	27	13	No
<b>CHURCH 10</b>	55	24	No

This research represents a number of different roles within these churches. Four of the respondents were Senior or Lead Pastors who were present when the transition to multisite was made, three of them were campus pastors of the first site, and three served in the role of Director of Multisite Ministry or Campus Expansion. This last category is one that fits most closely with churches that have more than one multisite campus; however, each of the ones involved in this survey were involved in the planting of the first additional campus. This last group, while unexpected as respondents, followed the same patterns of answers as the other respondents and tended to occupy an executive function for the campuses.

These participants also represent a number of different models of multisite ministry. Six of the ten churches use live teaching only at their campuses. One employs a video venue model with the use of bi-vocational campus pastors. Three of them use a mixture of video and live preaching at their campuses. All gave different reasons for the model they employ in terms of preaching and leadership.

### **Research Question #1: Description of Evidence**

**RQ #1.** What defines an effective transition for moving from a single site model of ministry to a multisite model of ministry?

When asked to define characteristics of an effective transition from single site to multisite churches, many different answers were given; however, all of the answers fit into five larger categories: clear communication based in vision, creation of momentum, defined benchmarks and expectations, clear understanding amongst staff and key leaders, and finally right people in the right places. According to the questionnaires and interviews, these five characteristics help to define an effective transition. The following paragraphs will unpack the findings around each.

The largest characteristic of an effective transition was that it has to fit into the larger vision of the church and has to be communicated within that context. One respondent described it this way, “When talking about the new campus, it is my job to help people understand how it fits into our mission and it’s the only way to make ‘them’ ‘us.’” Another pastor described it in this way, “The only way to get someone to do something that is inconvenient (and planting a new site is inconvenient) for them is to

couch it in reaching lost people, that is what we are all about and they will get on board for that.” All ten of the interviews referenced communicating in a way that helps people to understand the vision of the church is to reach other people for Christ, and that this is the purpose behind launching the second campus. One of the pastors interviewed stated that, “we had multiplication as a part of our DNA from the very beginning, so when we had the opportunity, it made sense; all we had to do is remind our people that this is who we are and this is what we do.” Other reasons, such as convenience and distance just don’t seem to allow people to coalesce around the vision for multisite; thus, all respondents agreed on this one thing—that it has to be about a kingdom vision and it has to be communicated clearly and frequently.

Half of the churches interviewed stated that the transition should be fueled with momentum and have some sense of fruitfulness that is experienced. When the announcement is made that the church is expanding, that its reach and fulfilling its vision of reaching people for Christ, there should be a sense of momentum crated amongst the congregation. One pastor stated that there should be, “energy and excitement about missioning out, going to people where they are should create momentum both here and there.” While a sense of momentum can be hard to quantify, one pastor said it in this way, “It should be energizing to the congregation; if you’re having to push really hard and its sapping a lot of energy that’s not a win for me.” Additionally, there should be some fruit associated with the work of starting the new campus. In order for the transition to be effective, there have to be people involved. Some of these people should be from the sending campus, but in order for it to be healthy, many of the churches stated that it needed to connect with unreached people in the new location as well. Four of the

churches mentioned a movement of people interested in connecting to the launch team early on, preferably both people from the existing church and from the new community. In one way or another, these churches stressed that this transition must create energy amongst both committed people and new people; it must engage people in the process of launching something new and create space for new people to engage in new opportunities now available at the sending campus.

While each church used different language to describe it, six of them pointed to an effective transition having some sort of plan in place with defined expectations and benchmarks. Only three of the churches described a formalized plan for transition and roll-out of the new campus. That does not mean the others did not have plans or expectations for the transition, they just did not have a formalized plan they were working from. Four of the churches defined their plan around a number for the launch team before the transition was fully implemented. These numbers varied but the average was 125 people committed to the launch team. Three of them talked about a benchmark of financial sustainability over a graduated period. While there were differences in how this was communicated, two of the three pushed for self sufficiency in funding within three years of the launch of the campus. Two different churches stated that their transition would have gone more smoothly had they defined expectations up front in terms of staffing, budgeting, and autonomy. In each of these cases, the launch was successful; however, in hindsight, they feel the transition could have been easier had these things been clarified early on. Two of the churches interviewed also stressed that even when there is a plan and an ideal, nothing is written in stone in launching a new campus; there must be a commitment to flexibility for the transition to be successful.

One church leader stated it this way, “MOVE! You’re never going to have a perfect plan, so move and adjust; that’s the only way to be responsive to opportunities.”

While this easily could have fit under clear communication, it seemed of such importance to warrant its own category. Three churches from the group mentioned the importance of understanding the model of multisite church amongst the staff and key leaders. This coalesced around understanding why this would be attempted, how it would be implemented, and what model would be used. One of the churches described a difficulty in the transition because of a lack of understanding for the need of the second campus amongst staff. According to this pastor, “The vision was not relayed well amongst the very people who needed to communicate it to the congregation as a whole.” One other pastor described, “having to explain why we wanted the second campus to use the same worship format as our main campus.” In each case, this was attributed to a lack of understanding of the purpose or methodology of the multisite model being used. To this end, one of the pastors recommended, “Be very clear about what model you are going to use (video or live), what will look and feel like the main campus, and how staff will talk about what it is that we are doing together.” This sense of staff understanding must also leak down to the key leaders both in the new campus and the original campus. Everyone must grasp how the campus should look and what will be global and what will be local to each campus.

The last common factor mentioned for defining an effective transition was getting the right people involved. Four of the churches that participated mentioned this. All four of them talked about ensuring you get the right person to serve as the campus pastor, that this was, “the most important thing to ensure the success of the campus launch”. One

other church mentioned that, “The campus pastor is everything” for the transition. Yet another pastor mentioned that the first campus they planted they, “Underestimated the need to invest in the campus pastor and his family and it was to all of our detriment.” Getting the right people in lead roles was very important to these churches. Digging a little deeper, two of them stated that having the right people on the launch team is equally important. “We don’t go unless we have leaders who are in that location,” was how one pastor framed it. Of interest to note is that while only four of the churches specifically mentioned having the right people as a part of an effective transition, all ten discussed ensuring that adequate time was spent training key leaders on the launch team.

### **Research Question #2: Description of Evidence**

**RQ #2.** How have other United Methodist churches of similar sizes made the transition from single site to multisite models of ministry?

As with any transition in different organizations, there were ten different processes the study churches followed for making the transition from single site to multisite. Each church has unique leadership, unique styles, and unique contexts, all of which make each transition unique. There were, however, some crossover in terms of how these churches went about making this transition.

For every church, the process began with a period of discernment and prayer. This period of discernment was brought on by many different factors. For one church, it was a group of people driving a distance wanting to reach their own community; for five churches, it was an opportunity to acquire property given by the conference or district; for two churches, it was a sense that it was time to create something new in order to reach

new people. Each church had a particular group involved in the discernment process (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

**Involvement in Discernment Process**

Senior Staff	All Staff	Admin Board	Elders or leadership team	Conference Staff
100%	20%	70%	30%	80%

Each group had various involvement in the decision making process. But as seven of the churches described it, the dissemination process has to edge its way out to larger and larger circles. “Drip it before you drop it,” quipped one pastor in regards to pushing the idea of multisite out. “You have to see if there is buy in from those who are most invested in the church,” stated another senior leader.

Of particular interest in this study is the role of the United Methodist Structures on the decision making and transition process. While all ten churches mentioned receiving permission from the Bishop of their conference, only eight of the ten churches stated that the District Superintendent, Director of Church Development, or Bishop played a major role in the decision and transition to multisite. Five of the churches were offered property, buildings that had been closed, and/or dying churches with the opportunity to revitalize; two received grant money and funding; one began with a direct conversation with the Bishop about how to bring about growth in the conference; and two mentioned the support and excitement of the District Superintendent. Additionally, four churches discussed the role of the appointive system in terms of brining on additional clergy staff to make the transition possible.

Once the decision was made to pursue the multisite model of ministry and the appropriate permissions were granted within the structures of the church system, four churches stated that you must decide how the church is going to be a multisite church—in other words, will it be video venue, live preaching, and what will the reporting structure look like. Additionally, three churches talked about how budgets will be handled as a very important aspect that should be decided in advance of rolling out to the whole congregation.

Only one church did not launch the multisite idea to the congregation from the pulpit or stage. Each church did so in differing time lines and at different frequencies but nine of them described the main form of communication for this change as, “Coming from the front during worship.” Additionally, seven churches described print and or email blasts regarding the launch of a new campus. Seven of the churches began their communication twelve months in advance of the official launch. One began nine months in advance and one began three months in advance. The outlier that did not communicate from the stage began a letter and email writing campaign to people in the specific geographic area six months in advance of the launch of worship. Four of the churches interviewed stressed the importance of consistent and clear communication on a regular basis regarding the launch of the second campus. “You must give good lead time for people to understand the goals and get on board with the vision,” stated one pastor.

Each of the churches participating in the project developed a launch team of some type. For one church, it was a group of people driving in from another area that wanted to reach people in that community; the other nine had a group of people that volunteered to begin something new. This group, measuring between 50-150 depending on the



church, met together pre-launch to develop teams, volunteer roles, and connect to the vision of planting the new campus. One church described those meetings as bi-weekly for six months. At the beginning, it was all about the vision of the church as a whole, which then moved to implementing that vision in another location, to expectations and specific action items. Another church spent there six months with the launch team studying hospitality in the scriptures in hopes of creating an environment of hospitality at the new campus.

Each church described some pain points along the way during the transition. One church claimed they did not communicate enough with the original church as the launch approached and it created some distrust between the two campuses. Another church reported giving too much autonomy to the launch team and campus pastor to the point that the church does not resemble the church it is connected to. Five of the churches talked about having to learn on the fly about shifting staff roles to accommodate the strain on the existing structure. This included everything from how the senior pastor is viewed in the organizational chart to what the role of the music and children's directors have with the new staff, to how the audio visual teams create content. All of these churches pointed out that they had not through these issues but had to learn to adjust on the fly.

### **Research Question #3: Description of Evidence**

**RQ #3.** Are there change management or transition management theories that might be applied to such a change to make it more effective?

Of the ten churches who responded to the questionnaire and participated in a follow up interview, none of them consulted any change management resources before embarking on the transition from single site to multisite. Only one of the ten pointed to having any outside consulting and it was from attending two multisite conferences with the Unstuck Group. None of the churches in the study could point to a way that change management principles could have made the transition any more effective.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

After careful parsing of the questionnaires and interviews that each of the ten churches took part in, there were a few themes that jumped to the top. They fit within the framework of creating a transition plan to move from a single site to a multisite church and were identified by the participant churches as very important.

- 1. Develop a detailed plan for the transition.**

Developing and implementing a plan for the transition is of huge importance. It must be able to be shared easily and have an effective timeline with enough lead time to develop the team necessary to launch the campus.

- 2. Communication is a vital component.**

The most important thing in moving a single site church to a multisite church as identified by churches who have made this transition is communication. How, what, and when a church communicates a large scale transition like a move to multisite makes all the difference. The communication must be clear and it must be based in the overall vision of the church.

**3. Understand the model being used and the expectations of the campus.**

Everyone must have a clear understanding of what sort of campus is being developed and why. The church needs to be clear about it being live preaching, video venue, or mixed communication and the reasoning behind it. Where the new campus will meet and what the worship will look like needs to be spelled out from the beginning. Expectations about numbers in worship, what will be shared globally and what will be done locally, and budgeting all need to be laid out clearly.

**4. Finding the right person/people to lead the new campus is essential.**

Finding the right person to lead the new campus must be considered. This person needs to be bought in to the vision of the existing church, understand the goals and directives, and fit into the model decided on by the sending congregation. Additionally, a launch team of some size with a mix of gifts and graces should be considered in the transition so as to give the new campus a leg up from the beginning.

**5. Employ change management framework to smooth out the rough edges.**

All of the churches that took part in this study pointed to areas that could have been improved during their transition; however, none of them employed any change management resources to help them in the planning or implementation of the shift. There are some frameworks that exist within this realm of social science which would likely help to smooth out some of the difficulties experienced in these transitions.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

The purpose of this study was to create a transition plan for Wesley United Methodist Church to move from a single site church to a multisite church. Because of the difficult nature of a major transition in a large church, it was important to discover how other churches of similar size have made a similar transition. This information, as well as literature surrounding both the multisite movement and change management, was consulted in order to understand principles that could be applied to such a plan. From this research, a few major themes came to light. This chapter will discuss the application of these themes and recommendations for ministry.

#### **Major Findings**

##### **Develop a Detailed Plan for the Transition**

Of the ten churches this project studied, only four of them had a written plan to make the transition from single site to multisite. The undertaking of such a large transition needs to have a well developed and thought out plan in order to be successful. It must be detailed enough that people can easily follow it at the same time allowing for flexibility as contextually specific issues come up. One author described it this way, “Launching a campus is one of the largest, most intricate, projects your church will ever manage. It involves nearly every department, requires countless conversations with the community, and will always come with unexpected challenges and opportunities. Only

you can your team can craft a detailed plan that will work for you” (D’angelo and Stigile 42). There are many steps that must be well thought through before the new campus is presented in any large environment. Many of these cross over into the other major findings of this project, but it is worth stating that there must be a plan that holds them all together.

The churches that took the time to create a plan ahead of time tended to describe their change efforts in more positive terms. There was less struggle to get people on board because they had accounted for what this new work would look like, how it would fit into the overall organizational structure, and what the steps would be to get them to a fully functioning second location. These churches knew when and how they would communicate the move to launch the new campus, they knew what the lead up to launch would look like, they had some idea of where the new campus would meet, and they knew what benchmarks they needed to hit in order for the work to be sustainable. In other words, they were willing to pause in the midst of the excitement of doing something new and count the cost.

In Luke 14:28, Jesus describes discipleship in this way, “But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it?” (NLT). Jesus points out that there must be some plan, some process through which decision making takes place. A well thought through, detail rich plan for the new campus allows people to buy in without having all the answers. They know that someone has “counted the cost” and at least considered some of the hardship and difficulty this change could have upon the church. Nehemiah approached the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s wall with a plan; it was not a

haphazard work that took shape as it went. He knew what needed to be done and set up a process to allow that work to take place. We must be willing to do the hard work in the midst of the excitement of planting a new campus to truly plan the work that must take place.

John Kotter describes a functional plan in this way; "...it provides focus by, eliminating many possibilities, pointing specifically to areas that need to change, and stating a clear target" (Kotter, *Leading Change* 80). A well formed plan focuses on people's notion of what is going to take place, what it will look and feel like, how this change will affect different areas of their lives, and sets realistic goals or benchmarks that allow people to know what the expectations are in advance. Bryan Collier of the Orchard recommends these planning conversations revolve around what core ministries will be offered, what staffing will look like, who will be involved in the core group, what the site costs will be, and who needs to grant permission (Collier 61-68). In regards to a transition plan, House and Allison say, "This written proposal sets forth the purposes, goals, changes, structures, policies, responsibilities, as well as a timeline for the change to the new model" (208). The plan needs to have all of these elements in some formalized manner while still realizing that things will change throughout the process. A formalized plan that lays out how the change will look will help with overall buy-in as well as answering many questions in advance of them being asked.

In every church, the plan for the launch of a second campus will look very different as context mandates that different things are emphasized; however, it is clear that a solid plan that is set in place before presenting it to the congregation as a whole is of the utmost importance. The research showed varying parts in each instance, but a plan

should contain the following: what the purpose of planting the new campus is, what model will be used in terms of teaching, the location (with supporting demographic research), a campus or preaching pastor for the site, gathering a launch team, an appropriate budget with financial guidance on how cash flow will be handled between campuses, and a timeline for rollout with benchmarks throughout the process. This sort of plan would answer many questions in advance while allowing room for contextualization and the unexpected difficulties that seem to happen in every situation.

**Communication is a vital component.**

Once a plan has been established, that plan must be communicated well and repeatedly to the congregation as a whole. This communication should be based in the vision and mission of the church itself and be specific enough to help people know how to behave and what is happening next. It is important to know the larger church context in order to know exactly how to best communicate this change.

Creating solid communication that moves people to action and allows them to buy into the vision is complicated but must be soundly rooted in the individual church's overall vision. If the church does not have a heart to reach new people, they will not buy into the vision of creating a new place for new people to attend. Every church that was a part of this project discussed the importance of casing the change in the vision of reaching new people. "The vision," one pastor said, "is the only thing that will make them do something that is uncomfortable and difficult. And starting a new campus is both of those things." Geoff Surratt says it this way, "Effective vision casting clearly articulates the advantages of employing a multisite strategy in ministry" (*The Multisite-Church Revolution* 88). The vision reminds people of the "why" for the change that is



taking place. Jeffrey Hiatt says that, “Understanding the why makes you better at doing the how. If you do not understand the why, changes can fail even when standard processes are followed” (14). Herrington, Bonem, and Furr point out that, “The intent of the communication stage is to generate a high level of understanding and commitment to God’s vision for the congregation. Failure to effectively communicate the vision can temporarily or permanently damage the entire transformation process” (62). Leadership must understand the plan and be able to articulate the plan within the context of the mission of the church in order for buy-in to take place.

Timing matters in regard to communicating the plan for multisite ministry. The congregation must be given enough lead time to understand the model, ask any questions, and consider at what level they will support this project. The research for this project showed that communication of the vision for multisite ministry should begin around twelve months out or at minimum nine months. Two churches had shorter time windows, but both pointed to the need for an extended period of time to aid with understanding amongst the congregation as well as rallying people around the new campus. This does not imply that the communication has to be immediately in front of everyone. One pastor recommended the “Drip it before you drop it” technique in which you communicate the vision to a small circle of invested individuals and then move out to larger and larger circles of influence. This allows people with the most at stake to have input early before the vision is cast before the larger groups. Four of the churches interviewed in this project talked about when to announce a move towards multisite; all of them used the church’s “birthday” as a way to leverage the vision and mission in an outward focused way. Author Daniel Pink agrees that the timing of an announcement of change matters:

“There is a phenomenon discovered by three researchers in Pennsylvania, known as the Fresh Start Effect. What it shows is that we are more likely to engage in behavior change at an individual level on certain dates” (Carucci). Each church should consider their own context in making decisions about when and how to communicate, knowing that lead time, who and when, and important dates will make the acceptance rate higher.

John Kotter states that organizations, “Under communicate the vision by a factor of 10 (or 100 or Even 1,000)” (*Leading Change* 9). He goes on to say, “the real power of a vision is unleashed only when most of those involved in an enterprise or activity have a common understanding of its goals and directions” (*Leading Change* 87). One pastor I have worked with is prone to say, “In the absence of information people create their own.” This is especially true in a change process like moving to multisite ministry. Even the scriptures affirm this reality. Proverbs 29:16 says, “Where there is no vision the people cast off restraint” (NRSV). Vision, and more aptly the communication of vision, must be done well in order for people to get on board and support the effort. While most people desire to support the work of their church, change is always frightening. and if the change is not effectively communicated over and over again, people will create their own narratives; they will “throw off restraint”. Often in the church, the most effective means of communication is from the stage or pulpit; this is where the overall vision should be shared, but it must also reach deep into the organization through every communication means possible. Over the decided on time frame, the vision must find its way into every worship experience, whether as announcements, part of the sermon, or information sharing the vision to become multisite must be repeated as much as possible.

### **Understand the model being used and the expectations of the campus.**

While this was discussed briefly in the planning phase of the findings, the research showed that many churches struggled with defining and clarifying what the model of multisite they were going to employ would look like and what the expectations of that site would be. Surratt points to a number of different models that could be employed:

*Video-Venue Model*—with this model, the church utilizes video cast sermons (live or previously recorded from the central campus). The multi-site can offer distinct worship style to fit the context of the community. The role of the campus pastor in this model is that of host or facilitator.

*Teaching-Team Model*—in this approach, the campus pastor assumes the role of preacher/teacher in the large group gatherings. Oftentimes the sermons are written together in a team brainstorming approach.

*Regional-Campus Model*—this system is often used in large cities and is implemented when a congregation desires to replicate the experience of the original campus in order to accommodate those who will not make the long commute to the main campus. This model can use both video or live teaching approach.

*Cathedral/Take-Over Model*—this approach is used when a struggling or dying congregation offers the ministry to the larger central campus.

*Partnership Model*—this model is implemented when two healthy organizations agree to enter into a collaborative partnership. Some examples include, prisons, fire stations, YMCA, local restaurants/bars, community centers, hospitals, etc.

*Low-Risk Model*—either through the simplicity of the programming or low financial investment, this system allows a congregation to experiment with creative ideas in the attempt to reach further into its community. (*The Multi-Site Church Revolution* 30)

In the research, it was clear that the regional model was the most often employed; however, most of the churches had some hybrid of the above models. Three churches inherited dying congregations; five set out to purposely begin regional-campus model churches; two employed a low risk model. Of these churches, seven employed a team teaching model for communication, two employed a hybrid or video/live team, and one was only video venue model. Essentially, each church must decide in advance what are

the non-negotiables for their church and the community that they are reaching. D'Angelo and Stigile say, "more (churches) experience a problem of clarity, suffering from the lack of a *defined* strategy. You'll need to define key variables in the conversation: Teaching, Worship, Discipleship Models, and Organizational DNA" (10). Tony Morgan, of the Unstuck Group, says,

The impact of a clear ministry strategy in a multisite church is significant. Among the multisite churches we surveyed, those that had a strategy implemented throughout the organization were growing 44% faster than those that did not. Clarifying your ministry strategy before going multisite will enable leaders to implement it effectively across all campuses. (Morgan 8)

This will allow them to successfully identify a model that will be most effective for them.

Once the model is agreed upon, there must also be clear expectations set out for the campus. Will it maintain its own budget? What will happen with children and youth ministries? Who will create sermon series and video packages? Two churches discussed at length the struggle to identify these expectations after "the train had already left the station." In order for the transition to have the most impact, there must be an understanding of who will do what, when, and how. This also includes benchmarking for worship attendance and finances. Bryan Collier describes his benchmarks this way, "our goals are to have a fully functioning ministry of two hundred adults and children that is introducing people to Christ, helping them grow up to be like Christ, and sending them out into the world to act like Christ... Financially, we plan for our sites to be self-sustaining no later than year three" (135-136). This plan gives clearly defined expectations that allow people to live into the plan and practice. Without these expectations, people define their own success and it may not be the success that the

sending campus was desiring. It would be far better to begin with clear expectations of what is to be done, how it is to be accomplished, and what success looks like.

**Finding the right person/people to lead the new campus is essential.**

In Jim Collins' book *Good To Great* he says, "The executives who ignited the transformations from good to great did not first figure out where to drive the bus and then get people to take it there. No, they first got the right people in the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) and then figured out where to drive it" (41). In other words, the people involved in the change from single site to multisite matter a great deal. This extends from the lead pastor pushing the vision, the campus pastor cultivating the vision, and the launch team rallying around the vision. All of these people must understand the process, expectations, DNA of the church, and what is being attempted in order for the change to be as successful as it could be.

For most congregations, the idea of a second campus is new and confronting. They have never thought about ministry in this way before. To navigate this, the senior leader must have gained and made effective use of the trust of the congregation. Tod Bolsinger says it this way, "unless we demonstrate that we are credible on the map, no one is going to follow us off the map" (50). The research for this project revealed a group of lead pastors who had lead their church "on the map" for a great deal of time. The shortest amount of time the pastor was in their role was eleven years and that pastor was the founding pastor of the church which gives an even greater sense of trust and authority. The point here is that these pastors had gained the trust of their people and were able to push a vision that moved people beyond their normal comfort and establish a large plan for change because they had gained trust and authority to do so.

The campus pastor of the new site also plays a large role in creating a successful change from single site to multisite. Over and over in this study churches mentioned getting the “right” campus pastor. While this can be a complex process in the United Methodist Church because of the appointive system of pastoral leadership, the churches mentioned that the campus pastor must have a firm grasp on the vision and mission of the church as a whole. In the *The Multi-site Church Revolution*, the campus pastor is described as, “The key to any new start-up... This is the leader who will convey the DNA of the primary campus, recruit the core team, develop the new leaders, and carry on the ministry once the campus is launched” (Surratt, Ligon, and Bird 144). Collier says of site pastors, “I am not suggesting that it takes a special kind of leader to begin a new site; however, I am certain that it takes a special kind of leader” (112). He goes on to describe a person who takes the initiative, is “flock focused” rather than “lamb focused”, and has a passion for the community that is being planted into (114-118). These are characteristics that describe a person who could be successful as a campus pastor, but it is of the utmost importance that this person knows, understands, and owns the vision and DNA of the sending church. D’Angelo and Stigile say that, “Skipping through on-ramping process is a pitfall that undercuts the potential growth and health of a new campus launch... If you’re hiring a campus pastor for outside the organization, we recommend you do so 12 months prior to launch” (22). Either way, the campus pastor is one of the most important decisions that will be made in the transition process.

Lastly, the launch team, or some sort of guiding coalition for the change effort, will be necessary. Kotter describes this as a “guiding coalition” (53) and Herrington, Bonem, and Furr call this group the “vision community” (41). Either way, this group is

necessary to “mobilize the full giftedness of the body (which) requires that a group of staff and lay leaders coalesce around the future direction of the church” (Herrington 41). As the plan is formalized and implemented, a group of people must come around the plan to shepherd it into existence. If there is not energy, excitement, and a group of people willing to champion a new campus, the chances of a successful transition and launch are slim. These people will not only do the work of preparing for the campus, but they serve as valuable bridges into the existing church community as well as the larger community trying to be reached. Exodus 18 shows the need for this type of leadership. Jethro advises Moses that he must engage others in the task of leadership. Moses set up groups of leaders, a “guiding coalition,” that allowed him to focus on what he needed to do while distributing authority to others. This model of leadership must be present early on in a new campus launch.

Since change is mostly a “people” centered activity, it makes sense that the right people have to be in the right places. It takes willing and engaged people at all levels of the organization to make a change of this magnitude happen. The senior leadership has to have enough relational equity to push a change along; the campus pastor must be firmly planted in the DNA of the church, and the right people need to jump on to the launch team for a smooth and fruitful transition to multisite to take place.

### **Employ change management framework to smooth out the rough edges.**

Change management has been extensively studied in the business and medical sector over the last 30 years. As discussed previously, Kurt Lewin was the forerunner of current change models proposing a three phase model described as “unfreezing”- “change”- “refreezing.” This simple model has been extrapolated and studied by

numerous other change theorists and worked into more elaborate models of change management. One of the more surprising findings of this study was that none of the churches studied employed any change management materials. While some of the principles were applied in each situation, not one church paused in the midst of their planning to ask if this fit into a proven change management framework. Many of the difficulties in the transitions described by the study churches could have been avoided with the application of such a framework guiding the transition.

Multiple different frameworks exist; however, three jump to the top in terms of ease of use and effectiveness in a church environment. First is the congregational transformation model from Herrington, Bonem, and Furr which provides an eight step process for change that takes into account the spiritual and relational components present in congregations (see page13). These eight steps are;

**Making personal Preparation**—This phase involves carving out time and space to discern God’s voice and direction for the leader’s own ministry and for the church, and living with the tension that this creates. It may involve spiritual disciplines and self assessment (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 34).

**Creating Urgency**—refers to the energy and motivation for change that is generated by contrasting between an accurate perception of reality and God’s ideal (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 34).

**Establishing the Vision Community**—this is a diverse group of key members who become a committed and trusting community in order to discern and implement God’s vision for the congregation. The vision community should be a part of the change process from beginning to end (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 41).

**Discern the Vision and Determine the Vision Path**—this is a written description of God’s preferred future that is broad and exciting in its direction but clear and explicit in its details (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 61).

**Communicating the Vision**—is a comprehensive, intentional, and ongoing set of activities that are undertaken throughout the transformation process to make the vision clear to the congregation. The intent of the communication stage is to generate a high level of understanding and commitment to God’s vision for the congregation (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 62).

**Empowering Change Leaders**—consists of two equally important elements: (1) establishing a new model for leadership within the congregation and (2) removing



the obstacles that would prevent leaders from serving effectively (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 70).

**Implementing the Vision**—involves coordinated, high leverage initiatives that move the congregation toward realization of God’s vision (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 78).

**Reinforcing Momentum Through Alignment**—this is creating an environment in which widespread commitment to following God’s vision routinely overshadows fears of continuous change attainable through routinely celebrating wins in the change process. (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr, 94)

The Congregational Change model takes into account much of the nuance of church life while leaning into what others, especially John Kotter, have said in terms of change management.

The ADKAR model focuses much more on the individual in terms of preparing and enabling them to make a large organizational change. While it was pioneered in the business and government sectors its applications can be used across any organization including churches. ADKAR stands for:

**Awareness**—represents a person’s understanding of the nature of the change, why the change is being made and the risk of not changing. It produces the “what’s in it for me” response.

**Desire**—represents the wiliness to support and engage in a change. Desire is ultimately about personal choice, influenced by the nature of the change, by and individual’s personal situation, as well as intrinsic motivators that are unique to each person.

**Knowledge**—represents the information, training, and education necessary to know how to change.

**Ability**—represents the realization or execution of the change. It is turning knowledge into action.

**Reinforcement**—represents those internal and external factors that sustain a change. (Hiatt 2-3)

The ADKAR approach provides a great insight into how people engage change.

While the ADKAR model is a person-centered approach, it can be applied organizationally by using the five steps as benchmarks to plan the change. How will the organization create awareness of the current state and the preferred change? How will the

organization go about building desire amongst the congregation to buy into the change? And so on. This model takes seriously the role of the individual in the change process, as each person must decide to adopt the change or reject it either overtly or passively.

The third model recommended by this study is John Kotter's eight-stage process for creating major change. It focuses on the organization as a whole, and, while its application has been mainly in the business sector, its use in a church would be incredibly effective.

**Stage 1—Establish a sense of urgency**—This stage involves examining the market and competitive realities. As well as identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities. This is the change to tell people why the change is so important.

**Stage 2—Creating the guiding coalition**—Putting together a group with enough power (influence) to lead the change as well as getting the group to work together like a team.

**Stage 3—Developing a vision and strategy**—Creating a vision to help direct the change effort while developing strategies for achieving that vision.

**Stage 4—Communicating the change vision**—Making use of every vehicle possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategies. It also involves having the guiding coalition role model the behaviors expected of employees.

**Stage 5—Empowering broad-based action**—This stage involves getting rid of obstacles, changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision, and encouraging risk taking and non-traditional ideas, activities and actions.

**Stage 6—Generating short-term wins**—Planning for visible improvements in performance, or "wins", followed by recognizing and rewarding those wins.

**Stage 7—Consolidating gains and producing more change**—Using the increased credibility from the "wins" to change all systems, structures, and policies that don't fit together and don't fit the transition vision.

**Stage 8—Anchoring new approaches in the culture**—Constantly articulating the connections between new behaviors and organizational success. (Kotter, *Leading Change* 23)

The eight-stage model provides an excellent template to view any change. While the church leadership must adjust the language of this process, it fits well into a transition plan to move from single site to multisite.

There are numerous change management plans that exist; this project focused on these three and found them to be most in line with what is needed to transition a church to multisite. Each of the churches interviewed used pieces of the processes, but no one claimed an overarching framework. The framework provides the bones for the change and allows the leadership to see how well they are doing in their planning to make a church change such as launching a second campus.

### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

The multisite movement is gaining steam across the United States and around the world. Jim Tomberlin estimates that there are currently more than five thousand multisite churches in the United States alone (Cavitt). This growth is strategic growth that leverages the strengths of churches with solid missional DNA and allows them to reproduce in a cost effective and efficient way. Especially within the United Methodist Church, it is important to capitalize on all possible opportunities for growth and development. In the coming years, the UMC will have a large number of facilities with no people to occupy them. Multisite makes sense to utilize and leverage these facilities to allow other churches with a culture of outreach to grow in other areas. This study was wrapped around the idea that change is difficult in any organization but especially in the church. Multisite presents a large change in the way that individual churches function. Thus, every church that is planning a multisite transition could take advantage of this research in order to better plan and assess their transition to multisite.

The most important impact should be the use of a full change management model for the churches looking to transition to multisite. While the research revealed portions

of a plan, there did not seem to be an overall guiding plan for the entirety of the transition. Much of this is likely due to the nature of church and especially senior leadership. When a leader has led well and earned trust, it sometimes allows them to experiment at a greater level without having to paint the total picture of what the end result of the multisite will look like. While this is an advantage in some regards, the overall results appear negative in terms of morale, execution, and vision fulfillment. As a popular colloquialism states, “Start as you mean to go on, and go on as you began.” Having a plan that is based in a change management framework will only help a church to be more successful in their transition. Everyone involved will feel more at peace about such a large change. Of course, there is no one size fits all plan for transitions. Each church must customize and contextualize a plan and format that will work for their particular situation. There are generalizable principles presented in the change management literature, but there is work to do in each church in order to fit it to their needs and objectives.

Just behind having a change management model, doing an excellent job of communicating the change set within the larger vision of the church has massive implications for creating a smooth transition from single site to multisite. Repeatedly, the churches who had made this transition successfully pointed to communication that is based in vision for those not yet reached. There are numerous reasons to make the transition from single site to multisite from space issues, to creating different styles of worship, to engaging new communities, but all of these opportunities for growth must be founded in a desire to reach new people with the Gospel. Reaching new people in new places and new ways is the reason that moves people to make a change in the way that

they are used to doing church. It is how people come to support a vision and a change that will not provide anything for them and may even inconvenience them. The goal is creating effective, repeated communication about what is happening based in why it is happening. This should start from the stage and from the leader, casting the vision for reaching new people through a new campus, but must also reach into all forms of communication—online, written, video, and every other possible way. The vision and the purpose cannot be communicated too many times.

The practice of multisite expansion has proven to be an effective way to create new opportunities for new people and growing churches with a vision for reaching more people. For those churches that have managed to launch one new campus or multiple new campuses, reaching untold numbers of people could follow. However, this often depends on the success of the first transition. If the transition from single site to the first multisite is a good, momentum creating, outreach oriented experience that the whole church rallies around, launching more campuses will be the only logical step. As one pastor in the study said, “My people now ask, well when are we doing the next one? And they’re disappointed if we say not yet!” This is a church that has embraced the dynamic nature of growth through multisite and one that has embraced the change and sacrifice that the multisite model brings with it. In order to get to the third, fourth, and fifth iteration, it is imperative to get the first right!

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on ten churches of over five hundred in worship attendance when a transition was made to multisite ministry. These churches were all in the United

Methodist Denomination and were relatively spread out throughout the United States.

There was a larger number of churches within the southern sections; however, this trend is a portents of the denominations growth as a whole. The goal was to speak to the lead pastor or the campus pastor who guided the church through the transition from single site to multisite. While there were four lead pastors and three campus pastors, three of the other respondents were staff members whose sole role was the development of new campuses. There are similarities in the roles and desires of all of these staff members; however, there are of course limitations when only one person from each church is interviewed. The Campus Development role also seemed to have more of an administrative role as opposed to a pastoral, vision casting role; this could have been addressed by further interviewing other staff members to get a more rounded view. However, with limitations of people's schedules it was important to get any accessible information.

There is a great deal of the research that was specified towards churches in United Methodism. There are generalizable features of the transition plans; however, because of certain aspects of United Methodist polity and practice, there are certain aspects of the research that are limited to that tribe. Additionally, all ten of these churches successfully launched a second campus and most have (or plan to) launched others. This study did not include any experiences with those who have not been successful in the launch of a campus. However, the purpose of the research was to help create a transition plan for Wesley United Methodist Church and thus successful outcomes were preferred. Other areas that could be explored more fully include: what is the best way of communicating a

large scale change, does pastoral tenure play a role in the ability to launch successful change efforts, and are there churches that are less or more predisposed to change efforts.

The research was qualitative in nature and therefore every effort was taken to diminish researcher bias. The questions were used in the same manner in each interview; however, there is some interpretation that takes place by every person answering the questions. At times there were answers to questions not asked and clarifying questions were used. Over all, the research is general and much of the findings could be applied in multiple places and even in multiple change efforts.

### **Unexpected Observations**

The major unexpected observation of this study was the necessity for an effective leadership pipeline before making the move to multisite ministry. Multiple churches pointed to the difficulty of backfilling volunteer roles that had been left vacant due to people moving to the new campus. One pastor observed that a “large number of our most evangelistic, welcoming, pioneering leaders wanted to be a part of the new launch and it left us scratching our heads as to why things felt so flat at the original campus. It took us 18 months to gain back the momentum.” The literature around multisite points to leadership opportunity creation as a positive attribute of going multisite. Many of the churches in this study stated that it was not so for them; the leaders did not have people waiting to fill their roles. Thus, there is a need to closely examine the leadership pipeline of any church before venturing out to start a new campus. Are the current leaders bringing along someone to train and possibly replace them? Is there a structure that

identifies and trains new leaders as they grow and connect with the church over time?

These important questions must be examined and a plan made to fill these roles.

### **Recommendations**

After examining the literature and the research of this study, I would recommend that any church desiring to move towards a multisite model for ministry spend ample time planning and implementing a transition plan that takes into account a change management framework. Which framework the church decides to use is not as important as ensuring that one is used. For Wesley United Methodist Church, Kotter's 8-stage process for change makes the most sense. What follows is the outline of the transition plan for Wesley United Methodist;

**Stage 1—Establishing a sense of urgency—**This stage will begin 12 months out from the projected launch, having already secured approval from the District Growth Team as well as Conference Level Church Development team. It will involve a sermon series on why it is that Wesley United Methodist Church exists, which is “to make disciples.” Disciple making involves moving out from what is comfortable in order to make more disciples. This series should present statistical data from the surrounding community, from 40,000 people within a five-mile radius who don't have a connection with a church or Jesus, and from over 100,000 within a ten-mile radius. In order to reach those people, Wesley must do something different as our current campus can not accommodate much more growth. The series will culminate with a call to action, inviting people to pray or volunteer to join a team preparing to launch something new in the fast growing area to the west of the church. The series will be based in the church's vision and



history as a new church start twenty-five years ago, drawing deeply on communication steeped in the vision of Wesley. It is important that the congregation is engaged in this communication from the senior pastor who has been there for a number of years as well as the new campus pastor who will need to gain trust and build excitement.

**Stage 2—Creating the guiding coalition**—This stage will involve gathering the people who were interested in volunteering to be a part of the launch of the new campus along with a target initiation of leaders that the Pastoral Staff agree on to help provide leadership at the new campus. This group will meet together bi-weekly to vision, craft, dream, and create a compelling picture of what could be at the new campus. Led by the campus pastor, this group will help to create its own future as well as live into the future as the launch draws closer. This team should have a solid vision for what worship and programming will look like at least six months before launch.

**Stage 3—Developing a vision and strategy**—Part of the work of the guiding coalition will be to coalesce around a vision and strategy for reaching in the new communities that are developing on the West side of town. This will include: where they will meet, what the worship will look like, what the children's programming will entail, what the preaching will be like (live, with similar themes to main campus), how they will gather community support, outreach events to connect in the community, and a timeline for development and self sufficiency over a three-year period. Additionally, a plan for gathering at least

one hundred people committed to worshipping at the new campus will be presented.

**Stage 4—Communicating the change vision**—The overall vision for creating a new campus will continually be repeated from the stage in terms of announcements and reports. This effort will find its way into sermons and be a part of what the whole church is getting behind. After the coalition has come with the full vision and strategy, it will be presented in a series of town hall meetings. These meetings will be held in three different locations over a one-month period and share the vision and strategy. One will be hosted at the main campus, one will be hosted in a community gathering space close to the new location, and one will be hosted in a home of a coalition member. These meetings will allow people to ask questions and make decisions about their level of support from prayer, financial support, a one-year worship commitment, to joining a serve team and making the new campus their place of worship permanently. The purpose is to present as much information as is available so that people can make informed decisions about how to support the effort. These meetings will also provide an opportunity to gather support for the new worshipping community and invite others to be a part of the preview services leading up to official launch.

**Stage 5—Empowering broad-based action**—The town hall meetings as well as the consistent communication of the vision should always encourage people to engage with the vision for the second campus in some way. One hundred days out from launch, a prayer campaign will begin encouraging everyone to pray daily for the upcoming launch and service. At the same time, three preview services

will be planned, one each month leading up to the official launch. With a community that has lots of connections and crossover, everyone at Wesley will be encouraged to think of someone to invite to the launch services. This will get a large number of people engaged and involved in the actual change effort while not necessarily having to make that their worshiping community.

**Stage 6—Generating short-term wins**—Each outreach event and preview service should provide short term wins. As the coalition and launch team continue to meet together bi-weekly, it is important to celebrate the people who have made some connection to the new campus. Additionally, after every event or service, it is imperative to celebrate the wins with the congregation as a whole. This maintains a sense that that is “us” winning together and maintains a sense that when the new campus succeeds everyone succeeds.

**Stage 7—Consolidating gains and producing more change**—As the launch gets closer, there will be things that were not prepared for as well as changes that must be made in staffing, structure, and systems. Making those changes quickly, and backed by the vision of reaching people, will allow the church to continue to embrace change and not halt a change effort or even worse recoil. There will be some unknowns and it is important to be upfront and open about what the changes have meant, where it has gone well, and even where it has not gone as planned. This creates a great deal of trust and allows the congregation more ability to accept the smaller changes along the way.

**Stage 8—Anchoring new approaches in the culture**—For Wesley, this step is largely about changing language. It is difficult to move language from “us” and

“them,” to “we” language, but for the change to be truly made and as impactful as possible, the church must see itself as one. The language used in announcements, celebrations, and even in communicating how each campus exists in its similarities and differences must be anchored in “we” language. “We” have two campuses and they are different, but we are all one church. Again, this must be a refrain from staff and leadership alike.

This model of change management makes sense for Wesley; it is structured, flows easily from one step to the next, and provides a solid framework with room to stretch and change along the way. Again, no one size frame fits all churches, but this framework takes into account much of what was learned through discussion with other churches that have successfully launched second campuses. The multisite model as a whole has a great future in the church and is not just a fad growth trend but a way to maximize the best things about growing disciple making churches. At Wesley, we believe that healthy things grow, and as we continue to grow, it is important to replicate this through a second campus. There will be struggles, but this model has the potential to help alleviate many of those pains. May God bless this effort as we do the work of preparing the soil!

### **Postscript**

We have a phrase in our house; we picked it up from author Brene Brown. It goes like this, “We can do hard things.” It is frequently bandied about when our three kids decide that they “just can’t”. Whenever that happens, we repeat the phrase, “we can do hard things” and hope that it instills a sense of perseverance in our children that helps

them to be able to endure some of the difficulties in life. This project, the process of writing this dissertation, made this phrase a reality in my life as well. It was no longer a statement used to encourage children to do their homework, it became a mantra that pushed me through page after page of reading, of reflection, of analyzing, and of writing. More than anything, this project helped me to see what diligence and endurance can produce. I am pleased with the project, but I am more excited about what I have seen in myself in terms of my growth in discipline, in an ability to ask deeper questions, and in the tools I use to track down the answers to those questions. This process was hard. It stretched and pushed me in ways that I had never been in undergrad or graduate school not to mention the rigors of ministry life and a family. To add to it, my father passed away in the midst of the writing of this project. There were days that followed where I thought, “I will just quit, I’ll push it off and finish when my life makes more sense.” I wanted to abandon the change process that was happening in me! Thankfully, I was reminded by a wonderful community that “we can do hard things.” My church family, my cohort, and my family all pushed me to do the hard thing and continue the process. I am eternally grateful for their patience. I am a better because of it: a better pastor, a better leader, a better husband, and a better father. The tools that this process have given me carry over into every area of my personal life and will continue to help me to “do hard things” for the Kingdom of God.

This project not only shaped me personally, it also allowed me to have a better understanding of being a ministry leader. I tend to be a systems thinker. I have always been a person with a plan, so this project just made sense to me. How do you take an amorphous concept like multisite ministry and condense it to a place where anyone could

pick it up and follow the plan? That was my goal when I began the project. I am not sure I was able to get to that place. Yes, I believe I have put forward a useful and effective transition plan for Wesley United Methodist Church, but what I have found along the way is that there are principles, not practices, that guide good change within the church. Practices are specified ways of doing things, it's the how. Each church that I studied had their own practices that God was using in amazing ways. They might not have been the way that I would have done things, but they were working in that context. There were some principles that cross over different areas of the country, different pastoral styles, different environments, and were able to be applied in almost any context. These were much harder to come by! A list of best practices would not have been as helpful as a series of principles that can be applied. The principles and, more importantly, the pursuit of these principles will give me tools to use within my local congregation as well as throughout the larger church. I firmly believe that multisite ministry is a cost effective, proven way to continue to reach people and grow the Church and any small piece I can play in that is very important to me. My prayer is that the principles that were pulled from the practices are the things that guide others as they make the jump from single site to multisite. I hope that more and more churches are able to make this transition because it means that more churches are focused on reaching more people for the glory of God. I hope that the end result of all this work is that people would encounter the creator of universe who loves them and showers grace upon them.

## **Appendix A**

### **E-Mail To Participants**

Date

Dear Pastor ABC,

Thank you for your initial interest in this research project. As stated in our earlier telephone conversation, I am writing a dissertation for a Doctor of Ministry degree through Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. This research is being conducted through a Questionnaire and Interview approach. Your church has been identified as one of ten churches that will be studied to see if there are overarching principles for change involved in moving from a single site church to a multisite church.

Based on feedback from expert recommendations, web searches, and initial phone conversations your church fits into the group being studied. In that, you have launched a second campus from a United Methodist Church that averages more than 500 in worship before the launch. I would be grateful if you would take the time to fill out the questionnaire and then grant me a follow up interview. This will aid in helping other churches to adopt principles of change that will help them effectively make a similar transition.

Please be assured that your identity and responses will be kept completely confidential and the information you provide will be incredibly helpful both in this project but also in the future of the multisite movement within the United Methodist Church. I look forward to your response to this request. Please feel free to contact me at

any time through email or by phone with any questions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rev. Adam Hilderbrandt

Office: 706-869-0888

Email: [adam.hilderbrandt@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:adam.hilderbrandt@asburyseminary.edu)



## **Appendix B**

### **INFORMED CONSENT LETTER**

#### ***Transitioning to Multisite***

##### ***A Model for Transitioning Wesley United Methodist Church to a Multisite Church***

You are invited to be in a research study being done by **Adam Hilderbrandt** from the Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because your church (or former church) has made a transition from a single site church to a multisite church and your church is a United Methodist Church.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to fill out an initial questionnaire that should take no more than 30 minutes and return it to me. Following that you will be asked to set up a time for a follow up interview via phone or skype that will last no more than 45 minutes. If available, this study seeks your permission to make use of any documents used during the transition from single site to multisite, be those internal or external print materials as well as church records of attendance before and after the transition took place. These will be used only for themes and to study the process or transition and will not be reprinted or shared beyond the scope outlined in this project.

This study will maintain your confidentiality through giving each pastor and church a number that will be known only to myself and my dissertation coach. This process seeks to maintain your privacy and that of your church while assisting in this study. All documents will be treated in the same manner.

As United Methodists we have a unique appointive system, if you were not the Senior Leader during the transition, this study would also seek your permission to speak

with the Senior Pastor at the time (or a Campus Pastor who lead the effort) as a way to better understand the transition that took place at your church.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable while you are in the study, please inform Dr. Ellen Marmon, director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Asbury Seminary. She can be reached at 859-858-3581. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the study, you may stop whenever you want. Please feel free to ask me any questions about anything in this study.

Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

---

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

---

Date Signed

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire Sent to Pastors

Dear Pastor,

Please provide as much information as possible for each question. Allow yourself around 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaire, save it, and return it via email to

[adam.hilderbrandt@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:adam.hilderbrandt@asburyseminary.edu)

Thank you for your participation.

1. How long have you served as the Senior Pastor of this church?
2. What is the current attendance of all campuses of your church?
3. What was your attendance when the transition from single site to multisite was made?
4. What role did you have in the transition from single site to multisite?
5. Why did your church decide to pursue a multisite model of ministry?
6. What were the goals in starting a second site?
7. Were those goals accomplished?
8. How well did the transition from single site to multisite go?
9. Were there benchmarks you hoped for in the transition? If so, what were they?
10. Describe the process of transitioning from single site to multisite.
11. Who was involved in the decision to move to a multisite model?
12. Was there any outside involvement (consultants, denominational, district) in the transition process?
13. How was the transition communicated to the church as a whole?
14. Was there a defined process for the transition?
15. Was there a certain timetable for the transition to take place?
16. Was the process or timetable followed or altered in the process?
17. Did you consult any change management resources before making the transition from single site to multisite?
18. What were the results of the transition on the original church?
19. How do you believe the transition could have been improved?
20. Have you launched additional sites? How were those transitions similar or different from your first site?

## **Appendix D**

### **Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

**Introduction-** Thank you so much for being a part of this research project that is focused around the transition from single site to multisite church. I want to remind you that this interview will be recorded digitally and kept in a password protected hard drive. Your identity will remain anonymous to everyone but the interviewer. This interview will last no more than 45 minutes and will ask a series of pre-set questions as well as incorporating questions your questionnaire raised. This data will be helpful for other churches looking to make a similar transition.

#### **Research Question #1**

What defines an effective transition for moving from a single site model of ministry to a multisite model of ministry?

1. What was the impetus for starting a second campus?
2. How did you go about making the decision to start the second campus?
3. Who was involved in the decision to make this change?
4. How well did the transition go?
5. How would you define an effective transition from single site to multisite?
6. What are the characteristics of an effective transition?

#### **Research Question #2**

How have other United Methodist churches of similar sizes made the transition from single site to multisite models of ministry?

7. Did you have a specific process that you created to make the transition from single site to multisite?
8. What was the process that your church used to transition from single site to multisite?

9. How was the transition communicated? To whom? By whom?
10. What worked well in the transition?
11. What could have been improved in the transition?
12. Were there any special circumstances based on your denominational affiliation that made the transition better?
13. Were there special circumstances based on your denominational affiliation that made the transition more difficult?

### **Research Question #3**

Are there change management or transition management theories that might be applied to such a change to make it more effective?

14. Did you consult with any outside agencies before or during the transition from single site to multisite? If so, who?
15. Did you make use of any specific change management or transition management material? If so, what?
16. Did your transition plan follow any specific process? If so, what was that process based upon?
17. Could any change management principles have been applied to your transition?
18. Have you added more sites subsequent to the first one? If so, how was that transition similar or different from the first site?

Is there anything else that should have been asked about that was not? Or is there anything else that you would like to add?

**Conclusion-** Thank you again for your time, when the project is completed I will be sure to send you a copy. If you have any further thoughts, documents, or information that would be helpful in this research you may contact me at any time.

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