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Autonomy or Multi-Site? A Policy Capturing Study of Two Models of Church Planting for the Guidance of Future Site Planting at Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, Kansas

Michael Bingenheimer
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, gobing@hotmail.com

AUTONOMY OR MULTI-SITE?
A POLICY CAPTURING STUDY OF TWO MODELS OF CHURCH PLANTING
FOR THE GUIDANCE OF FUTURE SITE PLANTING AT
ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH, WICHITA, KANSAS

REV. MICHAEL R. BINGENHEIMER

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Rev. Dr. William Utech—Advisor   Date

_____   _____
Rev. Dr. Glenn Nielsen—Reader   Date

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Rev. Dr. David Peter—Program Director   Date

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A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY
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BY

REV. MICHAEL R. BINGENHEIMER

WICHITA, KANSAS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to produce a set of reasoned recommendations for future site planting for Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS. Ascension unintentionally became a multi-site congregation in 2002. This study looks at thirteen Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod congregations. Six congregations planted independent congregations (daughter sites). Six congregations planted multi-site venues (sister sites). One congregation has used both models of church planting. The primary component for information gathering was a survey seeking information from each of these churches on how they decided which model to follow. Understanding the reasoning and assumptions made by these churches, I developed a set of recommendations was developed to help Ascension Lutheran Church choose which model to follow for our next plant.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROJECT INTRODUCED

"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full'" (Luke 14:23 NIV).

Long before Matthew 28:19 became the text cited for the missionary impulse of the Church, Luke 14:23 was the text.[1] In this parable, the Master, understood to be the Triune God, had prepared a banquet and invited people to come. Excuses were made for not attending the banquet. The Master sent out his servant to the poor, the physically challenged, those who would not typically be invited to a rich person's banquet. When the servant returned, there was still room. The Master then spoke the words quoted above. Mission is located in the heart of God. God wants his banquet filled. God will have His kingdom filled. Even though God could on His own without the help of humanity or anything else fill His kingdom, He has chosen to give humanity the privilege of being His missionaries, His ambassadors, His witnesses.

This can be a dangerous text on which to base the mission impulse because of the potential for abuse. "Compel" (αναγκιζω) can mean to urge or persuade by inner compulsion, or it can mean to force by outer compulsion. In the early Patristic Christian Church and in the Medieval Catholic Church, this verse was abused bringing physical coercion into play in forced conversions.[2] Yet when this verse is interpreted in the context of the whole of Scripture, it is clear that coerced conversion is not God's intent

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[1] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991, 2007), 236.
[2] Bosch, 236.

(although it worked for my Teutonic ancestors). It is not the "compelling" that shows the heart of God; it is the sending of the servants to fill the hall that shows the heart of God.

God has implanted a desire in me to be about His mission of filling the banquet hall, extending His kingdom. Can I point to something tangible and concrete to prove this statement? No. All I can present is anecdotal evidence and my word that this is my desire. Having been raised in a parsonage, the son of a veteran Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) pastor, I have been around the Church in its wider meaning and the church in its narrower meaning (local congregation) all my life. Since my Confirmation class consisted of me and my father, I had thorough instruction in the basics of Christian doctrine. My father required memorization of the answers and the supporting Bible verses. Being questioned on Confirmation Day by your father before the congregation when you are the only confirmand motivated me to learn the material very well. I followed "the system" route in my education having attended St. Paul Lutheran High and Junior College in Concordia, MO, before attending and graduating summa cum laude from Concordia College, St. Paul, MN. My Master of Divinity degree was earned at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1986.

The first call I received and accepted was to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Havelock, NC. It was in this small congregation in a military town that my passion for outreach and extension of God's kingdom was piqued. While serving this congregation, I devoured books, studied various outreach methods, attended professional development conferences and received training in organizational behavior from The Center for Creative Leadership based in Greensboro, NC. I also received training in Family Systems Theory from Dr. Pete Steinke. Combining these two disciplines gave me insights on how

to organize and lead congregations in church planting and mission outreach. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit as I put these insights and learnings into practice, St. Paul Lutheran Church grew from an average attendance of 45 a Sunday to nearly 200 a Sunday. I then accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN.

While serving at Immanuel Lutheran Church, the passion for expanding God's kingdom burned within. Immanuel helped start Grace Celebration Lutheran Church in Cordova, TN, a close suburb to the east of Memphis. In 2002, Immanuel birthed a daughter congregation in Arlington, TN, a town 12 miles northeast of Memphis. The plan for planting this church was simple. Ask 12 families to be "missionaries" to this small suburban town, form them into a church planting core group, call an assistant pastor from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, on the church planting route, have him serve Immanuel and the core group for a year or two and then release them for ministry. The plan worked and Christ Lutheran Church, Arlington, TN, is a thriving congregation that has since planted another church in Oakland, TN.

When I received the call to Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, which was just beginning a multi-site planting model, I was drawn by the Spirit to accept this challenge. Little did I know what challenges the multi-site model would present! This Major Applied Project (MAP) is the outgrowth of trying to understand the multi-site model of church planting and the challenges it presents, not only to Ascension Lutheran Church, but also as it touches on the doctrine, practice and polity of the LCMS.

A. The Problem Identified

A new model of church planting has arrived and rapidly spread across the LCMS. It is called multi-site ministry. Right now, 53 congregations in the LCMS have self

reported that they are using this model of church planting in planning future mission starts. However, it is unclear which model is the best option for congregations to follow as they plan to establish a new worshipping community: 1) A site plant leading to an independent congregation, often called a "daughter" congregation (incorporated separately and autonomous from the planting congregation) or 2) a site plant that will remain organizationally and financially connected to the planting congregation, often called a "sister" congregation or multi-site congregation (corporately connected and mutually dependent).

Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, began as a mission plant of Immanuel Lutheran Church, the mother church of all but two LCMS congregations in Wichita. Since its founding in 1960, Ascension has been blessed with steady growth and many good pastors. Immanuel Lutheran Church, as is the case with many "mother" churches in the LCMS, is located near downtown Wichita. Due to changes in community demographics and the growth of suburbia, Immanuel is no longer in a position to be planting churches. God has blessed Ascension to be in a position to actively planting new congregations. Previous to 1999, an attempt at a mission plant by Ascension and the Kansas District failed after a year. The Kansas District had already purchased land years in advance which would be made available to a new congregation. In 1999, a long range planning committee was established by Ascension Lutheran Church to determine how best to address the mission opportunities of western Wichita. Ascension was given the opportunity to purchase this site and begin a new ministry. The long range planning committee, after careful study and much prayer, decided to establish an Open Arms Child

Care Center on this site and begin a worshipping community soon after Open Arms was up and running.

When this second site opened in 2003, Ascension assumed all financial responsibility and also took responsibility for the worship life. Ascension branded itself as "One Church – Two Locations." During the planning phase of the second site, discussions took place as to whether the second site should eventually be an autonomous congregation or be organizationally connected as in a multi-site model. Some within Ascension Lutheran Church envisioned the Maple campus (Ascension–Maple) as always being organizationally and financially linked with Ascension's Tyler campus (Ascension–Tyler), the original site. Others thought the plan for Ascension–Maple was to get the mission started as multi-site with the ultimate goal being an autonomous, self-sustaining worshipping community (i.e. a separately incorporated financially autonomous congregation).

I arrived at Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, in September 2004, one and one-half years after the founding of the second site. I telephoned the pastor who was serving Ascension when the mission site was planted and asked him about the decision-making process of choosing the multi-site model. He reported to me that the decision to go multi-site was made because the planning committee felt it had a better chance of succeeding. He also indicated that being connected would allow a back-and-forth sharing of worshippers which would have the result of mutual cooperation and ownership hopefully averting an "us-them" mentality. During the decision-making process many assumptions were made about multi-site ministry based upon the experience of churches not within the LCMS. It was unknown by Ascension if there were any other churches in

the LCMS in 1999 who were following the multi-site ministry model. The first phase of this multi-site model was focused on the Open Arms ministry model that had been used successfully for planting churches in other districts of the LCMS. Originally, the multi-site paradigm was secondary to the Open Arms model.

That changed after Open Arms become financially viable and divine worship began to be offered at this site. When these two things became a reality, then growth of the worshipping community became the focus. Intentionally, Ascension Lutheran Church and its staff began to research and plan what we could do, what we could offer, what it would take to reach west Wichita with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was during this vision planning process that multi-site ministry became the model we intentionally would follow.

Today, as Ascension seeks to expand to more campuses or venues, questions are being raised about the multi-site ministry model. Is it the best path forward? What about the polity issues? How are the two campuses going to relate if a third or fourth campus is added? Should the second site, since it has grown to an average worship attendance of 170 per weekend, be an independent, autonomous congregation or should it remain organizationally linked? The question of whether this model has worked is not being asked as the answer is plain for all to see. In Ascension's case, it has worked.

While there is much informal discussion concerning this model taking place among the lay leaders, no formal committee has been established to address the next step. Currently, there is no open conflict over this, but one can easily conclude from listening to conversations that sides are being chosen. This issue of continuing to follow the multi-site model has the potential to disrupt the mission of Ascension Lutheran Church and

produce unhealthy conflict if not proactively confronted. In my opinion, these issues converge into one main question. Is autonomy or multi-site the best path forward for Ascension Lutheran Church?

B. The Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this Major Applied Project (MAP) is to investigate the above two models of church planting, autonomy and multi-site, in order to help the leadership of Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, decide whether we should continue on the path of multi-site or change direction and plant autonomous "daughter" congregations as has been the historical pattern of LCMS churches in Wichita. This study may provide useful insight and information for other churches or district mission executives to guide churches considering how best to extend God's kingdom.

This study, I believe, will provide Ascension Lutheran Church of Wichita, KS, with valuable information as to how to proceed with its current multi-site model so that an additional site plant may be considered beyond the Ascension-Maple location. Ascension has been gifted by God to take over planting churches as Immanuel once did, focusing primarily on planting new worshipping communities on the west side of Wichita as Wichita continues to expand.

C. Anticipated Outcomes

The anticipated outcomes of this MAP are:

1) To learn from the decision-making process of other church planting churches the advantages and disadvantages they considered in choosing to plant either

an autonomous congregation or an organizationally connected worship
community.

2) To capture the policies and assumptions in play during the decision-making
process of church planting churches in order to establish possible guidelines
for Ascension to consider and/or follow.

3) To gauge whether the policies and assumption have statistical or merely
anecdotal support.

4) To share this information with the leadership of Ascension Lutheran Church
so that Ascension is able to enhance its ministry by making good decisions
concerning the future of its multi-site model.

5) To share this research with district mission executives in order that they may
guide congregations into making intentional decisions leading to a more
effective site plant.

D. The Process

This MAP studied twelve LCMS congregations that are very close in size to
Ascension and have planted additional worship sites in suburban areas of the United
States. Six congregations were chosen that used the church planting model of establishing
autonomous worshipping communities (daughter congregations). Six other congregations
were chosen that used the church planting model of multi-site ministry. I also closely
studied Carmel Lutheran Church of Carmel, IN, which has planted four daughter
congregations and has recently started worshipping communities following the multi-site
model.

To gain a thorough understanding of each model, I discussed this project with the executive director of training from the Center for United States Mission located at Concordia University, Irvine, CA.

I then conducted a policy capturing study of thirteen identified LCMS congregations. I developed a survey for the lead pastor and for either the chairperson or the members of the planning committee from each planting church. This would provide me with twenty-six possible returned surveys if all were returned. They were asked to answer the questions to the best of their recollection. These answers helped me to understand the process, the factors and the assumptions used in choosing the model they did. This survey also asked them to list the advantages ("pros") and disadvantages ("cons") of each model as they came to understand them, what assumptions were in play about each model and then, finally, what they would do differently. I also asked them for self-reported statistical data on financial and numeric growth of both the main or mother site and the planted site.

The collected data was coded and analyzed to discover common threads in the decision-making process, the assumptions made and if there was a correlation between the assumptions and the made decision.

I shared this data and consulted with Dr. Aaron Buchko[3], a PhD in sociology and organizational development at Bradley University, Peoria, IL. In consultation with Dr. Buchko, I came to see what policies could be captured from the decision-making process and what recommendations could be established to aid in future church site planting.

From this information, I drew conclusions and proposed recommendations to the leadership of Ascension Lutheran Church.

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[3] Please see Dr. Buchko's curricula vitae in Appendix N of this Major Applied Project.

E. The Parameters of the Project

This MAP is designed to discover the positives and negatives experienced with the two planting options, autonomy or multi-site, in twelve congregations of similar size and setting, and one congregation that has followed both models in its history, so that Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, may be provided essential information on how to proceed with its current multi-site ministry. Some of the presuppositions that are understood which I did not investigate are:

1. There are other models for planting churches than these two. These models were chosen because they are the two which are competing within Ascension Lutheran Church.

2) There are factors other than size and location which will determine the health of a congregation, for example, how the site plant is staffed. I will be cognizant of these factors, but total elimination of variables is impossible.

3) Expanding God's kingdom can be done by methods other than planting new mission sites. However, it has been my experience (I have been involved in two site plants so far) and has been borne out in other research[4] that, oftentimes, new starts evangelize, assimilate and grow numerically more quickly than enhancing or refocusing existing congregation ministries.

4) Neither model is a guarantee of a successful plant.

5) Ultimately, God, through His Holy Spirit, establishes the Church and expands His kingdom. Numerical growth does not necessarily translate into spiritual growth, however, it is an indicator of the health of a congregation.

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[4] Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), xi.

There are also theological assumptions which I made that are in force and are not up for debate in this MAP. These theological assumptions are:

1) There is only One God – the Triune God who has revealed Himself in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2) The Bible is God's Word and does not merely contain God's Word. Thus, the authority of Scripture is unquestioned and is the sole source and norm of all Christian doctrine.

3) The Lutheran Confessions, as contained in the Book of Concord (1580), are a true and correct exposition of Scripture because (*quia*) they are in agreement with Scripture in their teachings.

4) God alone builds the Church. Though people are the *causa instrumentalis* (instrumental cause) of the Church, God alone, through the means of grace, builds His Church.

5) There is no salvation outside the Church. That doesn't mean a specific local congregation or a specific denomination, but the Church universal made up of true believers in Jesus whose faith is ultimately known only by God.

F. The Content of Upcoming Chapters

In Chapter Two, I discuss the Biblical and theological foundation of this MAP. I research the concept of the *missio Dei* and how the mission of God unfolded in Scripture and continues to unfold today through God's Church. I delve deeply into the history and usage of the Greek word εκκλησια as "church" immediately impacts the mission and impetus of church planting. I seek to answer the question: Is εκκλησια broad enough in

definition to encompass not simply a local autonomous congregation, but a congregation that meets in multiple sites or venues?

In Chapter Three, I look at some of the historical manifestations of multi-site ministry and what insights they may bring to bear on the contemporary practice of multi-site ministry. I then survey all the current literature associated with multi-site ministry to establish the contemporary milieu. Since the current iteration of multi-site ministry is relatively recent, there is not an overwhelming amount available to study.

In Chapter Four, I explain in detail the design of this project and the methods I used in gathering the information for this policy capturing study. Specifically, I am looking at the decision-making process used by the congregations and their assumptions.

In Chapter Five, I unpack the surveys by presenting my findings. An extensive and careful analysis of those findings, in consultation with Dr. Aaron Buchko, will present valuable information about what factors and considerations proved to be determinative in the model they eventually chose to follow.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, summarizes how the Doctor of Ministry Program has enabled me to grow and become a better servant to Ascension and God's kingdom. This chapter presents recommendations for action that can be captured from the collected data. I will draw conclusions and suggest recommendations for the future ministry of Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, and how these recommendations may be used by other congregations and districts in the LCMS.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

<u>Introduction</u>

The impetus for beginning the Doctorate of Ministry program has always been the keen awareness of the privilege I have to serve the Triune God as a pastor. I am well aware that being an undershepherd of Christ is all gift. The confessions call the Office of Pastoral Ministry the highest office (based on the reading of *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, Art XV, par. 42 in the *Triglotta*), not because those who occupy it are in some way above those they serve, or because the office itself gives one an indelible character, but because this is the only office ordained by God given to the Church for the preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments through which God enables His kingdom to come. From this office all other offices flow.

If God has called me to serve Him, which is the greatest privilege a human can have, then I need to use all the gifts and talents God has given to me to accomplish the task to which I have been called. With this humble sense of privilege and responsibility, I began the pursuit of a Doctorate of Ministry, not to make myself "greater" in the eyes of others, but to be better equipped to serve God's Church. I began this process after 20 years of service. So much had changed in 20 years of serving God's kingdom that I knew I needed "an update," to borrow a metaphor from computer software. I wanted to become current in scholarship and theological thought so that I could best serve this culture and the congregation to which I have been called.

Even before my first call to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Havelock, NC, I have had an interest and desire in evangelism, reaching out to those in the community I serve to

help bring them into a relationship with their Lord and Savior, or at least a closer relationship. I have been a constant learner, seeking wisdom where I could find it, employing that wisdom so that through me and the Church, God may cause His kingdom to grow.

The calling that I currently hold as pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, came with a unique structure. Ascension is a multi-site ministry. This direction of ministry was chosen, after prayer and congregational meetings, in order to reach more people in west Wichita with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. While preaching the Word and administering the sacraments rightly is the task of a pastor, it is also his task to lead the church in the mission of "making disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Believing that God is a God of mission, it has been my heart and passion to be one of those pastors who help God's people be about the task of fulfilling the Great Commission. That is why this study looks at the Church and its mission.

Since this study is focused on church planting, the primary theological foundation upon which this study is built is the *missio Dei*. Two main doctrines arise out of the *missio Dei*: the doctrine of the Church and the Office of Holy Ministry. I will first discuss the Biblical and theological foundations for asserting that God is a God of mission (the *missio Dei*). Next I will discuss that it is God who created the Church as an instrument to be used in accomplishing His mission. The local congregation is a manifestation of the Church and is neither an adiaphoran nor a human creation. Then I will discuss how God gifted the Church with the Office of Holy Ministry since the Church is created and grows through the means of grace. All these gifts work together to accomplish the *missio Dei*. In this section, there is no way to discuss all the aspects of the doctrines listed above and

how they impact the mission of the local church. I limit myself to those aspects of the doctrine which deal most directly with multi-site ministry.

A. The *Missio Dei*

<u>Introduction</u>

<u>God is a God of mission!</u> Ever since the fall of humanity into sin severing our relationship of grace with God, God has been about the task of restoring humanity to His original intent. As the Commission on Theology and Church Relations said, "Mission begins in the heart of God and expresses His love for the world.[5] Scripture tells us that it is God's desire that all people be "saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). In the past, the mission of the church was derived from the task of the church. In other words, the mission of going to make disciples of all nations derived its charge from the doctrine of the Church. It's what the church is to do as prescribed by Jesus in Matthew 28:19.

However, any cursory reading of Holy Scripture indicates that God has been on a mission to rescue this world since the fall of Adam and Eve after He justly cursed the world. Since that time, God's mission has been one of "reconciling the world to himself in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19). No longer is it sufficient to view the mission of the church as derived from the task of the church. As George Vicedom wrote, "The missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the Triune God Himself."[6] The Christian church does mission work because God is a God who does mission work. He sends. He sent His Son to rescue mankind and now sends those in the church to make

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[5] *A Theological Statement of Mission*, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, November, 1991, 3.

[6] Georg F. Vicedom, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 5.

His rescue known to τα εθνη by preaching the Son. The goal of the *missio Dei* is "to incorporate and to convey to mankind the βασιλεια του Θεου"[7]; to rescue "the nations" from the kingdom of this world and incorporate them into the Kingdom of God.

Scriptural Witness to the *Missio Dei*

That God is a God of mission is demonstrated throughout Scripture. While most texts in support of mission are derived from New Testament sources, there are important texts in the Old Testament that have a universal quality about them. One such text is Genesis 12:3 which says that Abraham will be a blessing to "the nations." Exodus carries on this theme of universality that God is a God who wants to be known by all people. In Exodus 9:13-16 we read,

> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.'" (NIV)

Even when YHWH brought on Egypt terrible plagues, the purpose was not simply to punish Egypt for not releasing Israel, although that was a part of it. The grander scheme of God was "that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." YHWH wanted His name known so that all the nations of the earth would know where salvation was to be found.

The universal theme of YHWH being known by all nations was carried from Torah into the Nebiim. The prophets clearly saw Israel's mission as a mission to make

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[7] Vicedom, 14.

God's name known among the nations of the world. The Prophet Isaiah wrote in 60:12 "For the nation or kingdom that will not serve You will perish; it will be utterly ruined." Isaiah envisioned the nations of the world streaming to Israel (personified in the context by the name Zion) and bringing rich tributes. Israel is the "priest" for the nations. It is YHWH whom Israel worships that is the true God of this world, and His desire is that all nations come to His holy mountain for salvation. Any nation that will not serve YHWH will meet with destruction.

Jeremiah was called to be a prophet to "the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). In chapter 4:1-2, Jeremiah brings a widened perspective. If Israel would return to the covenant God made with her, YHWH could get on with His mission to gather in the nations. Ezekiel, in 36:16-36, also makes the point that Israel needs "to return to *their* mission" so that God "can return to *his* mission – blessing the nations."[8] We are to read the Old Testament as God using a particular people (Israel) to make known the One God of the universe to all the nations of the world through the coming Messiah. God is not just Israel's God, but as Ezekiel points outs, God is God over all nations (Ezekiel 36:28 NIV).

Even the Ketubim, especially the Psalms, make it clear that YHWH's mission is to make His name known as the true King of the earth from whom salvation is graciously given. Psalm 22:

> **27** All the ends of the earth
>   will remember and turn to the LORD,
> and all the families of the nations
>   will bow down before him,
> **28** for dominion belongs to the LORD
>   and he rules over the nations. (NIV)

Also Psalm 47:

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[8] Christopher J. H. Wright. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 241.

⁹ The nobles of the nations assemble
  as the people of the God of Abraham,
for the kings of the earth belong to God;
  he is greatly exalted. (NIV)

Of course, this *missio Dei* carries into the New Testament with Jesus. It is why Jesus became incarnate. God's mission was to rescue the world and restore humanity and this world to YHWH's original intent. Jesus is the One whom God had chosen to make the "eph hapax" sacrifice that would remove the barrier of sin and, through Him, bring the world back into a grace relationship with the Father.

When talking to Zacchaeus, Jesus stated that his mission, which is thus God's mission, was one of rescue and redemption. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10 NIV). This "seeking and saving" wasn't limited to just sons of Abraham (Luke 19:9 NIV). When Jesus noted with astonishment the faith of a Roman centurion, He said, "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11 NIV). Wright correctly notes that Jesus is making five moves in this verse, all which speak of the universality of the *missio Dei*.

> First, he [Jesus] anticipates Paul in making *faith* (which in the story clearly means faith in Jesus) rather than *ethnicity* (physical descent from Abraham) the defining criterion for membership in the kingdom of God.
>
> Second, he restores the theme of the great messianic banquet to its proper universal extent. The idea of an eschatological banquet goes back to Isaiah 25:6, which is being prepared by God "for all peoples."
>
> Third, he rather shockingly uses texts that originally spoke of God gathering in Israelites from exile, "from the east and the west" (Psalm 107:2; Isaiah 43:5-6, 49:12), and implies that they will be fulfilled when Gentiles like this centurion arrive at the banquet, whereas some of the original guest list will find themselves excluded for their lack of believing response.

Fourth, he implicitly abolishes the food laws that had symbolized the distinction between Israel and the nations […].

Finally, Matthew closes his Gospel by making quite explicit what the opening of his Gospel had implied – the universality of Jesus Christ and the worldwide extent of the demand for discipleship.[9]

Luke has aged Simeon recognizing that God's mission is to save "all nations." Simeon sings,

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
    you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
    which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
    and the glory of your people Israel." (Luke 2:29-32 NIV)

John has the most well known passage that talks about the universal mission of God; John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (NIV). The word "world" in John is κοσμος which means more than simply the "earth." It has the meaning of "all creation." Jesus' mission is to reverse the curse placed on the whole of creation by God after the fall into sin by Adam and Eve. It is, after all, not simply humanity that needs redemption, but all creation.

Luke picks up the *missio Dei* theme post-ascension in Acts 4:12. In his speech, Peter says, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (NIV). Later in his book we are told about Peter's encounter with another Roman centurion named Cornelius. Of him Peter says, "But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean" (Acts 10:28b

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[9] Wright, 243-4.

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NIV). Peter's conclusion is, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34-35 NIV) .

Paul, in Romans 9-11, argues that those who are true descendants of Abraham are those who share the faith of Abraham. Blood descent does not necessarily make one a true descendant of Abraham. In Galatians 3, Paul says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28-29 NIV).

As the Bible begins, so it ends. Revelation, too, speaks about the ongoing mission of God to rescue and restore the world, a mission that will meet its final fruition in the second coming of Christ where He will defeat Satan and his minions and restore the world to its Eden perfection. Using apocalyptic language, John writes: "After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'" (Revelation 7:9-10 NIV).

The Doctrine of the Trinity and the *Missio Dei*

How God has revealed Himself to us also suggests that it is His will to make Himself known. God has revealed Himself as a Triune God. When we think theologically about the Trinity, we come to understand that the doctrine of the Trinity itself shows us a God who wills to be known. Thinking about the economy of salvation, the Father sent

His Son to save the whole world making known God's *opus proprium*. His Son, accomplishing that divine mission, sends the Holy Spirit to make this salvation known through the creation of faith. The Father sends the Holy Spirit in the name of His Son to us through His Word and the sacraments to make known to us both the Father's justice through the Law and also the Father's love through the Gospel. Jesus reveals the Father: "If you knew me, you would know my Father also" (John 8:19b NIV). "I [Jesus] and the Father are one" (John 10:30 NIV). The economic Trinity bespeaks God's will to be known by humanity so that His mission of salvation can be accomplished through His grace.

The sacrifice of Jesus and the gift of faith worked by the Holy Spirit make known to us *opus proprium* of the Father. It is not God's will to remain only *Deus absconditus*. It is God's will also to be *Deus revelatus*. As Luther argued in his Heidelburg Disputation (1518), God's *opus alienum* has the purpose of driving prideful humans to utter despair and humility so that He can then work His *opus proprium* of making alive.[10] God declares in Ezekiel 33:11, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live" (NIV). Only the power of God can work this conversion. We know the Father's love only by seeing Jesus. We know Jesus only by the Holy Spirit. We know the *opus proprium* of the Father only through the Holy Spirit and Jesus.

The doctrine of the Trinity emerges from the Gospel and the mission of God is to make that Gospel known to the fallen world so that the world might know the essence of God. Even the immanent Trinity suggests the *missio Dei*. The Son is begotten of the

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[10] Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelburg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 88.

Father to make the Father's essence known. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son so that the truth of God can be revealed to all creation. The persons are of the same substance so that there can be no flaw in communication, and yet they are three distinct persons who have distinct roles in the *missio Dei* with no modality. What we say about the immanent Trinity is based on how God has made himself known in the economic Trinity. Thus Karl Rahner is right when he axiomatically writes, "The 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity."[11] The doctrine of the Trinity, then, goes to the heart of theology, christology, pneumatology and soteriology, all which work in concert to accomplish the *missio Dei*.

Conclusion

There can be no doubt that the Triune God is on a mission. The great number of passages from Scripture and how God has chosen to reveal Himself make it clear that mission originates in the heart of God. God wills to be known. It is in His passion to save the world that we find our passion and motivation for missionary outreach. Evangelism is certainly a task of the church, but it is not the church that commands and sends. It is God who commands and sends through His Church. While one can find ample justification in Scripture for a human imperative to be about "making disciples of all nations," we serve a God who in His creative and redemptive wisdom makes clear that His intention has always been "to seek and to save the lost." All our mission work, all our energies, all our gifts and vocations originate in the greater reality of the *missio Dei*. Wright says it well when he writes, "God is on a mission, and we, in that wonderful phrase of Paul, are 'co-

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[11] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), 22.

workers with God'" (1 Cor. 3:9).[12] The mission of the Church, and all the members of

that church, flows from the *missio Dei.*

B. The Doctrine of the Church

<u>Introduction</u>

That God is a God of mission, there is no doubt. God established His Church as

an instrument through which His kingdom will be extended. The Church is the means

through which the means of grace are given. So in one sense, the Church is all God's

work. The Church is God's mission. He establishes it and He sustains it. If God so chose,

He could have accomplished the mission of the Church by himself. Jesus said in Matthew

3:9, "And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell

you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham." Walther rightly

points out that there is no salvation apart from the true church in Thesis IX of Kirche und

Amt: "To obtain salvation, only fellowship in the invisible church, to which alone all

promises regarding the church were originally given, is absolutely necessary."[13] The true

church has been given the means of grace: the Word and the sacraments. Through these

means God works faith, forgiveness and salvation in people.

The true church is manifested locally by congregations. In the local congregation

both the invisible church (those who are truly regenerate believers) and the visible church

(the sum of those who call themselves believers whether they are true believers or

hypocrites) exist (AC VIII).[14] Even though there are false Christians and hypocrites in the

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[12] Wright, 531-2.

[13] C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt)*, trans. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 21.

[14] *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. and ed. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 33.

local congregation, in an improper sense, it is still "church" as long as there are true

believers and saints gathering around the Word and the sacraments.[15]

The gathering of the believers in Christ is not an adiaphoran. The local

congregation is not a human creation. As Franz Pieper writes,

> We maintain: (1) Because it is the will and order of God that Christians
> who dwell in one locality should not merely read God's Word privately,
> but also fellowship with one another, hear God's Word publically
> preached, to that end establish the public ministry among themselves, and
> after its establishment make use of it; and (2) because it is the duty not
> only of the individual Christian, but also of the congregation to admonish
> and reprove the sinning brother, the whole congregation is enjoined to
> exercise Christian discipline; and (3) because in particular the celebration
> of the Sacrament of the Altar is not merely a church custom, but a divine
> order for the exercise of brotherly communion (1 Cor 10:17, 11:17-21,
> 33): therefore the formation of Christian congregations, and membership
> in them, is not a human, but a divine mandate.[16]

In other words, the doctrine and practice of the Lord's Supper, the doctrine of Christian

fellowship and the doctrine of Holy Ministry demand that there be local congregations.

These local congregations, then, become missionary outposts for God's kingdom.

It is quite clear that Luther believed that the spread of God's reign is the mission of the

church and this spread is accomplished through preaching (*viva vox*). Luther never

divorces mission from the means of grace. Luther does not believe that simply living as

Christians among the heathen, as monks would do in establishing a monastery outpost,

was sufficient to spread God's reign. He insisted that preaching the Word and

administering the sacraments must also be done as these are the means through which

God unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the people.[17]

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[15] Walther, 78.

[16] Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Vol. III*, trans. Theodore Engelder (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 421.

[17] Ingmar Oberg, *Luther and World Mission: A Historical and Systematic Study*, trans. Dean Apel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 206.

One would expect Luther to talk directly about mission work when he explicates Matthew 28:19-20. But Luther doesn't. Instead he talks about the Trinity because Luther never divorces mission work from the *missio Dei*.[18] Luther's paradigm of mission work was not based on some intentional missionary journey like Paul's. His concept of mission was that as Christians moved around the world, they would witness to their faith, join together as believers to form a congregation, call someone to serve them as pastor, and as a congregation, they would evangelize the community. Luther never developed a written systematic missiology. He viewed the whole life of a Christian as one of constant mission work by living the faith wherever the Lord leads the person to use his/her vocation.

Because God is a God on a mission, so, too, the Church is on a mission, a great mission: the mission of making disciples of all nations. The local congregation doesn't exist solely for those who are members, which would devolve into the so-called "country club" mentality. The local congregation feeds and nourishes those who have been called by the Gospel so that they can extend the Kingdom of God through living the faith, through vocation. Thus, evangelism and the extension of God's kingdom is not a secondary issue for a local congregation. It is foundation for its existence. God wants His kingdom to grow and provides resources for growth. That doesn't mean that every local congregation will plant new churches. Perhaps God has supplied other means which are to be employed for the extension of God's kingdom. But for those churches which are given the resources to begin new congregations, they are invited to participate in that particular way in the privilege of "making disciples." Certainly, the witness of Scripture, especially God's Word in Acts, gives us ample example of how God's kingdom grew

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[18] Oberg, 138.

when Paul and his companions planted churches in various locations which grew into local congregations.

<u>"Church" in the Old Testament</u>

The Church is not a recent work of God. It is not merely a New Testament work of God. It is the way YHWH has acted throughout history. God called His people to himself and formed a worshipping community beginning in the Garden in Eden. God met Adam and Eve in the garden where they communed (Genesis 1:28). YHWH and man talked with one another (Genesis 1:28, 29-30, 2:16-17, 3:9-19). When God called Abram (Genesis 12), God chose a person through whom and from whom He could bless the world. Abram and his household worship God in the new land (Genesis 12:8). As God called His people, Israel, out of Egypt, He gathered them around Himself in the tabernacle. God was calling the world to Himself through this worshipping community.

The equivalent of "church" in the Old Testament is *qahal*. The equivalent of "Church" in the Old Testament is *'edah*. (The Septuagint translates *qahal* using the Greek εκκλεσια.) The worshipping community (*qahal*) of Israel served the same function as the New Testament church and the church today. It is where God has chosen to meet His people and through whom God's kingdom may be made known.

The building of the temple in Jerusalem on Mount Zion by Solomon may, on the surface, seem to be purely for the cultic activity of chosen Israel. However, Solomon's own prayer at the dedication of the temple suggests that this temple belonged also to the nations. It would be for the nations a place where they, too, can meet the one true God. Solomon prays in 1 Kings 8:41-43:

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As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name—for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name. (NIV)

The temple was the place where even "foreigners" (נכרי) could come and meet God, and through faith receive the same blessings of mercy and grace that the people of Israel had received.

The prophets spoke about Mount Zion as the place where God makes His name known and where the nations will come to meet Him. Isaiah says in 2:2, "In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it" (NIV). Joel says in 2:32, "And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls." While many of these prophetic utterances had contemporary meaning, they also had eschatological meaning. God uses the Church as a means of distributing His mercy and grace. His Church is open to all people. God's Church will endure through eternity as the place where believers meet their Lord and Savior (Revelation 14:1).

Old Testament worship of YHWH reminded people who their Creator was, how YHWH's creation (including the people of Israel) rebelled against Him, and what YHWH in His mercy does to redeem and restore them and the world. The sacrifices required instilled in those who worshipped YHWH that sin costs, sin kills and only YHWH can give life. This is a simplistic ecclesiology of the Old Testament. My point is

this: The "Church" is not just a New Testament phenomenon even though it will be my primary focus since this is where the term "church" (εκκλεσια) originated.

"Church" in Acts

Since my MAP is focused on multi-site ministry, I wanted to focus on the book of Acts. This book has the most to say in a descriptive way about how the fledgling Christian Church grew in the decades after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Planting multiple sites or churches reflects how Paul planted churches as evidenced in the Acts of the Apostles.

The question I am often asked by colleagues is, "Is your second location a church or not? Even though you call it Ascension-Maple, isn't it really its own congregation?" Currently at Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, we have this moniker on our printed material: "One Church – Two Locations." Many have argued that we are really two churches under one system of governance or that we are two churches with one church controlled by another. The question I want to explore is this: is the term church, εκκλησια, broad enough to justify using the slogan "One Church – Two Locations," especially as we set about establishing a third location?

I am focusing on the Acts of the Apostles because I think Paul is the prime example of multi-site ministry. In almost every town he entered, he endeavored to establish a new church. The term εκκλησια is used to denote a community of believers that met in town and/or house churches. It is also used in circumstances when it does not refer to a single, local congregation, but to a wider community, an association of congregations. It is also used to denote all believers in Christ, what we Lutherans term

the invisible Church. Εκκλησια is also used in three instances in Acts where it does not refer to a Christian gathering at all (19:32, 39 and 40)!

Luke uses the word εκκλησια twenty-three times in Acts. We first encounter the word in Acts 5:11[19]: "And great fear came upon all the church (εκκλησια) and upon all hearing these things."[20] This was written by Luke in connection to the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira. Almost all the commentaries I consulted make note of the fact that this is the first time this word is used by Luke in Acts. What is the meaning of this word? What was its common usage when Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts of the Apostles?[21] What assumptions did Luke make in using this word? Why did Paul and Luke use this word instead of other words associated with religious gatherings? In the choice of this word, what are Paul and Luke trying to convey?

In *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Arndt and Gingrich had several definitions for the word εκκλησια. They list Acts 5:11 under the fourth definition, letter b: "the Christian congregation as the totality of Christians living in one place."[22] Other places in Acts where this definition is applied by Arndt and Gingrich are 8:1 and 3, 11:22, 13:1, 14:23, 15:22, 41 and 16:5. This is a good definition for these instances because the context makes clear that this meaning is the intent of the author. In the Ananias and Sapphira incident of 5:11, the totality of

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[19] The King James Version uses the word "church" in Acts 2:47. The Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament indicates in the critical apparatus that εκκλησια was found in some codices and manuscripts. However, the best and earliest codices and manuscripts do not use the word εκκλησια at this point.

[20] Quotes from the Acts of the Apostles will be my humble attempt at translating the Greek from the Nestle-Aland *Greek New Testament*, 1979.

[21] I am assuming the date of authorship to be between A.D. 65-69. Since Acts does not mention the death of Paul, I am assuming it had not happened. The people and events mentioned in Acts require a date after 64 A.D.

[22] William Arndt and F. William Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1957, 1979), 241.

Christians living on earth was in Jerusalem since mission work outside that city hadn't really begun in earnest. Luke also uses this term for the local churches in Syrian Antioch (11:26), for the churches (plural) in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch Pisidia (14:23) and the local church in Caesarea (18:22). Within the context of each of these verses, the local community of believers seems to be the intent of the author.

But εκκλησια has other definitions as well. From the context of 9:31, "church" must mean more than the local community of believers. Luke writes: "Therefore the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace." The singular "church" is used to refer to many local churches in these areas. Arndt and Gingrich define this use of church as "the church universal, to which all believers belong."[23]

"Church" is used in 7:38 in a different way. Luke writes, "This is the one having been in the church in the desert with the angel speaking to him on Mount Sinai and with our fathers, who received living revelations to give to you." In this context, Luke is referring to the nation of Israel as it wandered in the wilderness. This chosen people of God gathered around the tabernacle was called a church even though it wandered from place to place. Luke's usage here may be influenced by the Septuagint which often used εκκλησια to refer to "the congregation of the Israelites, especially when gathered for religious purposes.[24]

In Acts, the usage of εκκλησια seems to refer to both the local community of believers and the universal church. In Acts 20:28, for example, Luke quotes Paul's address to the Ephesian elders before heading to Jerusalem telling them to guard themselves and the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. Paul tells

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[23] Arndt and Gingrich, 241.
[24] Arndt and Gingrich, 240.

them, "to shepherd the εκκλησια of God." Even though Paul was talking to a specific group of people in a particular location, Ephesus, his command was addressed to "overseers" (plural) with the warning to guard "yourself and all the flock." This address may well have included pastors of churches other than the Ephesian church since it was common for letters to be passed around. In this particular verse Arndt and Gingrich note, "[The usage of εκκλησια] is essential Pauline usage, and it seems to give the current Greek term its Christian coloring and thereby its special meaning."[25]

Paul uses the word εκκλησια almost fifty times in his epistles most of which were written before Luke wrote Acts. Thus, by the time Luke uses this word, its reference to gatherings of local Christians would have been well established.

These two usages are not the total usages of εκκλησια in Acts. In chapter 19, εκκλησια is used three times in a way that has nothing to do with a Christian congregation or religious worship. In verse 32, Luke writes, "Therefore others cried out indeed something different, for the assemblage (εκκλησια) was confused and most didn't know on what account they had come together." This same group of people is referred to again in verse 40 when Luke says that the city clerk dismissed the assembly (εκκλησια). Arndt and Gingrich list these two verses under the second definition, "assemblage, gathering, and meeting."[26] No hint is given in this usage of anything other than a gathering of people. But in the context, specifically verse 30, Luke calls the assembly a δημος, and in verse 33 he calls them a οχλος. Both of these terms mean "crowd" with the latter having the nuance of a throng, a milling about crowd, rather than an occasioned gathering of people. These terms, within this context of confusion, can also

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[25] Arndt and Gingrich, 241.
[26] Arndt and Gingrich, 240.

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be translated as "a mob," especially considering mob mentality where people get caught up in an action and do not know the reason for such mob action. That's why Luke says that most didn't know on what account they had come together.

Εκκλησια is also used in verse 39 with a modifying adjective. Here Luke adds εννομω, which means "legal." This definition is the first listed by Arndt and Gingrich. They define this usage as "assembly, as a regularly summoned political body."[27] The city clerk of Ephesus was referring to a lawful political assembly, not the near riot he saw before him. Luke's usage here indicates a prior meaning to εκκλησια. This term was not reserved solely for a Christian congregation or religious assembly. It is used for a political gathering as well. Coenen states that the word was used as early as the 5th Century B.C.:

> I. (a) ekklesia, derived via ek-kaleo, which was used for the summons to the army to assemble, from kaleo, to call (--. Call). It is attested from Eur. and Hdt. onwards (5th cent. B.C.), and denotes in the usage of antiquity the popular assembly of the competent full citizens of the polis, city. It reached its greatest importance in the 5th cent, and met at regular intervals (in Athens about 30 - 40 times a year, elsewhere less frequently) and also in cases of urgency as an extra-ordinary ekklesia. Its sphere of competence included decisions on suggested changes in the law (which could only be affected by the council of the 400), on appointments to official positions and – at least in its heyday – on every important question of internal and external policy (contracts, treaties, war and peace, finance). To these was added in special cases (e.g. treason) the task of sitting in judgment, which, as a rule, fell to regular courts. The ekklesia opened with prayers and sacrifices to the gods of the city.[28]

Coenen further notes, "Thus ekklesia, centuries before the translation of the OT and the time of the NT, was clearly characterized as a political phenomenon, repeated according

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[27] Arndt and Gingrich, 240.

[28] Lothar Coenen, "Church, Synagogue," *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 1979), 291.

to certain rules and within a certain framework."[29] This prior usage raises a question. Why did Paul and Luke choose this term to denote the worshipping community of Christians? As Coenen notes, it was, except in three exceptional cases, used exclusively for a political gathering.[30] There was prayer and sacrifice to city gods at some of these gatherings, but there seems to be no real cultic sense to the word. There were other words that conveyed the cultic sense more, such as συναγωγη and θιασος. Synagogue had, by the time of Luke, become a more specialized term denoting a place of Jewish worship.[31] But, by its usage in Acts 19, the meaning of εκκλησια pointing to a political assembly referent was still common usage. That aspect of meaning was not dead nor had "church," denoting a gathering of Christians, superseded the older meaning.

One can only speculate on the reason Paul and Luke chose to use εκκλησια for neither author gives us a reason. With συναγωγη so closely connected with Jewish worship, I understand why the primitive Christian community would want to avoid that designation. Too much Jewish cultic activity was connected with the meaning of this word. A primitive community of believers would want to distinguish themselves from Jewish worship as they gain their own sense of corporate identity. On the other hand, at least while still in Jerusalem, the early believers considered themselves a part of the Jewish community. Using the word συναγωγη would have afforded the new Christian gatherings some legal status under Roman law. εκκλησια, having a small amount of cultic activity connected to its meaning, was a fairly neutral term for a gathering. It didn't have the connotation of an unorganized crowd (οχλος), but of an ordered gathering and a

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[29] Coenen, 291.
[30] Coenen, 291-2.
[31] Goeffrey Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 399.

legal assembly to work on community projects. Those nuances would influence how people understood these gatherings. These gatherings were not for rabble-rousing or insurrection, but for an ordered purpose.

It is important to note that the gospels, except for Matthew 16:18 and 18:17, do not use the term εκκλησια at all. Gathered people were most often termed οχλος, (Matthew 9:23, Mark 7:17, Luke 12:13, etc.), with πληθος του λαου used occasionally (Luke 6:17, for instance). εκκλησια is used only after the ascension of Jesus. It is used only after the community had begun to develop a corporate identity with an eschatological flavor. This added nuances to the word as it applied to communities of Christian believers. The group of believers saw themselves as living in the end times following the coming of the promised Messiah.

There seems to be some disagreement as to the helpfulness of the etymology of εκκλησια. Lenski's commentary, which was a standard for many years, says, "The term is derived from εκκαλειν, "to call out," as when a herald calls out the citizens to meet in assembly."[32] This might be the etymology of this word, but εκκαλεω or any of its conjugations are never used in the New Testament. Bromley lists εκκλησια under this root in his theological dictionary.[33] Coenen, as noted in the quote above, also connects it to this root. However, when εκκλησια is used in Acts 19:32, Lenski translates it as "assembly" and makes the comment: "Luke still speaks of the εκκλησια, the word for a proper assembly […]."[34] The point Lenski is making is that, in contrast with the use of δημος in the previous verse, this was a legally "called out" assembly. Only those who

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[32] Richard Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1934), 205.
[33] Bromley, 394.
[34] Lenski, 809.

were called were assembled even if they were confused as to why they were called to assemble.

However, several other authors say that εκκλησια did not carry the sense of "called out" by the time Paul and Luke used it. The word had lost that sense. I. Howard Marshall in his commentary says, "The old view that it means the 'called out' people should be abandoned once and for all, resting as it does on a false derivation of meaning from etymology. Rather, behind the term lies the Jewish use of εκκλησια and συναγωγη to translate Old Testament words referring to the assembly or congregation of God's people."[35]

It is pertinent that the Septuagint translates *qahal* with εκκλησια, while the Hebrew *'edah* was translated mostly with συναγωγη. Coenen notes that *qahal* came to mean "simply the special, general assembly of the people, including women and probably even children…."[36] *'Edah*, on the other hand, is used for the covenant people of Israel, often as a whole. Here Coenen says, "If one compares the use of the two Heb. [sic] words, it becomes clear, from the passages in which both occur in the same context (…) that *'edah* is the unambiguous and permanent term for the covenant community as a whole. On the other hand, *qahal* is the ceremonial expression for the assembly that results from the covenant, for the Sinai community and, in the deuteronomistic sense, for the community in its present form. It can also stand for the regular assembly of the people on secular or religious occasions, as well as for a gathering crowd."[37] So if εκκλησια is

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[35] I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 114.
[36] Coenen, 293.
[37] Coenen, 295.

more connected with the *qahal* in the Septuagint, with which the Hellenistic Jews would be familiar, then εκκλησια had some cultic sense to it, but not overtly like *'edah*.

Louw and Nida say, "Though some persons have tried to see in the term εκκλησια a more or less literal meaning of 'called-out ones,' this type of etymologizing is not warranted either by the meaning of εκκλησια in New Testament times or even by its earlier usage. The term εκκλησια was in common usage for several hundred years before the Christian era and was used to refer to an assembly of persons constituted by well-defined membership."[38] When you add to this how often εκκλησια is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew *qahal*, you have a long history of usage that refers to a gathering of people, a community, without a sense of being "called out." I cannot detect in Paul, Luke and other New Testament writers that they intended the idea of "called out" to be understood when they used the term εκκλησια. That Christians were elected by God and gathered into the church is known from Paul, especially when he refers to the one "called to be holy" in the church of God in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2) and the "called to be saints" in Rome (Romans 1:7). But this calling εν Χριστοω is not associated with being "called out." The history and usage of the term are more important than the etymology.

Why does this make a difference? It makes a difference because if indeed εκκλησια refers to "called out" people, then we would have to determine what exactly the "calling out" entailed. What would be the Christian's relationship to the world? Does this "calling out" mean that we remove ourselves from the rest of society? Does this "calling out" mean that the church on earth contains only true believers, that everyone

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[38] Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1988), 126.

who belongs to an εκκλησια is a true believer and no hypocrites are a part of the church? The ramifications could lead in several directions. If the church does in fact consist of those whom God has called out of the world, it would relate to material rather than linguistic considerations.

Εκκλησια in Acts does not have the usage of a special "called out" people who are only true believers. It refers more often to the total community of believers in Christ at a given location. Coenen says, "Hence the *ekklesia* can be thought of in purely concrete terms, and any spiritualizing in the dogmatic sense of an invisible church is still unthinkable for Paul."[39] Brown, at this point, makes this editorial comment, "The thought uppermost is not to minimize the importance of church membership, but to recognize the possibility of hypocrisy and deceit."[40] This suggests to me that εκκλησια, as it was in use at the time of Paul and Luke, was strongly connected to a concrete community of believers whether they were in one location or many locations. Thus the church could exist in the full sense in several places at once.

We also know from some of Paul's epistles, in particular Philemon 2, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Romans 16:5 and Colossians 4:15, the term εκκλησια was used for groups of people meeting in individual homes as well. This would indicate that neither the location nor the size of the gathered believers determine the use of the term. What counts, it seems, is the faith in Christ those assembled share.

So is Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, really "One Church – Two Locations?" Can local congregations which establish multi-site ministries still be one church? Is the term "church" broad enough to encompass this method of growing God's

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[39] Coenen, 299.
[40] Coenen, 299.

Kingdom? I would say, "Yes." If the term can be applied to groups meeting in houses as well as those gathered in the hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus (Acts 19:9), then location doesn't determine what is and what is not a church. Could there have been multiple house churches in Ephesus? We know they met not only in the hall of Tyrannus but in the house of Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus (Romans 16:5). Yet in all these situations, Luke always calls the total number of believers "the church."

Coenen, again, has a pertinent remark, "In the Acts too the *ekklesia* is ultimately one. Admittedly, it appears only as it gathers in particular places. But it always implies the totality."[41] Ascension Lutheran Church, as a legal corporate body, is one church – two locations. As a spiritual body, all our members are connected with the one true Church in Christ. It is faith in Christ that incorporates believers into the Church, not the location or the assembled group. But does that mean each location is a congregation? In a sense it is, as fellow believers form relationships and unite to serve one another in community. In another sense, it is simply an extension of Ascension-Tyler because there are many who worship at both locations and each worshipping community works together in common mission endeavors. There is much crossover of people between both locations. If Ascension-Maple decided that it would want to become an independent, separately incorporated congregation, I'm sure Ascension-Tyler would agree to that after some negotiation as to who would be responsible for certain monetary debts. However, at this time, the cooperation in mission and ministry that exists between locations is seen as valuable to the larger witness of Christ's kingdom in west Wichita.

At this point in time, the real pressure for Ascension-Maple to become a separate legal entity has been coming from our circuit counselor who wants to add to the total

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[41] Coenen, 303.

number of churches in our circuit. If our Maple campus would become a separate incorporated church, we would have enough churches to move from two circuits to three circuits and thus gain more representation in district and synodical processes. The polity of the LCMS adds complications. I will discuss the polity issue a little later.

Paul's mission developments in the towns he visited would suggest that while each location had an εκκλησια, meaning a local gathering of believers, turf protection and anxiety over counting members was not an issue. They saw themselves as fellow brothers and sisters united in the mission of sharing the Good News that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Location and size made no difference. They were a part of this special community of redeemed people of Christ. Surely, εκκλησια is broad enough to be used for multi-site ministry churches as well.

Conclusion

Believers are given the privilege of being missionaries wherever their vocation currently has them dwelling. And yet we must maintain that <u>God alone ordains and establishes the Church</u>. Because faith alone in Jesus Christ as Savior makes a person a member of the one true Church through the power of the Gospel (Ephesians 1:19-20, 1 Peter 1:15 and John 1:13), God alone, specifically, the Holy Spirit, "calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith (SC, Art. 3)."[42] The Church is built and preserved on the means of grace (Romans 10:17, 1 Peter 1:23-25). The Church is not established by human desire and it is not preserved by human might. The Church is entirely and solely God's work (Psalm 100:3, 1 Corinthians 5:17-20).

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[42] *The Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, 345.

At the same time, God has given his people the privilege of extending His kingdom by "making disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). While humanity does not ordain or establish the church, we are the *causa instrumentalis* (instrumental cause). God uses humanity, with all its flaws and weaknesses, to be the instruments and mouthpieces for the Gospel which saves. As His instruments, we are to use our God-given mind and talents to pray, plan and execute ways to enable God's kingdom to come. The planting of a new congregation or site is but one strategy in kingdom extension.

C. The Office of Holy Ministry

<u>Introduction</u>

There is only one way to enter into the Kingdom of God – by grace through faith for Christ's sake. Faith alone justifies the human before the Holy God. Thus, only faith makes one righteous before God. The only way to obtain faith is through the means that God has chosen to deliver faith to the human heart – His Word and the sacraments. Through these means of grace faith, life and salvation are delivered. The Holy God in His wisdom chose humanity as His *causa instrumentalis* to make His Word known. God's will is that His people, in addition to private and personal testimony and witness, band together as congregations. His people are called to join together in worshipping communities so that these means can be taught and rightly administered. That the preaching and administration may be done in good order, as our God is a God of order, He has commanded that His people gathered in worship call a pastor to serve *en publica*. Thus Article V of the Augsburg Confession, which follows on the heel of the article on saving faith, says:

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To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel.[43]

The Office of Holy Ministry is not of human invention nor is it an optional office. Walther wrote in Thesis II of the Holy Ministry: "The ministry of the Word or the pastoral office is not a human institution but an office that God Himself has established."[44] Walther bases this conclusion on predictions of the prophets (Psalms 68:11, Jeremiah 3:15, and Joel 2:23), the call of the apostles into ministry (Matthew 10; Luke 9:1-10, Mark 16:15, John 20:21-23; 21:15-17), the divine character of the ministry (Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 12:28-29, Ephesians 4:11) and those who were later called mediately by the apostles as co-workers who were made equal to them (1 Peter 5:1, 2 John 1, 3 John 1, Colossians 4:7).[45] The office is ordained by God so that His kingdom may come among us.

Christians are to unite to do the work of the Lord. As believers gathered in a location, they are to establish the Office of Holy Ministry. This right and privilege belongs solely to the congregation and not to an individual, such as a pope, not to a hierarchy, such as a synod or presbytery, nor to any political power, such as a king or president. The Office of the Keys belongs to the priesthood of all believers and the priesthood of all believers, acting in concert, establishes the Office of Holy Ministry among themselves according to the will of God.

It is impossible in this section to cover all aspect of the doctrine of Holy Ministry. Given the basic understanding of the previous paragraphs, I want to touch on those

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[43] *Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, 31.
[44] Walther, 177.
[45] Walther, 177-178.

aspects of the doctrine of Holy Ministry which I believe converge with the contemporary

practice of multi-site ministry. The issues include these. Who has the right to call and

ordain pastors? May a congregation elect and call a person who has no formal theological

training? Does each location necessarily need an ordained pastor? May a non-rostered

person, properly called by a congregation, do Word and sacrament ministry under the

supervision of the original site's pastor? With the recent advent of Specific Ministry

Pastors (SMPs), how may these gifts be employed in multi-site ministry? What role does

LCMS polity play in multi-site ministry and specifically in relation to how other non-

LCMS churches practice multi-site ministry? I will not discuss the question of whether

the Pastoral Office puts the holder in a special class above ordinary Christians, which I do

not believe it does, even though it was an issue for Walther in *Kirche und Amt*

contradicting J. A. A. Grabau and the Buffalo Synod. This question is not an issue that

directly impacts multi-site ministry as practiced contemporarily.

The Right to Call and Ordain

 The right to call and ordain derives from Christ's gift of the Office of the Keys

(John 20:21-23). This spiritual power is distinct and separate from any temporal power.

The Office of the Keys imparts spiritual blessings and is given to the whole church, that

is, apostles, pastors and lay people alike. As many of us learned in Junior Confirmation

class,

> *What is the Office of the Keys?* It is the peculiar church power which
> Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent
> sinners, but to retain the sins of the impenitent as long as they do not
> repent.[46]

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[46] *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A Handbook of Christian Doctrine* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943, 1965), 181.

The Office of the Keys cannot belong to an individual since an individual does not constitute "The Church." In Matthew 16:19, Jesus' disciples were gathered around Him when He addressed Peter by saying, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (NIV). That doesn't mean the keys were given only to Peter. In this instance as in others, Peter is used as a synecdoche, a part for the whole. He is representative of the Church. Later when Jesus spoke of the power of the keys in Matthew 18:18, this power wasn't given to Peter alone. Jesus was speaking to all His disciples when He said, "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (NIV). The power to retain and remit sins is given to the whole church, the priesthood of all believers.

In view of the testimony of Holy Scripture, after Jesus, the congregation is the highest earthly ecclesiastical authority. Authority in the church isn't derived from an organization, an assembly of churches or by a group of clergy usurping the power of the keys. Edward Koehler writes: "The local congregation is not subject to the jurisdiction of any other congregation, nor to any higher ecclesiastical body, such as a synod, a conference, a super-church, a pope and the like. Christ gives supreme and final judgment to the church, when He says: 'Tell it unto the church' (Matthew 18: 17, 20)."[47] Therefore the local congregation is the sole possessor of the right to call a pastor.

It is the priesthood of all believers gathered in the local congregation exercising the power of the Keys that has not only the right, but the command to establish the Office of Holy Ministry. Walther writes:

> Since the congregation or church of Christ, that is, the communion of
> believers, has the power of the keys and the priesthood immediately […],

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[47] Edward W. A. Koehler, *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 253.

it also and it alone can entrust the office of the ministry, which publicly administers the office of the keys and all ministerial functions in the congregation, to certain competent persons by electing, calling, and commissioning.[48]

The congregation exercising this power of the Keys as the sole possessor of the priesthood can fill that office in the name of the congregation. Pastors receive their power and authority only through the call of the congregation. That is why our confessions (AC, XIV) insist: "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call" (*rite vocatus*).[49]

It is the call of the congregation and the acceptance of that call which makes a person a pastor. Neither ordination nor installation makes one a pastor. Ordination is attested to in Scripture as when hands were laid on a chosen group of men in Acts 6:6 and on Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:3. It is also attested in 1 Timothy 4:14, 5:22 and 2 Timothy 1:6. Ordination, however, is not commanded. It is a good and proper rite and carries with it certain divine blessings, but it is not a sacrament nor does it place one above the ordinary Christian. We, as a church body, retain this rite because it serves order and decency and because of the divine blessings it carries. However, ordination and installation are not necessary for a person to have a *rite vocatus* to a congregation.

Whom May a Congregation Call?

If the congregation is the highest earthly ecclesiastical authority, then it and it alone has the right to call a pastor to fill the Office of Holy Ministry. The congregation alone can call whom it wishes to fill that office. The witness of the early church in Acts seems to suggest that Paul appointed people to fill the pastoral office. However, a careful

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[48] Walther, 219.
[49] *Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, 36.

reading of Acts 15:23 says that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders (πρεσβυτεροι) in each church, but there was no laying on of hands suggesting an ordination or installation. While it isn't explicit in Scripture, the inference could be made that ordination and installation were left to the individual churches as they met together.

But may the congregation call whom it wants without input from other ecclesiastical officials? Melancthon asserts the right of the local congregation to do so. He says in his Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope: "Consequently, when the regular bishops become enemies of the Gospel and are unwilling to administer ordination, the churches retain the right to ordain for themselves. For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing and ordaining ministers."[50] The local congregation may elect, call and ordain whom it wants without the consent of any other ecclesial authority.

This suggests that congregations can do what they want. But, what does the Christian congregation want to do? The Christian congregation, as the local manifestation of the Church, wants to do what is God-pleasing in this matter. Therefore, Christian congregations will not elect and call just any person, but only persons who are competent and gifted to perform the duties connected with this divine office. 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 2:7-8 are the seminal verses that speak to the qualifications for the Office of Holy Ministry. Congregations will necessarily want to be cautious in their choosing so that no offense is given or false witness preached and taught that could damage the eternal welfare of the souls within the congregation.

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[50] *Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, 331.

To prevent such a scenario, early in the history of the LCMS, it was agreed by those congregations joining the synod that they would only call those who were certified by one of the seminaries or rostered by the synod.[51] An orderly practice was established so that the entire church was involved in obtaining pastors. This was done to protect congregations from those who claimed to be preachers, but later were discovered to be frauds.[52] The previously established seminaries were charged with properly training candidates to present to vacant congregations so that the pastoral office could be filled. However, the above arrangement is of human origin and is not by divine command. Certification by any earthly authority is not prescribed anywhere in Scripture, although it is good and proper. Scripture's general prescription is that things be done decently and in order for the sake of the witness of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 14:40).

If a congregation wanted to elect and call an individual who is not rostered or certified by the synod or one of the seminaries, it may do so since the local congregation is the highest earthly ecclesiastical authority. If the congregation wanted to elect and call someone with no formal theological training, it has the right. Of course, taking such action would exhibit non-fraternal behavior, call into question church fellowship and would seriously damage relationships with other congregations that are united in common ministry according to the pledge they made when joining the LCMS. It would be a poor witness of the kingdom of God if a congregation would go out on its own without following the agreed upon procedures. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations spoke to this issue in 1981:

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[51] Carl Mayer, ed., *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 152-154.
[52] Carl Mayer, ed., 92-93.

We stress the fact that ordination is the declaration of the whole confessional fellowship. In the end, a single congregation or an agency representing larger segments of the church does issue the call. Nevertheless, in a synod of congregations bound by a common confession and loyalty, good order demands that admission into the pastoral office or into its closely allied auxiliary offices is not the act of a single congregation or agency.[53]

They go even further to say,

For a congregation willfully to ignore or ride roughshod over the concern of the rest of the church in establishing its ministry is a sin against the brotherhood and may even be a schismatic act in that it ignores the transparochial aspect of the "regular call" (AC, XIV)."[54]

Does a Second or Third Site Need an Ordained Pastor?

Each congregation must establish the Office of Holy Ministry. The Holy Ministry has been ordained by God so that the Gospel may be preached and the sacraments administered rightly. That fact we have previously established.[55] We have also established that while ordination is good and proper, it is not absolutely necessary for a man to be called into the Office of Holy Ministry. So does each site need an "ordained" pastor? No, but note the caveat of the previous section. Does each site need a pastor? Yes. This doesn't mean that each site must have a pastor exclusively to itself. Sharing a pastor or pastors among several congregations or sites is a longstanding practice with dual, even triple parishes. What this means is that each site needs a regularly called pastor to serve it. How can the Word be preached and the sacraments administered rightly (AC, V) without a pastor? However, we don't push this too far into thinking that the office of the ministry is absolutely necessary. It is not the office that confers spiritual blessings.

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[53] *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (St. Louis: Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 1981), 30.

[54] *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 31.

[55] See the introduction under "The Office of Holy Ministry."

The office simply administers the means of grace through which spiritual blessings, such as forgiveness of sin, faith and salvation, are conferred.

It is recognized that in cases of emergency, where no regularly called minister of the Word is available, a congregation may elect one of its own and call that person to serve as pastor. Walther quotes Huelsemann: "In an emergency not only the elder but also the seniors of any particular congregation may ordain, because the power to ordain does not inhere in one member."[56] The planting of additional sites in connection with the contemporary practice of multi-site ministry in the United States would not constitute such an emergency. The desire to have a "campus pastor" is real, but it does not rise to the level of emergency. To call it an emergency would run the risk of being an act of disunity and a breech of fraternity with fellow LCMS congregations.

I believe this question is asked among multi-site practitioners looking more toward financial issues rather than theological issues. Multi-site churches from denominations that do not make a pledge to abide by certain agreements when it comes to the person who fills the Office of Holy Ministry quite routinely choose and train a layman who is seen as having the gifts of being a pastor. After a certain time of training within the local congregation, the layman is deployed as "campus pastor" at one of the additional sites.

In the LCMS, the cost of having a rostered pastor is not to be taken lightly. If multi-site ministry is to become a legitimate church planting model, then the financial responsibility of having a rostered pastor will certainly be a factor. It may be a factor that will need to be addressed with alternatives to full-time rostered pastors especially in rural or ethnic situations. The LCMS is doing that now with the Specific Ministry Program

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[56] Walther, 287.

(SMP) and with Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT). The LCMS doesn't have

to do away with rostering, which is a protection for the congregations, but the paradigm

of what a pastor looks like in the LCMS may have to change. Currently, a local

congregation should not and ought not, for the sake of fellowship and "walking together,"

elect and call someone to serve as "campus pastor" who has not been properly certified or

rostered.

May a Layman Serve as "Campus Pastor" under the Supervision of an Ordained Clergy?

This may sound similar to the question we just discussed. However, this question

comes from another issue. The issue here is how to "provide the Gospel and the

sacraments" (AC V) at each additional site. God established the Office of Holy Ministry

for this purpose. In the past, when clergy were not available, services were conducted by

lay people who read prepared sermons.[57] But these were emergency or exceptional

situations. This solution was temporary and not meant to be permanent. Baptisms, except

in medical emergencies, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper were delayed until a

called and ordained clergy could be present. Today, the preached word can come from a

live person, via DVD, cable, internet or satellite. A person on the other side of the world

can hear a called and ordained pastor preach and teach God's Word. The LCMS has

embraced technology for the distribution of the preached Word throughout its history. It

has used books, magazines, radio and now internet and satellite.

This new technology has made it possible for multiple sites to hear the preached

Word of God either in real time or recorded. Having a remote congregation served with

the Word by a called and ordained pastor is not a problem. However, the Word is

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[57] Mayer, 200.

different from the sacraments in that the Word is not connected to visible or earthly elements. The preached Word is effective because of the Holy Spirit's presence in God's Word. The Word is cast far and wide, like a net, and catches whom the Spirit wills (Matthew 13:47-50). The sacraments are of a different sort because of need for pastoral care before and after the celebration of the sacrament.

The problem of a layman serving as "campus pastor" or worship leader comes with the administration of the sacraments. How can pastoral care be given without the presence of a pastor? To be sure, advice and counsel can be given electronically, but pastoral care entails more than just advice and counsel. How can a pastor instruct and prepare parents for the baptism of a child if he is not present? How can a pastor consecrate and administer the Lord's Supper, carefully tending the flock, if he is not present? It is not that **only** ordained clergy may baptize or consecrate Holy Communion. These gifts were given to the whole Church, which is made up of the priesthood of all believers. Any Christian may baptize or consecrate Holy Communion in emergency, exceptional or temporary cases. Walther quotes Gerhard in this matter: "Assuming that there is no regular minister of the Word, the administration of Baptism should still not be omitted, since, for the essence of Baptism, it is not at all required that he who administers this sacrament should be a minister of the church."[58] Yet for the sake of order, God has established the Office of Holy Ministry to administer the means of grace *en publica*. In a congregational setting, the pastor administers the sacraments. The need for pastoral care puts the sacraments in a different category than the Word which can be spread far and wide.

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[58] Walther, 285.

I read about one so-called virtual church where the person to be baptized was linked via webcam to the pastor. The pastor spoke the words and the mother-in-law of the one to be baptized dunked the woman in their Jacuzzi tub.[59] Why it was necessary for the pastor to speak the Word, I do not know. In cases of emergency any Christian may baptize since they belong to the priesthood of all believers, but this was not an emergency. The author indicates the woman wanted to be baptized right then. The emergency was based on an emotional issue, not a threat of death issue. In my opinion, this woman should have sought out a local congregation, joined that fellowship, and then sought Holy Baptism. She should have been baptized among fellow believers where she would also receive their support and encouragement in the faith.

This same book says that some churches "have created scenarios that allow them to share the sacrament of Communion online."[60] While both Holy Baptism and Holy Communion require pastoral care, Holy Communion is different than Holy Baptism because of the scriptural mandate that participants examine themselves before partaking of Holy Communion (1 Corinthians 11:28). The celebration of Holy Communion "virtually," in my opinion, is not in accord with God's institution.

There are several issues that are ignored when consecration comes electronically. First of all, when Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, he was physically present and in fellowship with those present. We remember that the power of the sacraments is not the pastor. The Donatist heresy was settled long ago. Franz Pieper writes, "that neither the condition of the administrant nor of the communicants, but the institution and ordinance

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[59] Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon and Warren Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip: Exploring the New Normal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 93.
[60] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, 93.

of Christ make our celebration the Lord's Supper."[61] The power of the sacrament is the Word of God.

The question still remains, is it valid when the pastor speaks the Word of God, as in the words of consecration, over the internet or via satellite? If the person has no bearing on the power of the Word, then certainly distance and transmission would have no bearing on the power of God's Word. Even if another person at the other end were doing the application of the water or putting his or her hand over the elements of Holy Communion, as long as God's Word is spoken, it is effective. But, this is not how Holy Communion was instituted and would not follow Jesus' command to "do this" (Luke 22:19).

Second, electronic consecration could lead to the false notion that the power of the sacraments is in the person doing the consecration, in this case a pastor via web-cam or satellite link. Instead of drawing the believers' attention to the power of the Word, electronic consecration draws the attention of the believers to the pastor, making his words similar to an incantation.

Recently, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) came to a similar conclusion when it answered a question from a Texas pastor concerning DVD consecration of the Lord's Supper. The response said:

> This practice lends itself to the unscriptural notion that the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper are present by virtue of the "incantation" of the pastor in some way, shape or form, rather than by the gracious power of Christ and his Word. "Concerning the consecration," says the Formula of Concord, "we believe, teach, and confess that no man's work nor the recitation of the minister effect this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but it is to be ascribed solely and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ" (FC Ep. VII, 8; quoted in *TPLS,* 15). While it is true that "the regularly called and ordained pastors of the

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[61] Pieper, 369-370.

church are to officiate at the administration of Holy Communion" (*TPLS*, 17-18), it is only "through Christ's word and its power"—not through the mere "sound" or "recording" of the voice of the pastor—"that Christ's body and blood are present in the bread and wine" (*TPLS*, 14).[62]

Another problem I have with "virtual" sacraments or having a non-called and ordained "campus pastor" celebrating Holy Communion is the disconnection of "The Office" from the people. The fellowship among pastor and parishioner is absent. To be sure, when Christ instituted Holy Communion, having a person in another place speaking the words could not have taken place. A person could be only in one place at a time. Although Christ using His divine powers could do such a thing, He did not. Paul's address to the Corinthians is very instructive concerning the fellowship aspect of Holy Communion. Communion is not simply between "me and God." Communion is also a witness of the reconciliation we have with God and one another through the forgiveness of sins.

In addition, there can be no pastoral supervision to lovingly prevent someone from eating and drinking judgment on themselves (1 Corinthians 11:29). The pastor knows better than some layperson serving as campus pastor the people he serves. Close Communion is practiced for the very reason of loving service and care. Close Communion cannot be practiced in a "virtual" way.

The sacraments are not absolutely necessary for salvation. Baptisms, in non-emergency situations, can wait for the properly called pastor of a congregation to be present. The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated "often," but "often" is never specifically defined. Here, too, arrangements can be made for the pastor to be present. The issue, I

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[62] Commission on Theology and Church Relations, *Texas District President Request concerning "DVD Consecration"*, accessed March 3, 2011, http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CTCR/DVD%20Communion%20Response%200206.pdf, 2.

believe, is more one of convenience. It is inconvenient for parishioners of sites where the called pastor is not physically present to come at a special or different time which would allow his presence. In today's culture, 10:00 A.M. Sunday is the time most people find convenient to attend church. If it doesn't happen then, the thinking is, then it won't happen at all. In the LCMS, multi-site would work best if a called and ordained pastor were present at each location.

Could Specific Ministry Pastors (SMPs) Be an Answer?

With the advent of what is being called Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP), the LCMS as an "entire church" in convention, has agreed to a slight paradigm shift in what constitutes a "regular call." A process for a layman to be certified by the seminaries has been established and the requirements for certification have been laid out. SMP students do not have to follow the four years of theological training as a residential student at a seminary as most pastoral candidates. Their service to the Lord's kingdom in a local congregation is included in meeting the established requirements. In addition, they receive specialized training so that they may be certified for a call to a specific type of ministry.

SMPs could potentially be a way for multi-site ministries to administer the sacraments rightly, even if the Word is electronically preached or delivered. If a congregation is truly going to be multi-site and if God blesses that ministry, the reality is one pastor will not be able to adequately serve multiple sites. It may happen that someone within the current congregation has been given gifts that can be used in the service of God's kingdom. That person may be groomed with in-house training. If that person is drawn to ministry, the congregation can ask him to consider entering the SMP program

with the intent that the congregation will call him to a specific ministry. Dividing the duties of the one pastoral office is common in multi-staff situations. It would be possible for an SMP to be called by the church to perform some of the duties of pastor at outlying planted sites.

If the message is delivered electronically, there might be a disconnect between pastor and people. For example, what if something tragic happens within a community at a location outside the city where the original campus is? This scenario can be addressed in two ways. Either the preaching pastor could mention the tragedy in his sermon, or the "campus pastor," assuming the "campus pastor" is called and ordained, could be asked to preach for that Sunday in that community of faith. There is a way to meet the needs of each community. Yet, proclamation (in the sense that Forde used the word[63]), the delivery of the goods, so to speak, is awkward and generic when the sermon is delivered electronically. So while it may be plausible to deliver sermons electronically, I would argue against it for the above reason. However, when the sites are within the same city or area and the preacher knows each of the sites, then delivery of the message electronically may work and proclamation can be done without it becoming generic, especially if the additional sites are simply different venues on the same campus.

If the issue is that the preacher needs to "know" the parishioners, then we are getting into territory that is speculation without clear directive from Scripture. How well does a pastor have to know his people to be effective? How well does he have to know them to "deliver the goods?" In a congregation where more than 800 people worship each weekend, how well does a pastor really know all the people? Answers to this issue would be mere human argument for nothing in Scripture speaks to this.

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[63] Gerhard Forde, *Theology Is for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 1.

The SMP may be helpful with the issue of a "campus pastor" for LCMS churches. Otherwise, my advice is to have the called and ordained pastor do "live" preaching as much as possible and provide times and places for the sacraments at each location.

How Does LCMS polity mitigate against Multi-Site Ministry?

While polity is of human origin, it is not something to be taken lightly. As mentioned above, when a congregation joins the LCMS, it makes a pledge to a confession and to certain practices. Synods and similar organizations are formed by a number of congregations for the purpose of accomplishing work that can only be done through cooperation. It is better and more efficient for a group of churches (i.e., a synod) to do foreign mission work cooperatively rather than each church doing its own thing. It is better that congregations with the same faith and confession unite to protect and defend the faith than having each church individually defending matters of doctrine. These larger groupings are not divinely ordained and of themselves are not possessors of the Keys. They do, however, serve a good and decent purpose enabling local congregations to accomplish great things for the kingdom of God. Although polity is not divinely prescribed, it is useful.

Churches who seek to follow the multi-site model of church planting bump up against some polity issues that adversely affect them. There are generally two minor issues which deter a congregation from using the multi-site model.

One such minor issue has to do with how representatives are determined for district and synodical conventions. Only a church that is legally incorporated with a constitution approved by the district and accepted as a congregation in a district convention is entitled to one lay and one pastoral delegate. Under current polity, multi-

site congregations only count as one congregation thus limiting representation for district and electoral circuits to one pastor and one lay delegate. Since additional sites are not organizationally separate and function under the constitution of the original site, they are not allowed representation. Again, this issue will not stop a congregation from following the multi-site model of church planting, but in the interest of dealing fairly and brotherly with one another, this issue should be addressed.

Another way LCMS polity deters using the multi-site model is our agreed upon practice for training pastors. This was discussed above. Training is not the issue. The church wants and needs trained clergy. However, do all clergy need to be master-level theologians? We need clergy to be theologians. We need clergy at all levels to be able to apply God's Word to people and address culture. However, not all parishes need master-level theologians. There are "alternate" routes to ordination, such as colloquy, SMP and EIIT. Perhaps more thinking needs to take place on this issue.

I believe that a fair and fraternal way forward can be found in dealing with these issues so that the mission of God's kingdom is furthered. I don't believe them to be major issues that would cause long discussions of deep theological topics. Addressing these polity concerns deal more with control and power issues than with theology.

Conclusion

The Office of Holy Ministry is a divine office that God has established to administer the means of grace in a congregational setting. This office must be filled in the congregation. It is not optional. The people of God need to be served. Multi-site ministry seeks to go where the people are and to serve them. Pastors are the most appropriate way to deliver the spiritual blessings of the means of grace. Additional sites birthed from the

original campus cannot be without a shepherding pastor. They cannot simply choose someone from their ranks, elect and call them to serve as pastor. Doing so does not involve the entire church.

Providing Word and sacrament ministry to additional sites or venues can become a challenge, but there are ways to provide for the ministry which are in accord with Scripture and our confessions. The model of multi-site ministry, in and of itself, is not forbidden in Scripture. However, the way many non-denominational and reformed churches are currently practicing this model does raise Scriptural and theological issues so that care must be taken by LCMS churches not to give up the truth of Scripture for this model of church planting.

THE HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, is a multi-site ministry. There are very few congregations in the LCMS that classify themselves as multi-site ministries. Recently, a book was written declaring that America is experiencing a "multi-site revolution."[64] This book claims that there are 1,500 multi-site ministries in the United States.[65] One out of four megachurches (that is, churches with attendance of 2,000 or more on a weekend[66]) holds worship services at a place other than the main campus.[67] Today, multi-site ministry is as prevalent in denominational churches as it is in non-denominational churches.[68] This model of church planting continues to rapidly expand. Even in the LCMS the number of multi-site congregations is increasing as well.

I realize that one pastor serving multiple sites is not all that unique. Dual and triple parishes are not uncommon in the LCMS. One pastor or even a pastor with a number of lay workers or deacons serving under his supervision can be traced from the earliest churches in Christianity. Multi-site ministry is how the Christian church started as demonstrated in the theological foundation of this MAP. This historical context section will bring to the reader examples of multi-site ministry, starting with the Apostle Paul, the father of multi-site ministry. I will write about examples found among the early

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[64] Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon and Warren Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 2006), 9.

[65] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, 9.

[66] Hartfort Institute for Religious Research and Leadership Network, "Megachurch Definition," accessed Jan. 21, 2011, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/definition.html.

[67] Hartford Institute for Religious Research and Leadership Network, "Megachurch 2005 Survey," accessed Jan. 26, 2009, http://www.hirr.hartsem.edu.

[68] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, "Multisite Is Multiplying: New Developments in the Movements Expansion," accessed Jan. 28, 2011, http://leadnet.org/resources/download.asp, 2.

church fathers. Moving into Medieval and Reformation history, I will show examples of some abuses that arose from one pastor/priest being in charge of multiple parish sites. The surprise of my research was what I discovered in connection with Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, one of the founders of the LCMS. He was *Pfarrer* of four parishes in St. Louis at the same time even while the pastors at those parishes were *Seelsorgers* under Walther's direction. Circuit preachers (*Reiseprediger*) were also employed by the LCMS to serve multiple worshipping communities. This section will conclude with this writer's interpretation of these examples from the past and what it may mean for the self-knowledge of Ascension Lutheran Church.

A. The Historical Perspective

Multi-Site in the Context of Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS

Ascension Lutheran Church - Tyler Campus started in 1960. This congregation has been blessed with a large number of members and very good facilities. In 1997, land was made available by the Kansas district at 12885 West Maple. The stipulation for the purchase of this land from the Kansas district was that a new ministry must be started. This parcel of land was an advance site purchase by the district. Ascension and the Kansas district previously tried to plant a new congregation. Abundant Life Lutheran Church was the name of the mission. Ascension called a church planting pastor and funds were granted by the Kansas district. However, after a year and a half of struggle and many other logistical obstacles, the mission planting pastor took a call. The Kansas District mission executive decided to abort the mission.

The district then turned to Ascension and asked if we would be interested in the land at 12885 West Maple, about four miles south and west of the Tyler campus.

Ascension formed a planning committee to study this opportunity. In 2000, Ascension decided to purchase the land at a greatly reduced price and begin a second site using the Open Arms Child Care model. A daycare/multipurpose building was erected and opened in 2002. Soon after the dedication, the city of Wichita decided to close West Maple Street between South 119th Street and South 135th Street for 10 months to widen it. This severely hampered access to the new daycare facility, with the result being the number of families served was much below expectation.

That was 10 years ago. The last five years Open Arms has generated a profit which has been used to complete an unfinished area and expand the Open Arms' summer recreation program. The summer recreation program generates the most revenue because it has the largest enrollment. Open Arms, however, is just one side of the story.

The story I want to focus on is the worshipping community that has developed at this location. We began worship services at Ascension-Maple Campus on September 14, 2003, with a Sunday evening service. This service grew to around 80 in attendance each week. The Tyler campus was getting very crowded and to open up space, the congregation agreed with the proposal of the pastoral staff to begin a Sunday morning worship service. This service began on September 4, 2005 and has grown to an average of 170 in attendance each Sunday morning. In September 2008, the Sunday evening service was moved to Saturday evening. The reason for this change was because Sunday evening had dwindled to 40 people in attendance, and we had people requesting Saturday evening services. Wichita is a very Roman Catholic community and Saturday evening services are a common option and not a novelty. The last two months have seen an average weekend attendance of 247 at Ascension-Maple.

Multi-site ministry has worked very well for Ascension. We have recognized how important it is to establish new ministries with proper leadership and support. The direction provided by an experienced pastoral staff and the financial management provided by an established congregation have helped God's kingdom grow in west Wichita. Ascension is looking forward to starting a third site and to continue providing leadership and resources to sites beyond.

When Ascension decided to follow the multi-site ministry model, I assumed this model was quite new in the LCMS. The recent history of the LCMS has been to plant independent congregations incorporated separately from the planting congregation. One of the past mission strategies was for a planting congregation, usually the largest Lutheran Church in town, to plant independent daughter congregations around the town as the population grew. This is how Ascension was started. The mother church of Wichita, KS, is Immanuel Lutheran Church. This church planted six daughter congregations as Wichita grew in population and size. Each church called its own pastor and these congregations, with subsidy from the Kansas district, were financially responsible for the pastor and property. What is unique about Ascension's planting is that the new congregation will remain organizationally connected, sharing financial resources and being served by shared staff. Ascension-Maple will retain the Ascension moniker and will not be incorporated separately.

Multi-Site as House Churches

When a person reads through the Acts of the Apostles, the reader easily discovers the church planting strategy of Paul. Wherever Paul went on his missionary journeys, he established worshipping communities, mostly in towns where he labored for the Lord. In

some places, like Corinth, there were several worshipping groups. Some groups worshipped in the houses of Aquila and Priscilla (1 Corinthians 16:19), Stephanas (1 Corinthians 16:15), Titius Justice (Acts 18:7-8) and Crispus (1 Corinthians 1:14). None of the people in whose houses these groups worshipped are called πρεσβυτεροι, διακονοι or επισκοποι. These were titles often used to designate people on whom hands were laid and thus consecrated to serve as "pastor." The lack of these terms would indicate that most of these house churches were not being served by "pastors." The individuals mentioned above were believers who opened their homes for worship, but there is no indication they were pastors.

In other cities where Paul evangelized, he would work out of the homes of believers while establishing a worshipping community. When Paul left for another town, he would often leave someone in charge as in the case of Silas and Timothy in Berea (Acts 17:14). Silas and Timothy were fellow missionaries of Paul. Silas was called a "leader among the brothers" (Acts 15:22). However, neither Silas nor Timothy had had hands laid upon them by the church in Antioch as did Paul and Barnabas. As a result of the missionary work of Paul and his traveling missionary band, John Reumann says, "In all likelihood, several house churches resulted in each city where Paul worked; likewise in places like Rome where he was not mission founder."[69]

What evidence is there in the events recorded in Acts and Pauline Epistles that Paul was the "pastor" of many churches? First there are the letters of Paul to the different worshipping communities. In them, Paul seems to exercise authority over the house churches, even while not present. An examination of the word εξουσια does not help us

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[69] John Reumann, *Common Life in the Early Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 110.

much. Paul uses it less than a dozen times in his epistles. Most of the time Paul refuses to exercise "authority" except on two occasions in dealing with false apostles in Corinth (2 Corinthians 10:8, 13:10). It seems that Paul uses the metaphor of a family to explain his relationship with the churches established in various towns. He calls himself their "father" (1 Corinthians 4:15). But Paul does not want these communities to remain as his children. He encourages them to grow and mature (Ephesians 4:15). The relationship Paul envisions is that of "parent-to-adult-child," rather than "parent-to-infant-child."[70] Paul recognizes their self-sufficiency, yet his letters indicate that he maintains contact with them and through these letters displays care and concern for them. He corrects these congregations when he hears of error and he provides financial support to some while receiving support from others. He acts very much as a pastor would act towards a congregation he serves.

In Paul's letters to the Corinthians, Thessalonians and Galatians, he uses his strongest language to exert his authority. We must remember that these churches experienced the most serious aberrations from what he had taught. Yet even adopting this strong language to correct false teaching, he writes that he "works with them for their joy" (2 Corinthians 1:24). Paul doesn't want to "lord" his authority over them, but that they be in partnership with him in the spread of the Gospel. Banks points out, "The apostle, for all his divine call, diverse gifts and founding labours [sic], does not set himself in a hierarchical position above his comunities [sic] or act in an authoritarian manner towards them."[71]

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[70] Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 176.
[71] Banks, 178.

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Obviously, Paul could not carry out the ministry in all the places he founded worshipping communities by himself. Acts and Paul's letters tell us of many coworkers and "fellow slaves" in the Gospel. From Acts we learn that his main coworkers were Barnabas, Silas and Timothy. Barnabas and Paul had a disagreement over taking John Mark on a mission trip and they split (Acts 15). From Paul's writings we can count about forty people, both male and female, who were a part of Paul's missionary activity, providing space, hospitality, financial resources, training, companionship and leadership. Only a few of these had the hands of the apostles laid upon them which would signify consecration/ordination as overseers, elders or deacons within the faith community. Most seemed to be people raised from within the community who displayed the gifts needed to lead and to accomplish the task at hand.

Some communities did not choose a person to be their pastor. On occasions certain people were asked to perform religious ceremonies and duties on their behalf. Banks points out,

> But these tasks were extra-mural and not intramural in character, determined by the geographical isolation of the communities. When certain functions had to be fulfilled elsewhere it was impracticable for the community as a whole to carry them out. Instead it deputized one or more members for the task…. All such people, insists Paul, are to be given their due honour [sic] by the communities who commissioned them or whom they represent, not because of any superior position that they occupy or official rank that they possess, but on account of the way they carry out their responsibilities and the kinds of helpful services they perform.[72]

Paul maintained his pastoral connection with the various worshipping communities through these fellow servants of Christ. He visited the churches, often more than once. The financial aid provided Paul by these churches allowed him to pursue further missionary work and to travel to visit the churches. He was happy to share these

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[72] Banks, 166.

resources with other churches. Through those who traveled with him, those who served

the local churches as emissaries taking offerings or correspondence back and forth from

Paul, and those who were left by Paul at various locations, this web of workers helped

Paul provide pastoral care, spiritual guidance and encouragement in the faith.

The houses of worship in the apostolic church were not formal buildings

dedicated solely to cultic activities. Family homes were the "churches" of the fledgling

Christian community. Reumann says, "The New Testament church began as a small

group house church (Colossians 4:15) and it remained so until the middle or end of the 3rd

Century."[73]

Multi-Site among the Early Church Fathers

There is evidence that the early church father Clement was the overseer of many

house churches. Clement wrote a letter of encouragement to the churches he served. This

letter is known as *1 Clement*. Scholars think that this letter was written about 96 A.D.[74] In

Rome, the church of Clement is built on top of the remains of a house which is said to be

the house of Clement.[75]

In 1 Clement 44.5, he uses the word "presbyters."[76] He uses this same word again

in 1 Clement 54.6 when he calls for the flock to be at peace with the "appointed

presbyters." In 1 Clement 44.6, he concludes his discussion of support for the elders of

the church by saying, "In spite of their (plural) good service, you have removed them…."

The plural is important to illustrate that there were several elders of multiple churches

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[73] Reumann, 110.
[74] *Early Christian Fathers*, Cyril C. Richardson, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1953), 33
[75] Floyd V. Filson, "The Significance of the Early House Churches," *Journal of Biblical Literature* (Spring, 1939): 107.
[76] *Early Christian Fathers*, 64.

who served under Clement's guidance. Clement maintained pastoral authority over these churches. Barbara Ellen Bowe, an early church scholar who has studied Clement's letter, says, "From this concluding remark, it is very clear that Clement does not envision cultic ministers, but faithful 'public servants.'"[77]

Clement refers to himself as επισκοπος and not πρεσβυτερος. The above citations suggests that presbyters where not on the same level as overseers or bishops. From Bowe's comment, it seems these "public servants" were not consecrated by the laying on of hands. They were leaders of house churches, but not cultic ministers. Reumann points out that the early Roman church had what was called "fermentum." This was a fragment of bread from the bishop sent around to churches (tituli) with the presbyters.[78] Could it be that this practice came about because presbyters were not authorized to consecrate the elements as a pastor would be?

From Clement's letter, it seems that he viewed himself as the "pastor" of these churches and the presbyters were those who were chosen, but not consecrated, to carry out ministry within the various house churches.

Ignatius of Antioch is another early church bishop (overseer) who wrote letters to several churches in the pattern of Paul. As he was being dragged to Rome to be executed, he wrote letters to churches in Smyrna, Magnesia, and Trallia among others. These letters have been dated during the reign of Tajan (98-117 A.D.)[79] In his *Letter to the Smyrnaens* 8:2, Ignatius uses the word "church" to designate a number of local congregations governed by a single bishop who is supported by presbyters and assisted by deacons.[80]

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[77] Barbara Ellen Bowe, *A Church in Crisis* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 151.
[78] Reumann, 115.
[79] *Early Church Fathers*, 75.
[80] *Early Church Fathers*, 76.

This seems to be a stage of development beyond Clement. In his *Letter to the Magnesians* 7:1-2 and *Letter to the Trallians* 2:2 and 7:2, Ignatius tells these churches not to do anything apart from the bishop. In Trallians 3:1, Ignatius lists three offices: bishop, presbyter, and deacon. They are not to lay hands on deacons.[81] Reading the translation provided in Early Church Fathers, the *Letter to the Magnesians* 6:1 suggests that there is no apostolic succession as we know it today.[82]

House churches lasted until around the 3rd Century. After that, Hippolytus (4th Century.) makes clear there were deacons, presbyters, subdeacons and readers.[83] The church's leadership structure evolved with bishops serving in ever smaller places as in the case of Gregory of Nazianzus.[84] Writings from this era seem to suggest that bishops are becoming more numerous and that presbyters and deacons are becoming local "pastors." Hardaway says, "The bishop, who had earlier been a strong pastoral figure concerned with spiritual development of the community of faith, now assumed additional roles as a financial and personnel manager, exerting decisive control of the lower clergy such as presbyters, priests and deacons."[85]

Multi-Site in the Reformation Era

The hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church in the Reformation era had long been established. Since the legalization of Christianity by Constantine the Great, the worshipping Christians moved from private house churches to buildings specifically designed for cultic activity. Pastors assigned by the clerical hierarchy to these churches

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[81] William Schoedel. *Ignatius of Antioch* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 141.
[82] *Early Church Fathers*, 95.
[83] Bart D.Ehrman, *Christianity in Late Antiquity 300-450 C.E.: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 132-3.
[84] Ehrman, 139.
[85] C. Kirk Hardaway, Francis M. DuBose, and Stuart A. Wright, *Home Cell Groups and Home Churches* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987), 46.

became the norm. However, by the Reformation era, an abuse of this assignment process

had developed that allowed a priest to be assigned to multiple parishes. The motivation

for multiple parishes was not fulfilling the Great Commission, but the gaining of more

money. The priest would collect the benefice from each parish but would seldom, if ever,

visit the parish to serve the people. The duty of ministry was usually assigned to some

lesser church person who was paid from the benefice collected by the priest.

What is a "benefice?" According to *Our Sunday Visitor Catholic Encyclopedia*, a

benefice is:

> …a grant of land in reward for certain services rendered. In the Church it
> came to mean an ecclesiastical office which carried certain obligations, as
> well as being a source of income for the office-holder.[86]

Benefices were like endowments for parishes or chairs for professors. There was annual

income derived from the land grant or gift. Originally the benefice was to be used to

support the priest serving that location since priests were expected to serve the church

full-time and not work for income outside parish duties. The potential for abuse is fairly

obvious in this system. When parishes with benefices were within the territory of a

secular authority, that authority would suggest the name of the priest for the parish. The

priest would then receive the benefice. Sometimes the person suggested by the territorial

prince wasn't even qualified. Sometimes the benefactor of benefices from multiple

parishes would provide the prince a "kick-back." Because of this abuse, *Our Sunday

Visitor Catholic Encyclopedia* explains, "The benefice has to be permanently established

by an ecclesiastical authority. At one time, secular authorities could present candidates

for a benefice to the ecclesiastical authority. In time, all rights of presentation and

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[86] Peter M. J. Stravinskas, *Our Sunday Visitor Catholic Encyclopedia* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 1991), 87-88.

inheritance, as well as the possibility of holding more than one benefice, were abolished."[87]

Note the addition in the last sentence from *Our Sunday Visitor*, "as well as the possibility of holding more than one benefice." This was a practice that began before the Reformation era. It came to be known as pluralism. A bishop or priest would be assigned or, if simony were involved, would buy more than one parish and receive the benefice off the parish. The Roman Catholic Church was aware of this happening before Martin Luther arrived on the scene in the early 16th Century. The conciliar movement tried to address these issues. They "thundered anathemas against absenteeism, pluralism and simony..,"[88] but those who sat on the councils were the very people involved with these practices. They were not about to let go of this cash cow easily.

Martin Luther decries the practice of pluralism with one priest being granted many parishes. In a 1520 letter to the ruling nobility, called *An Appeal to the Ruling Class of the German Nobility as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom*, Luther writes,

> What Christian purpose is served by the ecclesiastics called cardinals? I will tell you. In Italy and Germany there are wealthy monasteries, institutions, benefices and parishes. No better way has been devised of bringing them into Rome's possession than by creating cardinals and giving them bishoprics, monasteries and prelacies as their property, thus destroying the service of God. The consequence is that Italy is now almost devastated; monasteries are in disorder, bishoprics despoiled, the revenues of prelacies and all the churches drawn to Rome, cities devastated, land and people ruined, because no longer are services held or sermons preached. Why so? Because the cardinals must have their revenues![89]

[87] Stravinskas, 88.

[88] Justo L.Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 7.

[89] Martin Luther, "An Appeal to the Ruling Class of the German Nobility as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom." *Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1962), 419.

Luther mentions in this same letter that there were parishes with benefices packaged together that were not supposed to be combined with others. However the pope reclassified them as "one body" and combined them with other parishes. Luther mentions in his letter a court follower in Rome who has sole possession of 22 parishes, 7 priories and 44 canonries.[90] Luther's concern is that Germany maintains some independence against the hegemonistic tendencies of Rome. While it may seem that Luther is more concerned about money leaving Germany than about the absenteeism of priests, we need to remember to whom he was writing. He was writing to the German ruling class and not to theologians. The German nobility would be more concerned about money heading to Rome than about spiritual services being provided for those living within their territory. For the nobility, religious services took a back seat to matters of money.

Luther, however, was concerned about the spiritual welfare of the people which prompted the letter to the nobility. Luther wanted the people to be properly served. Clergy were not to be land owners, but servants. Luther wrote that the role of the clergy was to "minister to the people."[91]

Some argue as to whether the problem was as bad as Luther and others have made it to be. Lawrence Duggan argues that "Many pluralists held benefices without pastoral obligations. Such conferral did not jeopardize the church's pastoral work."[92] Lawrence claims that the papacy could do little about pluralism without the cooperation of the kings and princes. The kings and princes were responsible for absenteeism because they assigned the benefices to people as rewards and the priests had nothing on which to

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[90] Luther, 427.

[91] Madeleine Grey, *The Protestant Reformation: Beliefs, Traditions and Practices* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2003), 89.

[92] Lawrence Duggan, "The Unresponsiveness of the Late Medieval Church: A Reconsideration," *Sixteenth Century Journal* IX, no. 1 (April 1978): 23.

live.[93] The priests had to have multiple parishes to gain enough income for basic necessities.

If what Duggan suggests is true, then the problem of multiple parishes under one priest, bishop or other ecclesiastical position would not have been so forcefully addressed by the Council of Trent as it was. Pope Paul III convened the Council of Trent in the 16th Century. Among several reforms made by what is now called "The Counter-Reformation," Trent banned the election of bishops solely for political reasons. Trent also tried to deal with absenteeism by not allowing bishops to live on landed estates outside their dioceses.[94]

While the above illustrates that a priest was responsible for more than one parish at a time, it can hardly be used as a positive example for multi-site ministry. Every example of ecclesiastical officials serving multiple locations is not exactly multi-site ministry. It does, however, illustrate that multi-site parishes have occurred throughout history and suggests what kind of abuses can arise from a pastor/priest serving many locations.

The St. Louis *Gesammtgemeinde*

Early LCMS history provides a surprising example of multi-site ministry that is very close to the concept and structure being used by Ascension. The example comes from the very beginning of LCMS history; in fact, from the date of the founding of the LCMS. It is the example of the *Gesammtgemeinde* of St. Louis, MO, which began in 1847, the same year as the founding of *The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of*

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[93] Duggan, 24.
[94] *Council of Trent*, trans. J. Waterworth, accessed January 2009, http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/trentall.html, 30.

Missouri, Ohio and Other States, which was eventually shortened to *The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.* The *Gesammtgemeinde* (joint congregations) is an example of multi-site ministry and cooperation among sites to establish new sites. It shows how financial resources can be shared so that the fledgling site can provide the ministry and programs needed for the new site. With the *Gesammtgemeinde*, the two needs were worship and Christian education. The motivation for organizing the *Gesammtgemeinde* had its basis in fulfilling the Great Commission.

What makes the churches of the *Gesammtgemeinde* unique is that they did not follow the normal path to becoming an official church as prescribed by the constitution of the LCMS. These congregations were not separately incorporated congregations. They did not have individual constitutions approved by the synod. And they did not conform to any of the steps required for the establishment of an independent congregation. They did not have a ratified constitution. They did not have the right to call. All these privileges were held by Holy Trinity, St. Louis, the congregation served by C. F. W. Walther.

Carl Meyer, in *Moving Frontiers*, writes, "Another problem faced the Lutheran parish in St. Louis in 1847, when a new congregation, Immanuel, was formed. At that time, instead of organizing completely separate and independent parishes, the *Gesamtgemeinde*, or 'Joint Congregations,' was established. Article 22 of the constitution refers to this development. Still later a third, Holy Cross (1858) and a fourth, Zion (1860), were added to the joint parish. Walther remained the chief pastor of all four 'branch congregations' until the time of his death in May 1887."[95] Article 22 of Trinity's constitution says, "Since only Trinity Church existed when this congregational constitution was drawn up and since in 1848 a new church, called Immanuel Church, was

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[95] Meyer, 167.

added, paragraphs 2 [which says that the church shall bear the name Trinity Church of the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation] and 14 [which says only German can be spoken except for agreed upon specified services] also apply to this church, as to all other churches which the congregation may build in the future. This paragraph is also unalterable."[96] So even though Immanuel had a different name, according to the constitution of Trinity, it was still nominally Trinity.

Erich Allwardt, in an article he wrote about the *Gesammtgemeinde*, draws the same conclusion: "In all these years all three district congregations [that is Immanuel, Holy Cross and Zion] were considered and treated simply as parts of the total congregation, the *Gesammtgemeinde*, with Trinity not only in possession of the corporate title but also in possession of all the property."[97] Even the minutes of the Joint Congregations meetings (the *Gesammtversammlung*) were entered chronologically into Trinity's records as if there was no difference between Trinity's minutes and the minutes of joint congregational meetings.[98]

Walther had other younger pastors serving these congregations under his guidance. He was called the *Pfarrer* or *Pfarrgemeinden* of the joint congregations. The other pastors were called *Seelsorgers* of their congregations. The *Seelsorgers* received their calls not from the church they would be serving, but from the *Gesammtversammlung*, the joint voters meeting. In every way, except for the name of the locations, all things were done in joint and cooperative manner.

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[96] Meyer, 170.

[97] Erich Allwardt, "The St. Louis *Gesammtgemeinde* – Its Demise," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 57 no.2 (Summer 1984): 62.

[98] Allwardt, 62.

Walther, while serving as synodical president, was aware of the issue of representation at district and synodical conventions. Even though they were four worshipping communities, these four communities only had two votes: a lay delegate and the *Pfarrgemeinden*. Allwardt translates the 1866 proposal by Walther to the general assembly where he asks the synod "to declare that according to the synodical constitution parishes are to be understood as all congregations that have a pastor of their own even if in other respects they constitute a joint congregation."[99] The synod agreed with the resolution and granted the other three congregations voting rights of one pastor and one lay delegate for district and synodical gatherings even though they were not incorporated separately and wholly belonged to Trinity.

Voting rights for second or third campuses of multi-site parishes are currently being debated in the LCMS. Lack of voting rights has been raised as one reason for a congregation not to form a multi-site ministry. In talking with other lead pastors of multi-site ministries, this lack of representation is a concern, but not such a concern that it would become a deterrent in moving forward with the multi-site model of church planting. If this resolution is still in the official minutes of the LCMS and, as far as I can discover, has never been rescinded, perhaps a congregation like Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, a member in good standing of the LCMS, could petition the synod to be granted voting rights for the second campus citing this precedent. This could be a solution to the polity issue of district and synodical representation.

The St. Louis Joint Congregations was dissolved in 1889 after the death of C. F. W. Walther. Its demise was spearheaded by Carl Christoph Schmidt, *Seelsorger* of Holy

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[99] Allwardt, 63.

Cross, with the help of St. Louis Seminary professors Pieper, Schaller, Graebner and Stoeckhardt.[100]

The *Gesammtgemeinde* model does not seem to have been confined just to St. Louis. Allwardt quotes a section from the article *The Lutheran Parish in an Urbanized America with Special Reference to the Missouri Synod* found in the Fifteenth Yearbook of the Lutheran Education Association, River Forest, IL. The article indicates that this multi-parish model was also tried in Cleveland, OH, Ft. Wayne, IN, Chicago, IL, and New London, WI.[101] These multi-site parishes did not last nearly as long as the one in St. Louis, perhaps because they didn't have a strong leader like Walther.

Circuit Preachers as Example of Multi-Site Ministry in the LCMS

While circuit riding, which is a pastor travelling to numerous congregations or settlements to provide worship services, is most closely associated with the Methodist denomination, the LCMS had what were called *Reiseprediger*, circuit preachers. The history of circuit riding in the Methodist tradition is well documented. The reasons that the Methodist denomination sent out circuit riders are the same reasons the LCMS sent out circuit preachers, that is, the lack of pastors in frontier areas, the vast space between settlements and the small number of organized churches in these areas. In a sense, the circuit riding pastor was responsible for multiple sites. The reasons for establishing multi-site parishes today are not the same as the reasons for circuit preachers in the past. What remains the same is the need to provide worship opportunities and Christian education in areas not being well served.

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[100] Allwardt, 79.
[101] Allwardt, 60.

That there was a need for pastoral ministry in the frontier as America expanded westward is explained by C. A. T. Selle. In a plea to the Western District of the Missouri Synod, Selle stated: "When we realize, for example, that in the first eight months of this year [1856] alone nearly 140,000 immigrants have landed in the city of New York, of whom the biggest portion is made up of Germans, then it cannot amaze us to hear how the western part of our country is being settled with fabulous speed."[102]

The first step the LCMS took to address this need was to establish "visitors" and "colporteurs." In 1847, Candidate Fricke was appointed as a visitor.[103] His job was to travel to various settlements and ask if there were any Germans there. If there were, were they Lutheran? How many other denominations were present? Were these people being served? Then he was to gather the Lutherans and make sure they were being instructed in the Catechism and to provide for Baptism if needed. He was not necessarily appointed to establish a congregation in these settlements.

Colporteurs were laymen who went around selling Lutheran books.[104] They were used to locate German Lutheran settlements. They were to report their findings so that plans for serving these settlements could be arranged.

Selle's plea was for "Evangelists."[105] These were the *Reiseprediger*, circuit preachers. Selle notes that circuit preachers had been sent out previously and produced a good harvest, but they had been pulled from the field by calls to permanent congregations.[106] Selle wanted the Synod to establish an "office of evangelist." The

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[102] Meyer, 205.
[103] Meyer, 202.
[104] Meyer, 203-4.
[105] Meyer, 205.
[106] Meyer, 205.

person holding this office would not bind himself to any permanent congregation so that he could focus on finding German settlements and providing spiritual care.

As a result of Selle's plea, Candidate F. Liebe was installed as the first *Reiseprediger*.[107] He was sent to Minnesota to serve the German settlements there. These circuit preachers were allowed to function with all the rights and privileges that any ordained pastor had. However, they were not ordained because they had not completed their seminary studies.

Eventually, the circuit preachers being sent out were ordained clergy and became known as "missionaries-at-large." Their tasks were essentially the same as the *Reiseprediger*. They were to travel the frontier looking for German settlements and provide services for these settlements until something more permanent could be established.

This mission strategy moved westward as the settlements moved westward, all the way to the northwest United States. The book, *God Opens Doors*, relates the story of one circuit preacher, Rev. Edward Doering, who travelled the interior of Oregon and Washington looking for settlements and gathering Lutherans for worship.[108] He and his family travelled to Oregon after accepting the call as *Reiseprediger fur Oregon* in 1881. When he arrived in Portland, Doering started worship services after a suitable building was found. However, he did not minister just to that congregation. He was called as a circuit preacher and the congregation in Portland knew he would be travelling the Oregon countryside looking for German settlements. He found settlements of Hanovarians and Wuertemburgers. From these he established churches outside Portland in Blooming and

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[107] Meyer, 206.

[108] Hans Spalteholz, Matthew L. Becker, and Dwaine Brandt, eds. *God Opens Doors* (Portland: Premier Press, 2000), 9ff.

Sherwood, OR, upon which he made regular visits.[109] In the early 1900s he travelled, mostly by train, some by horse and even by foot, around Oregon and Washington seeking new settlements.[110] From his efforts, many multi-point parishes were established which were then filled by pastors called to serve these multi-point parishes – all German. The mission of gathering German Lutherans was the impulse behind his effort. It was his call.

<u>Conclusion</u>

In this section, I have traced examples from the past of multi-site ministries. While none of these examples are exactly identical to the call I serve at Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, each example is insightful. The examples cited are not identical to the contemporary movement of multi-site ministry. Of course, one rarely finds identical movements. The context, the technology and the social and spiritual impetus for movements differ greatly over time. However, that there were multiple parishes being served by a pastor or staff is established throughout the history of the Christian Church. Each iteration of multi-site ministry addresses challenges present for mission of the church, but also brings with it other challenges and issues.

The closest example to my current situation at Ascension Lutheran Church would be that of the Walther's *Gesammtgemeinde*. Of the examples I cited, all, except the medieval problem of pluralism, had as their main goal the mission of expanding God's kingdom. It was the goal of expanding God's kingdom through bringing the church to the people that multi-site ministry was the direction chosen by Ascension Lutheran Church.

It is also good to note that these examples of multi-site ministry happened in response to a perceived need. Paul and the early church fathers were well aware of the

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[109] Spalteholz, 14.
[110] Spalteholz, 31.

lack of trained evangelists and the need for Christians to gather for worship and instruction. Today's environment is similar in some respects and dissimilar in other respects. There is a need for Christians to gather for worship and instruction, but many parishes simply cannot afford to build a structure dedicated solely to worshipping the one true God, nor can they afford a full-time pastor. Cooperation among congregations is becoming more vital. While Paul and other multi-site parishes in the past have had to deal with distance and sparse population, today's context is the growth of subdivisions and the concentration of more people in a smaller area. I am not saying that multi-site ministry is the only strategy or even the best strategy to reach the ever expanding city. It is one strategy that seems to be effective in serving areas that are currently not well served.

While the pluralism of the Medieval Christian church was an abuse, the reason benefices were established was so that priests could serve the people in local parishes, especially where there was no other means of support. Sometimes parishes with small benefices were bundled so that regular worship could take place. The abuse came about when the priests or princes started making the benefices an inheritance that was handed down and the papacy grabbed the benefices for its income. The result was that people were not served well.

The examples of multi-site parishes in the LCMS were in response to the need of providing pastoral ministry to the great number of Germans settling in North America. It seems that mission was the main reason multi-site parishes were established.

I would say that mission is the main reason Ascension decided to follow a multi-site model. With this model, as the past has shown, there is opportunity for abuses to arise, but there is also opportunity for rapid expansion. The St. Louis joint congregations

show that internal relationships between congregations can be both a source of frustration and an opportunity to cooperate in doing God's work. The St. Louis joint congregations also provide insight on how cooperation among the sites can enhance mission work in the area.

Multi-site ministry is not exactly a novelty. While the situation with which Ascension is dealing is different than the past (it always will be), the model of a pastor or pastors serving multiple sites has a long history. The prime motive is typically mission driven. The mission God has given His Church to "make disciples of all nations" and to "seek and to save the lost" must remain the focus of this model. When mission is the focus, God can accomplish great things through His people.

B. The Contemporary Perspective

Introduction

Recent studies have indicated that we are living in a time of cultural transition that is greatly impacting religion [Kimball (2003),[111] Sweet (2003),[112] Newbigin (1989),[113] and Kirk (2006)[114]]. The trend seems to be focusing more on spiritual experience rather than spiritual knowledge or spiritual truth. While the truth of God's Word cannot be thrown out with the proverbial bath water, post-modern missionaries have to be cognizant of the trends and tendencies of current culture. From my research, it seems that people with a post-modern mindset desire what Dan Kimball calls "vintage Christianity."[115]

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[111] Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids, Zondervon, 2003).
[112] Leonard Sweet, *The Church in Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 2003).
[113] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).
[114] J. Andrew Kirk, *Mission Under Scrutiny: Confronting Contemporary Challenges* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).
[115] Dan Kimball, 29.

"Vintage" is defined as the teachings of Jesus and His disciples without the institutional baggage of the modern church or denomination. This puts the LCMS in a unique position since we are Biblically conservative and strongly focused on "vintage" apostolic teachings. Yet, it also challenges the LCMS since we do retain much of "the institutional baggage" of a historic church organization. How to combine experiential worship with "vintage" Christian doctrine is the puzzle to be solved.

One way experiential worship is being combined with "vintage" Biblical teaching is found in the recent phenomenon of multi-site ministry. Worshippers seem to be gravitating away from the megachurch, fed up with what they perceive to be the crass commercialism of these behemoth congregations. They are looking for more intimate, relational and experience based worship communities.[116] Churches that became megachurches by tapping into the desire of people to be a part of something "big" are noticing this trend as well. Many megachurches have also become multi-site churches creating small, more intimate worship experiences and focusing on connecting people and establishing mutually supportive relationships.[117] The desire for community and an innate spiritual yearning, both of which have always been parts of the human experience, are combining in such a way in contemporary society that church leaders have taken notice. One response of church leaders to the postmodern version of this yearning is the multi-site church.

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[116] Nikki Reno, "Make Way for the Microchurch!" *FaithWorks Magazine* (January 2001): 24.
[117] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, accessed January 28, 2011, 10.

<u>Background Information to Contemporary Practice of Multi-site Ministry and Its Corresponding Literature</u>

Multi-site churches are not a recent phenomenon in church history as the previous section suggests. What differentiates this movement from past multi-point parishes is that in the modern iteration one established congregation is starting new sites that are organizationally and financially tied to the original site and each site intends to remain that way. Megachurches seemed to be the initiators the contemporary version of multi-site ministry. They "read the tea leaves," so to speak, concerning what was happening spiritually and culturally among postmodern Americans and were in the position to be able to merge two disparate factors: technology and great leadership.[118] Psychologically and sociologically, people want to be a part of a congregation that is abuzz.[119] They want to belong to churches that have what Craig Groeschel calls "it."[120] While "it" is hard to define, Groeschel writes, "[I]f you've ever been part of a ministry that had *it*, you knew you were part of something special."[121] When people belong to a vibrant church that has *it*, they want to take that experience with them when circumstances dictate a move. Within the past ten years, the number of churches offering similar worship experiences in locations or venues other than and in addition to the original location or venue is rapidly expanding. This is what is being called the multi-site church phenomenon. Some are even calling it a "revolution."[122] Because of advances in technology, current economic realities and unfolding social trends, each of which will be

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[118] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip: Exploring the New Normal*, 14.

[119] Whether this is a God-pleasing way to choose a church is debatable. Personally, as a pastor and theologian, I don't think it is. However, this is the psychology of many Christians in contemporary America.

[120] Craig Groeschel, *It: How Churches and Leaders Can Get It and Keep It* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2008), 31.

[121] Groeschel, 8.

[122] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 15.

discussed further, Surratt, Ligon and Bird believe, "Fifty years ago, the one-venue option was the norm. Fifty years from now, we believe multi-venue and multi-site will be the norm."[123]

Since the contemporary version of multi-site ministry is a relatively recent phenomenon, not a lot of literature has been written specific to that subject. However, the three books that contain the most research and insight on this subject are: *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip*, and *Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movement's Next Generation*. The first two books are by the same authors, Geoff Surratt (a minister at Seacoast Church in Charleston, SC), Greg Ligon (director of publishing at Leadership Network) and Warren Bird (research director and primary writer for Leadership Network). The third book was written by Scott McConnell (associate director of LifeWay Research). Other studies and books have informed this section, but they simply reinforce what has been reported and published by the above authors.

What is a multi-site ministry?

The definition of what constitutes a "multi-site" ministry has been a little difficult to settle. The reason for this is the wide variety of venues and ways in which multiple worship services are being offered by the numerous practitioners of multi-site ministry. The following definition is the most common:

> A multi-site church is 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 multi-site church shares a common vision, budget, leadership and board.[124]

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[123] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 10.
[124] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 18.

The last sentence is essential to defining the difference between a multi-site ministry and a congregation which is planting another site that is to be organizationally independent of the planting congregation, that is, a daughter congregation. Multi-site ministries maintain a ministerial, structural and financial tie with the original site. Centralized control over each site is essential. This control of the ministry at the other sites or venues is maintained by a board or committee located either at the original site or some administrative office building.

The term "control" need not be read with a negative knee-jerk reaction. Oversight and leadership can be positive especially if the board maintains a focus on outreach and mission and doesn't curve the service arrow inward. In fact, control is often needed to maintain focus and not be swayed or distracted by those who want to divert attention and resources away from the prime mission to their individual pet ministry or to what seems to be the latest and greatest program. As Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger say in their book *Simple Church*, "Staying focused is essential to being simple, and a church cannot stay focused without saying no. While it is not easy, the health of the church is at stake."[125]

Since the original campus usually provides the resources to launch the additional site or sites, particularly financial and personnel resources, in the vast majority of cases the name of the original ministry is also shared among the new sites. For example, Seacoast Church of Charleston, SC, a non-denominational church many researchers use as a prime example of multi-site ministry, has twelve additional sites. The names of some of the additional sites are Seacoast - Mt. Pleasant, SC, Seacoast - Manning, SC, Seacoast - North Charleston, SC, Seacoast - Irmo, SC. You get the idea.

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[125] Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 200-201.

<u>The Growth of Multi-Site Ministry</u>

To give you some idea of the growth of the multi-site phenomenon, the following table from *A Multi-Site Road Map* shows just how rapidly multi-site ministry has grown in the past few years.

Figure 1 - Number of Known Multi-Site Churches in the United States (one church in two or more locations) [126]

1700s	fewer than 10
1800s	fewer than 20
1900-1970s	fewer than 50 (mostly off-site preaching points and Sunday Schools that developed accompanying worship services)
1980s	Fewer than 100 (same)
1990s	About 200 (in addition to the above, a small number of churches began experimenting with having multiple campuses)
2000	300
2001	400
2002	600
2003	800
2004	1,000
2005	1,200
2006	1,500
2007	2,000
2008	2,500
2009	3,000

From this table you can see that in the 1980s there were fewer than 100 known multi-site ministries. The model of church planting from the 1950s through the 1980s was mostly mission boards or church district led plants. In the LCMS, typically, the district mission board would decide where a church should be planted and then budget monies to fund the plant. It was under the auspices of the district that a church planting pastor would be called. Before the 1990s, church plants were usually called "mission" congregations and received subsidies from the district. In the 1990s a shift away from an

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[126] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip*, 217.

undefined length of subsidy was replaced by a defined model in which the church planter was typically given three years to become a self-sufficient church. Often subsidies were extended beyond the three years, but a target was set so that urgency and energy could be focused.

Within the last ten years, a number of LCMS congregations who were mission minded noticed the multi-site ministry phenomenon and followed this model of church planting. From an email list obtained from Ron Burcham,[127] pastor of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Urbandale, IA, on October 27, 2010, fifty-three LCMS churches have self-reported being multi-site. On that same email list were six other churches which self-reported that they were in the planning stage to become multi-site.

Models of Multi-Site Ministries

Current literature identifies five main types of multi-site ministries.[128] The most common model is the "Regional Campus" model. A church replicates itself at another offsite location, whether it be in the same city, region, or in another city or state, in order to make that church's worship experience accessible to people of another geographical location. If the campus is within the same city, preaching may be done live. In many situations, though, the other sites have worship services that are scheduled the same time as the original site. In these cases the preaching is projected from a DVD or via satellite.

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[127] Ron Burcham is a brother pastor who organized the first multi-site ministry conference for LCMS congregations that was held during the summer of 2010. He invited all churches practicing the multi-site model to send him their information which he collected into a database and which he shared with me. An exact number of congregations practicing the multi-site model is hard to determine, but fifty-three self-reported following this model.
[128] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 30.

The second most common model is the "video-venue" model. With this model, one or more on-campus venues are created, usually with different worship styles offered. The preaching is done either via live camera feed or through a DVD recording.

The third model is the "Teaching-Team" model. The original site identifies and trains additional "leaders" who then begin church plants and use the same message or series of messages as the original campus. Quite often, a weekly gathering of the teaching team meets to plan and write these messages. Multiple "preachers" are used in this model, but all the preachers are preaching on the same topic or text.

The fourth model is the "Partnership" model. In this model, the original church site partners with a local business or non-profit organization to use their facilities beyond a mere "renters" agreement. In this model both the new worshipping community and the local business or non-profit organization benefit, either by upgrading the facility, increasing foot traffic to the area, or filling an unused store front.

The fifth model is the "Low-Risk" model in which a church looks to theaters, store fronts, schools or other places to rent. There is no large upfront financial investment in buildings or property with this model. Thus if the new site doesn't grow as expected it can be closed with little loss of revenue or energy in trying to sell a building or property. With this model, though, the evangelism return is still potentially large.

A model that is being hotly debated as to whether it is truly a multi-site ministry is the "virtual" church model.[129] Some churches have established websites where their worship services can be seen in streaming video whether at the actual time or from an archived file. The debate whether this is actually a multi-site ministry is centered on the issues of fellowship and discipleship. Do virtual sites develop community? Do these

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[129] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Ministry Road Trip*, 87-100.

communities "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19)? Dave Kinnaman, president of Barna

Research Group, believes that by 2010, "10% of Americans will rely *exclusively* on the

internet for their religious experience."[130]

While this method of getting a religious experience is not uncommon and has its

pluses – some of those pluses being the service can be viewed at any time, the distance

from the preacher or church site doesn't matter, and viewer can ask questions directly via

email or other social media – whether these groups can be defined as a "church" or

"congregation" is not settled. One reason that I would not define these virtual

communities as a church is that the marks of the church are not present, especially the

right administration of the sacraments. How can Baptism take place? How can Holy

Communion be celebrated? The whole horizontal dimension of worship with brothers

and sisters of the faith is missing. Some argue that the horizontal dimension is there via

chat rooms, but there is more to fellowship, especially Biblical fellowship, than digital

messages sent back and forth. Nothing can replace face-to-face interaction between

fellow Christians.

Factors Contributing to the Rapid Growth of Multi-Site Practitioners

It is argued that multi-site ministry is not new. I have previously outlined how

multi-site ministry has occurred in the past. Yet, the explosive growth of practitioners

suggests that this model of church planting has struck a chord in today's culture and

society. It is meeting a need, overcoming some barrier or finding a niche that has

otherwise not been filled. What are some of the factors that may explain this

phenomenon? What has research learned about this movement?

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[130] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Ministry Road Trip*, 94.

1. Technological Advances

Perhaps the greatest barrier to multi-site ministry in the past has been that a pastor can only be in one location at any one time. In the past, those pastors who were gifted preachers and talented leaders were privileged to serve a congregation that grew larger and larger. This is how churches became megachurches. For example, Bill Hybels is a well-known pastor who is exceptionally gifted. Under his leadership Willow Creek Community Church in North Barrington, IL, grew into a megachurch. He had others on staff who were important leaders and helped in developing Willow Creek, but Hybels was the visionary. When attendance grew, Willow Creek added services. Most congregations addressed the issue of pew space by adding worship services either to Sunday morning or the evening of another day of the week.

Within the past 10 years, however, technology has so rapidly advanced and the cost of using of this technology has dropped at an equally astounding rate that churches could now afford to tap into its potential. Where sound used to be the only thing carried to other parts of a church building via wire, now video and audio are easily streamed across cable or wirelessly to other venues on campus or off campus. Digital video can be recorded and downloaded to a computer and placed on a website. People can access that website and replay the video of a sermon on a screen in a location anywhere in the world. Where audio tapes used to be sent to people who wanted to hear a particular preacher or sermon, now one can go to a website to see and hear uploaded files of a particular preacher or sermon. No longer does a person have to be present to "see" the preacher. A person with an internet connection anywhere in the world can see and hear sermons of his or her favorite preacher.

Today, it is not uncommon for high definition (HD) video cameras to be used to either record or stream live video of a sermon. No longer does a pastor have to be present in a location to give a sermon. It can be shared through the internet, through a recorded DVD, through a satellite link or through live streaming video and projected on large screens.

LCD projectors are becoming more advanced with higher lumens, producing brighter and clearer pictures. These advanced LCD projectors are cheaper than past less advanced units and the quality of the video is getting sharper and sharper. The old physical barrier of needing a live person for a sermon is quickly being overcome as people become more used to digital video. In fact, when launching a new site, technology now out strips the cost of the facility or advertising.[131]

In spite of the rapid advance in technology in which messages and media can be shared quickly and with good quality, live teaching or preaching remains the most common way sermons are delivered among multi-site congregations.[132] Because the majority of current multi-site congregations have three or fewer sites, live preaching can still be done.[133] A single preacher can deliver his message several times at several places. At Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, where I currently serve, the preacher for the weekend travels back and forth between campuses delivering the same sermon multiple times. The greater the number of campuses and services offered, however, the more likely digitally recorded video messages will be used for the sermon.[134]

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[131] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, 8.
[132] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, 17.
[133] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, 4.
[134] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, 18.

LifeChurch.tv of Edmond, OK, uses satellite links. Part of its original campus has been converted into what church leaders call their Global Operations Center (GOC). The GOC is the control room through which they are linked via satellite to their various locations. The Edmond location has an uplink dish. They capture Groeschel's message using four Panasonic HD cameras and send the message out through the uplink. Each of their other locations has a small downlink dish. At a certain time in each service, the live feed is projected on screens so that worshippers at the other sites hear Groeschel in real time.[135] Sunny Thomas, LifeChurch.tv's broadcast coordinator, says that this method has "less financial overhead once the initial uplink equipment is purchased."[136]

2. Lower Cost

As I said earlier, the dominant model of planting LCMS congregations in the past had been a board or some other mission committee looking at the demographics of various places and then deciding a new church needs to be planted there. The district leadership would often enlist the help of The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) to provide monies for the advance purchasing of land where they had decided a new church should be located. The hope was that the subsidized church planter would gather enough people to form a congregation. This new congregation would then purchase the land from LCEF and build a worship center. The upfront cost of starting a new congregation following this model is very, very large. In recent years, with the escalating price of land and construction, cost has become a major barrier to starting new congregations.

That was the experience of a mission plant close to Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS. Abundant Life Lutheran Church was an LCMS plant of the Kansas District

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[135] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Road Trip*, 108

[136] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Road Trip*, 109.

on the west side of Wichita in 1999. A church planting pastor was called to form a new congregation and funding was made available from the Kansas District. After a dozen or so families committed to the new worshipping community, Abundant Life officially organized, drew up a constitution and was received by the Kansas District as a congregation. However, Abundant Life could not afford to purchase the land previously purchased by the Kansas District nor could it afford to build a place to worship. Abundant Life struggled to find a place for regular worship. After several moves, this new congregation ended up less than a half mile away from the large and well established location of Ascension. The frustrated church planter took a call to another church. The plant failed within two years. Abundant Life was an expensive experiment and illustrates how cost is a major barrier to a successful church plant.

A shift in the church planting paradigm began in the late 1990s and early 2000s. With less funding being made available to districts for mission plants and with the LCEF no longer speculating in land purchases due to the tremendous increase in land prices, the model of church planting shifted from district starts to individual congregations planting new churches. While serving Immanuel Lutheran Church in Memphis, TN, a daughter congregation, Christ Lutheran Church, Arlington, TN, was birthed. The district offered $50,000 a year for three years. Immanuel offered a pastor and 12 missionary families plus additional financial help. Even with that assistance, Christ Lutheran struggled from the cost of finding a place to worship and paying a fulltime worker. This church, however, was able to overcome the cost barrier and is still in existence. Its church planter recently took a call and finding a new pastor that was within Christ's budget proved difficult.

In the mid-2000s, multi-site churches began to catch on. Many of the pioneers of

multi-site ministry highlighted in the literature made the move to a second campus or

venue precisely because of cost issues. Again, Seacoast Church of Charleston, SC,

typifies the early multi-site ministries. Seacoast Church was blessed with rapid growth at

its original campus. It was fast becoming a megachurch. It needed to expand its worship

auditorium, but the city council refused to change zoning regulations. Instead of fighting

city hall to expand the original site, Seacoast decided to develop additional campuses

down the road. That plan worked and at a greatly reduced financial cost.[137] Many of the

early multi-site churches were seeking "new ways to extend their ministry without having

to pour millions of dollars into new buildings."[138]

Craig Groeschel, pastor of LifeChurch.tv in Edmond, OK, tells of a similar

experience.

> When our church was several years old, we built our first building with an
> auditorium that could seat about six hundred people. Within a year, it was
> full four times over. In our limited thinking, we'd run into a wall. Adding
> more services seemed impossible. We knew we couldn't financially afford
> to build again. Even if we could, it would take way too long. With
> nowhere to grow, we were afraid we might lose *it*.
>
> That's when God gave us a shot of creativity. […] After praying and
> brainstorming, someone suggested we consider meeting at a second
> location. To our knowledge that had never been done before.
>
> Armed with passion, we approached a movie theater and asked if we could
> hold worship experiences there on Sundays. […] They said yes, and
> overnight our greatest limitation became the catalyst for what we consider
> a great innovation: the multisite church.[139]

Research continues to indicate that financial cost remains a large factor pushing

the multi-site phenomenon. Churches and mission boards are discovering that a new

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[137] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 15

[138] Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 11.

[139] Craig Groeschel, 97.

church planted without any relationship to an existing congregation can take years to get a footing, but "an extension site of an established church will grow immediately."[140] If the church has a positive image and relationship with the community, people know for what the church stands and are more likely to connect with it. Starting a church from scratch means building a reputation and name recognition within the community the church is trying to serve. That reputation may take years to develop which will slow down membership growth. Growth in numbers usually translates into growth of financial resources, but not always.

3. Filling a Sociological Niche

Another key factor for the rapid growth of multi-site congregations, in addition to technological and financial, seems to be that multi-site churches are meeting a sociological need. This insight became clear to me while attending a LCMS multi-site church conference hosted at Faith Lutheran Church, Oakville, MO, during the summer of 2010. It occurred to me that people were joining multi-site churches because they wanted the resources, programs and event offerings of a large church, but also desired the intimacy and relationships one finds in a small church. Multi-site can meet both these wants. This insight is supported in literature, too. In the book *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip*, the authors write, "A larger congregation can also offer a larger palette of ministries…. Other people crave the intimacy available in a small-church atmosphere."[141] Quite often the phenomenon of why multi-site ministry seems to be expanding so rapidly is explained by researchers and authors using mainly sociological reasons.

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[140] Scott McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movement's Next Generation* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), x.
[141] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip*, 24-25.

We live in a consumerist culture. Much is made by the practitioners of the multi-site movement of offering choices. In listing some reasons for choosing to become multi-site rather than planting an autonomous congregation, these were given: 1) brand new and yet trusted brand, 2) new-church vibe and big-church punch, 3) move there and stay here, 4) more need and more support, and 5) more outreach and more maturity.[142] Please note that all these speak primarily to sociological issues and to a lesser degree to theological or financial issues.

In trying to explain why the multi-site movement is different than past church planting strategies, four reasons were given: 1) relationships vs. rescue, 2) stepping-stone vs. limited-service mission, 3) personalization vs. cookie cutter, and 4) lay empowerment vs. clergy dependency.[143] Again, these reasons focus much attention on sociological factors with a limited focus on theology. I am not saying that the use of sociology is bad or wrong in fulfilling the Great Commission. One could argue that sociology is ultimately a First Article (Apostles' Creed) issue. Churches are just taking what has been learned about God's creation and applying them to evangelism and church planting efforts. If it is true, as many claim, that this movement is not about the promotion of a church or a personality cult, and the purpose of becoming a multi-site church is to make more and better disciples by bringing the church closer to where people are,[144] then people of God should use all right and good means to accomplish the task of making disciples of all nations. Ultimately, the proof will be in the fruit that multi-site churches bear.

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[142] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 47.
[143] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 80-81.
[144] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 66.

4. More Successful

In the most recent survey of multi-site congregations across the Christian denominational spectrum, Warren Bird and Kristin Walters report this finding: "Multisites have a 90% success rate. Only 10% of surveyed churches report that they've had a campus closure."[145] One explanation for this is offered by Scott McConnell. He says, "Why? Because it has an established reputation, people know what they will get when they go in, and it has a familiar feel to the experience."[146]

In reading through the literature, the reputation of the church and especially the main preacher seems to be an extremely helpful predictor of success. Many of the churches cited in studies center around a popular preacher people want to hear and with whom they want to associate. These preachers include Greg Surratt (Seacoast Church), Craig Groeschel (LifeChurch.tv), Larry Osborne (North Coast Church), Rick Warren (Saddleback Church), and Erwin McManus (Mosaic Church) among others. The reputation of the aforementioned pastors precedes the new campus or venue and provides a point of attraction that an independent church plant does not have.

Surratt, Ligon and Bird go deeper in analyzing why multi-sites seem to be more successful than the single autonomous church plant model. They give eight reasons in addition to reputation. They are: 1) accountability, 2) sharing of resources, 3) already trained workers, 4) shared DNA (vision and core values), 5) greater prayer support, 6) pre-established network for problem solving, 7) not needing to "reinvent the wheel," and 8) connection with others doing the same thing.[147] It would seem logical that if these factors are in play, then some of the most common barriers that cause church plants to

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[145] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, 3.
[146] Scott McConnell, x.
[147] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 51.

fail are being addressed. Certainly having the church planter, often called "the campus pastor" in multi-site literature, being accountable to and reporting to a board or committee would help that person focus his energies and keep on task. But along with that accountability also come help and resources. These resources include financial help, personal support, wisdom and insight from others, established church practices and values, a reputation and people with which to share ideas. The authors claim that these resources create the conditions that make multi-site church planting more successful than single church plants.

Why Choose Multi-Site?

From the inauspicious beginning in which many churches became multi-site out of necessity or serendipitously, current research suggests that multi-site ministry has become an intentional model of church expansion. It has been shown that the single most effective method for reaching new people with the Gospel has been starting new churches. Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird write, "Two thousand years of Christian history have proven that new churches grow faster, and reach more people, than established churches."[148] Greg Ligon writes, "As we indicated in our first book, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, multi-site church growth was initially more of a reactive strategy resulting from a lack of worship space or from city zoning challenges. Today, however, it has become a purposeful way of doing church, and the proactive strategies being deployed are aggressive moves for the advance of the gospel."[149]

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[148] Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), xi.
[149] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip*, 175.

Multi-site ministry lays aside some of the cultural accoutrements associated with "church," such as buildings, trained clergy, certain programs and events, and focuses more on discipleship development, deployment of the laity and taking the church to where the people are. That's not to say that all cultural accoutrements are gone. A major focus is still on providing a quality audio and visual experience, but those in charge of making this happen are most often lay people.

When current multi-site congregations were asked what their motivation was in becoming multi-site, their answers focused on fulfilling the Great Commission and not on financial matters.[150] Many believe the financial barrier they experienced was God's way of getting them to think outside the box.[151] Researchers make it clear that multi-site ministry is not a strategy <u>for</u> growth; it is a strategy to <u>continue</u> growing.[152] Erwin McManus writes, "The multi-site movement is a strategic response to the question of how to maintain momentum and growth while not being limited to the monolithic structure of a megachurch."[153]

The prime motivation for becoming multi-site, according to research, is the expansion of God's kingdom and not the promotion of a particular church or the ego of a certain preacher. Bill Easum and Dave Travis observe, "The key to understanding the multi-site movement is to remember that fulfilling the Great Commission drives these congregations, not a growth strategy."[154]

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[150] McConnell, 8.
[151] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 20.
[152] McConnell 14.
[153] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 7.
[154] Bill Easum and Dave Travis, *Beyond the Box: Innovative Churches That Work* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2003), 85.

Challenges for Multi-Site Ministry

Multi-site ministry is not a panacea for the mission of making disciples of all nations. There are several challenges associated with multi-site ministry.

One challenge is to get the congregation to "buy in" to the idea of becoming multi-site. Large paradigm shifts have to be made. The single congregation must shift from thinking "me" to thinking "we." They must see themselves as a church focused outwardly. They need to remember that they are here to serve others and that what happens inside the walls of a church is for those who are still outside the walls. The vision of the single church must shift from accomplishing the mission alone to partnering with others to accomplish the mission. David Parker of Desert Vineyard Christian Fellowship says, "Communicating that vision is the greater challenge, more than just being a multi-site congregation."[155]

This large paradigm shift is not to be underestimated. For thousands of years churches have been mostly single point parishes. Their organizational structure was designed with only one location in mind. Real estate, real property and maintenance issues were all focused on one geographical location. The vast majority of practicing Christians were raised in congregations that were organizationally independent of any other congregation. Essentially, single point parishes are all most people knew. To make the paradigm shift to multi-site is no small task. My experience at Ascension indicates that thinking "we" is a shift that has to be constantly raised to conscious level.

Along with the paradigm shift comes the challenge of keeping the sites connected so that the mission doesn't degrade into an "us" and "them" battle. Jesus said, "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (Mark 3:24 NIV).

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[155] Scott McConnell, 154.

Certainly, no kingdoms are being established in multi-site ministry, or at least they ought not to be, but keeping all the sites moving in the same direction with a common mission and vision is a challenge. Those who are pastors know the challenge one congregation can be in keeping sinful humans, pastors included, from being distracted by quarrels, multiple competing agendas and hurt feelings. When you add multiple sites, the challenge becomes that much greater and has added importance.

This challenge is being addressed by multi-site congregations in various ways. Some churches stay connected by having every location hear the same message each week.[156] Some churches stay together by having the same music each week, the same style of worship.[157] Most of the time it is left to the campus pastor to remind each location that it is a part of a larger ministry. The campus pastor prays for the other locations. Bulletins may include information about what is happening at other sites. Sometimes it's the preacher who keeps the sites connected as people rally around a preacher they like. However, it is the common vision and mission of the church that seems to be the main glue.[158]

Multi-site ministry makes church structure a challenge. It is easy enough, most of the time, to create a structure that will serve a single congregation. When it is a small congregation, the pastor does most of the ministry. The supporting structure is minimal. In larger congregations, boards or commissions are created to handle the programs and ministries offered. This also allows the involvement of more laity in ministry. But when one goes beyond one site and adds two, three or more sites, one greatly increases structural problems. "Now, for instance, the children's ministry leader at the original

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[156] Scott McConnell, 204.
[157] Scott McConnell, 205.
[158] Scott McConnell, 102.

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campus has to oversee weekend services at the original campus, give leadership to two

additional children's ministry directors, and find time to visit the other campuses."[159]

Under the added weight of multiple ministries and sites, most structures sag. Finding a

structure that allows input from all sites and ownership of decisions from all sites is a

challenge.

Seacoast uses a structure similar to a franchise. It has a "home office" that

produces all the bulletins, does all human resource functions, takes care of all the

finances and trains all ministers.[160] Having a "centralized" office seems to be the most

common structure for multi-site ministries and most often this office is at the original

site. So-called ministry teams are deployed at each new site replicating, in part, the

structure of the original site.

For the LCMS, polity becomes a challenge. In most of the literature surveyed, the

authors point out that raising up leadership for the next campus or venue is critical.[161]

However, the path to leadership in most of the examples cited is some individual who is

currently in the congregation and exhibits the talents, leadership qualities and passion

those in charge of planting the next site are seeking. The training of this individual comes

through joining the staff of the church and taking on leadership roles and responsibilities

until the time of the launch. There is no formal theological training. There is no

certification by a seminary, as with the LCMS. There is only on-the-job training of those

identified as having the gifts desired in a campus pastor.

Obviously, that will not work for us at Ascension since we are a part of the LCMS

and wish to remain a part of the LCMS. In joining the LCMS, we agree to certain

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[159] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 135.
[160] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*, 138.
[161] Scott McConnell, 90.

theological doctrines and certain common practices. One practice is that congregations of the LCMS will call only certified, rostered clergy. Congregations are not free to raise up their own pastors and certify them. The most commonly proposed way of developing leadership for multi-site ministry in current literature will not work for congregations of the LCMS.

Another polity issue for LCMS congregations has been mentioned in the previous section, that being representation on the district and synodical level. As currently practiced, only independently incorporated congregations who have had their constitutions pass the district review board and received in a district convention are eligible to send one pastoral and one lay delegate to a district convention. In Ascension's situation, that means only one of our pastors and one lay delegate are eligible to represent both locations. Ascension-Maple alone averages 170 a weekend in attendance. This is larger than two-thirds of the congregations in the Kansas district, and yet Ascension-Maple is not eligible for representation under current LCMS polity.

The model of the *Gesammtgemeinde* and the request of Walther before the 1866 Synodical Convention are intriguing. It sets a precedent and seems to be a fair and equitable way of handling this, albeit minor, issue.

I am sure other challenges will arise as multi-site ministry matures. The challenges listed are ones which are currently in play and for which solutions are being sought. If multi-site ministry is to become a dominant model of church planting in the LCMS, then issues of structure, polity and theology will have to be addressed.

Conclusion

While not a lot of literature has been written specific to multi-site ministry, what has been written is both a combination of anecdotal information and statistical information. It shows that multi-site ministry has blossomed tremendously in the past decade. The reason for this rapid growth has been a convergence of technology, sociological factors (wanting large church resources with small church intimacy) and financial constraints. One could say that the past decade was a "kairos" time for multi-site ministry.

The concern with movements that arise at an opportune time culturally is that it may simply be a fad. Only the passage of time will answer whether this movement is a fad or if it will be the norm fifty years from now as stated earlier in this section (see footnote 12). Surratt, Ligon and Bird strongly argue that it is not a fad, citing these statistics:

> ➢ On a typical Sunday in 2009, some five million people – almost ten percent of Protestant worshippers – attended a multi-site church in the United States or Canada.
> ➢ At least forty-seven U.S. states and Canada's four largest provinces have congregations that describe themselves as one church in many locations.
> ➢ Leaders at some forty-five thousand churches are "seriously" considering adding a worship service at one or more new locations or campuses in the next two years, according to a 2008 random survey of Protestant pastors conducted by Lifeway Research.
> ➢ From 2006 to 2008, nearly seven hundred churches attended Leadership Network – sponsored conferences on how to become, or improve as, a multi-site church.
> ➢ More than 20,000 documents have been downloaded from Leadership Network's website of free resources for anyone interested in the multi-site approach, a number that started with 2,089 in 2003 and has increased steadily.
> ➢ Some 37 percent of megachurches reported being multi-site in 2008, up dramatically from 27 percent in 2005. Interestingly,

> average seating capacities in American megachurches grew
> minimally between 2005 and 2008 (from 1,709 to 1,794), while
> the churches grew in overall attendance from 3,585 to 4,142 –
> doing so by becoming multi-site and also by increasing the
> average number of services offered each weekend from 4.4 in
> 2005 to 5.3 in 2008.[162]

As the reader notes, all these statistics are very recent. Do 10 percent of worshippers involved in a movement take it from being a fad to being legitimate? How many years in existence and how large does a movement need to grow to be considered legitimate? These are questions that will only be answered by those in the future as they look back at the history of this movement.

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[162] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-Site Road Trip*, 14.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT DEVELOPED

<u>Introduction</u>

When I was called to be the Administrative Pastor at Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, the congregation had already planned, obtained a loan to purchase land, built and dedicated Open Arms Child Development Center. Sunday evening worship services had just started at Ascension-Maple. As far as I have been able to discover, Ascension-Maple was to be structurally and financially tied to Ascension-Tyler for the foreseeable future. The multi-site ministry model was not discussed and intentionally chosen. Multi-site was not even a word used during the discussion because it was an unknown model of ministry. What was chosen by Ascension was the Open Arms Child Development Center model and Ascension-Tyler would, in effect, be the owner/operator of that center. Like other Open Arms centers, a large multipurpose room was a part of the building design. The intention of Ascension was to hold worship services there sometime after the child development center was operating.

Since there was no real intentionality behind the multi-site ministry Ascension-Maple has become, and since I previously had no experience with the multi-site model of church planting (although I have led the planting of daughter congregations), this MAP is the result of a pursuit to understand the multi-site model, how Ascension is practicing it, and if Ascension wants to continue using this model in the future. This MAP is a quest to capture the policies, the assumptions and the outcomes from the experience of other LCMS churches that have planted other congregations. The resulting data will provide vital knowledge and useful insight as Ascension plans to start another ministry location.

By collecting this data I hope to obtain valuable information that can be used beyond the walls of Ascension. I hope that this information can be used by the Mission Executives of the various districts as they lead and counsel churches which are looking to expand God's kingdom by planting new churches or sites. I hope this information can be used by churches as they seek God's will in choosing which model of church planting to follow. As I have written previously, there is no guarantee that a church plant will survive, but church planting still remains one of the best ways to extend the kingdom of God.

A. The Design of the Project

This MAP studied twelve congregations that are very close in size to Ascension and have planted additional worship sites in suburban areas of the United States. Six congregations were chosen that had as their goal autonomous worshipping communities. Six other congregations were chosen that had as their goal the multi-site model. I closely studied Carmel Lutheran Church of Carmel, IN, (the thirteenth church) which has planted four daughter congregations and has recently started worshipping communities following the multi-site model.

To gain a thorough understanding of each model, I interviewed the executive director of mission training from the Center for United States Mission, Mike Ruhl. I explained the study I was conducting and asked him about his knowledge of the use of these two models of church planting among LCMS congregations. I also asked him to recollect from his experience why some congregations choose to plant daughter congregations and why some choose multi-site as the model to follow.

I developed a survey for the lead pastor and for either the chairperson or the members of the planning committee from each planting church.[163] They were asked to answer the questions to the best of their recollections. Of the twenty-six possible responses, I had twenty-one returned. These answers helped me to understand the process, the factors and the assumptions used in choosing the model they did. This survey asked them to list the advantages and disadvantages of each model as they came to understand them, what assumptions were in play about each model and then, finally, what they would do differently knowing what they now know. I also asked for self-reported statistical data on the financial and numeric growth of their congregation.[164] To have useable data I had to combine the main or mother church with the data from the planted site as many multi-site churches do not keep separate statistics.

I made a special study of Carmel Lutheran Church, Carmel, IN. This congregation has in the past planted four daughter churches and has recently planted multi-site venues. I developed a special survey[165] with an explanation letter[166] as to why I had chosen them for special attention. I also asked for and obtained permission from Carmel Lutheran Church to use its name within this MAP.[167] Carmel graciously agreed.

After I had collected this data, I began to code it discovering the common threads of the decision-making process, the assumptions made and the correlation between the assumptions and the made decision.

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[163] See Appendix C and E.
[164] This form may also be found in Appendix I.
[165] See Appendix H.
[166] See Appendix F.
[167] See Appendix G.

I shared this data and consulted with Dr. Aaron Buchko,[168] a PhD in sociology

and organizational development at Bradley University, Peoria, IL. In consultation with

Dr. Buchko, I came to see what policies could be captured from the decision-making

process and what recommendations could be established to aid in future church site

planting. My intent in conducting a policy capturing study of each of these thirteen

congregations is to glean information that can be used as recommendations for future site

planting at Ascension Lutheran Church.

B. Research Tools and Methodology

I conducted a policy capturing study of twelve congregations approximately the

same size as Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS: six churches which have begun a

second worship site with the expressed intent that the second site becomes an

independent congregation and six churches which have begun a second site with the

expressed intent that the second site remains organizationally connected. I also studied

one congregation that has used both models.

In choosing the churches to study, I opted for churches that are most like

Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, demographically, that is, in a suburban setting,

averaging around 700 a Sunday in attendance, the second site being in a growing area of

suburbia. As much as possible, I chose congregations in the Midwest to minimize cultural

and economic variables. It is important to make these distinctions and choose

congregations as similar to Ascension (in reality, no two congregations are ever exactly

alike) in order to minimize variables that may skew the research.

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[168] Please see Dr. Buchko's curricula vitae in Appendix N.

After these churches were identified, I requested permission to study them.[169] Having received permission, I ascertained who the lead pastors were during the decision-making process and the chairperson of the planning committee. I sent them a survey which they were to independently fill out. I asked each church for vital statistics from their congregation in regards to worship attendance, financial health, membership gains and membership losses, especially adult baptisms and confirmations. I compared the data between the two models to discover if there are any trends or insight that could be gained between the six churches which followed the multi-site (sister) model and the six churches which followed the autonomous (daughter) model. I also compared the data with data collected from churches across denominations and throughout the whole United States by the Center for United States mission to see how close it was to previous research. Collecting attendance in half-year increments proved to be impossible so I only reported one year increments.

Once I gathered all this information, I compiled it[170] and began to code it and write memos concerning insights gained from these three sources of data (congregation analysis, survey of the planning committee and survey of lead pastor). To further help me interpret the data, I consulted with Dr. Buchko who offered much useful insight and important corroboration and collaboration.

The validity of this study is being addressed by the triangulation of data collection and by having experts interpret the data as well.

The cumulative results of this exploratory research is distilled into a report that details the perceived advantages and disadvantages of each model of site planting and the

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[169] A sample of the permission letter may also be found in Appendix B.
[170] The compiled data from the surveys and statistics may be found in Appendices J, K, and L.

establishment of recommendations to guide the decision-making process for Ascension and perhaps others who are considering one of these models of site planting.

C. Implementation of the Project

In July 2010, I submitted my MAP proposal for committee approval. Since it was the summer, the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) committee didn't meet for a while. On September 21, 2010, I received an email that my proposal had been approved with some minor revisions. On October 6, 2010, my advisor, William Utech emailed me the revisions that needed to be made. I made these revisions on October 7, 2010 and emailed the final proposal document to both David Peter and William Utech. The survey questions that would be asked of lead pastors and chairpersons of church planting committees were appended to the proposal.

In October 2010, I emailed Ron Burcham for a list of churches and pastors who have self-reported that they were following the multi-site model. I had met Ron in June 2010 at the first LCMS conference for multi-site churches held at Faith Lutheran Church, Oakville, MO. Having obtained a list of multi-site pastors I began to narrow the list by eliminating those churches which were demographically farthest from Ascension. I also eliminated churches that were using a different model of multi-site than Ascension was using.

It was also during this time that I contacted Mark Frith, Assistant to the Kansas District President for Missions and Stewardship, asking if he could help me locate churches in the Midwest that have recently planted autonomous daughter congregations. Mark sent out an email to mission executives from other LCMS districts asking them to respond to me. From the responses, I was able to identify six congregations that had

planted autonomous daughter congregations and made a list with phone numbers so that I could contact each congregation.

In November 2010, I began work on the Contemporary Perpective section of the MAP in order to gain as much knowledge as I could about the current practices and the research being done on multi-site ministry. This section of Chapter Three was submitted to Dr. Utech in January of 2011.

In January 2011, I began phoning pastors from the churches I had previously identified from the responses from Rev. Frith's request and the list Rev. Burcham provided. I phoned the pastors of each of the twelve churches asking if they would be willing to fill out a survey regarding the process, the factors and the assumptions they made in reaching their decision on which of the two models they ultimately chose. I also phoned Rev. Luther Brunette formally asking if he would be willing to participate having received informal willingness to participate in an earlier conversation.

During the phone conversation, I explained to each pastor my study, requesting that he fill in the survey and also have those in charge of the church planting committee fill in the survey. I also told them I would be sending an additional page requesting basic attendance and financial information, if they had it. I told them I would include a permission form allowing me to use their information while protecting any confidential issues.

Having received verbal assent, I gathered the addresses of these churches, printed off the appropriate surveys, statistic page, confidentiality agreement and cover letter with instructions. These were mailed to the thirteen congregations with the request that they return them by March 9, 2011.

While waiting for the surveys and requested information to be returned I wrote both the Biblical and Theological foundation of the MAP and the historical context. These two sections were submitted to Dr. Utech. The historical context section was submitted the first part of February and the Biblical and theological foundation was submitted the latter part of February.

By March 9, 2011, I had received only four responses. In the days following, I made follow-up phone calls to encourage these pastors to return the surveys and requested information. Two pastors said they had lost the surveys so I emailed the documents to them and begged them to return the documents as soon as possible.

On March 11, 2011, I consulted with the executive director of training from the Center of United States Mission, an institute based at Concordia University, Irvine, CA. I asked him some of the same questions that I had asked the pastors and chairpersons seeking the "pros" and the "cons" of each model of church planting. After he listed several positives and negatives of each model, I asked him what questions he would ask of church planting committees to help them decide which model to follow. His responses were written down and can be found in the appendix of this MAP. By doing this interview, I was able to gain a more thorough understanding of the models of church planting and what some of the issues are in deciding which model to follow.

On March 29, 2011, after another round of begging pastors to return the surveys, one pastor had his secretary email me informing me that he had changed his mind and would not participate. I went back to my list of churches and called another pastor from the list asking if he and his church would participate. He agreed to participate for which I was grateful.

Finally, on April 11, 2011, the last survey and statistic sheet arrived in the mail. I made copies of the returned information, redacted them to protect confidentiality, and mailed them to Dr. Buchko on April 12, 2011 asking him to use his expertise in organizational behavior to provide insight and what the data reveals. I also set about interpreting the data.

Dr. Buchko and I had a preliminary conversation on April 19, 2011 regarding initial impressions. Dr. Buchko and I first looked at the average attendance of the two groups studied.

I then carefully went through the surveys and compiled the data creating a table which is appended to this MAP.[171] While I was compiling the data I coded it noting when respondents gave the same answers and also noting the key words used that indicated a value. Value words indicate movement toward a particular choice. I also marked the compiled data to note the similarities between both groups as they filled in the survey indicating where common agreement was found.

I did the same for Carmel Lutheran Church[172] and with the statistics of all the respondents.[173]

I then compiled and reviewed my interview with Rev. Ruhl, the director of The Center for United States Missions. This organization is used by many LCMS district executives and by LCMS seminaries to provide training for pastors who will be planting or are planting new congregations. The compiled data from the interview can be found in Appendix M.

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[171] See Appendix J.
[172] See Appendix K.
[173] See Appendix L.

On April 27, 2011, I emailed all my compiled data to Dr. Buchko so that he could study it. In addition, on May 4, 2011, I emailed Dr. Buchko my initial findings and analysis. Several e-mails went back and forth during this collaborative process. I rewrote Chapter Five as he suggested, making the findings more readable and to clarify the findings. I sent him another draft of Chapter Five on May 12, 2011. We held a final collaborative conversation on May 26, 2011, during which time he provided further insight and analysis which was included.

I wrote my concluding observations and Chapter Six on May 27, 2011, while the information was still fresh in my mind.

Conclusion

I didn't realize when I started the survey phase how difficult it would be to get fellow brothers in the ministry to respond to a survey and provide data. I sent out the survey forms in early January giving them until early March to complete the surveys. Only three were returned by that date. I had to make numerous phone calls to beg and plead for these surveys to be returned. I realize all of us are "busy," but it was very frustrating and time consuming.

In spite of the frustration, this phase of the MAP provided valuable information from which I was able to gain insight and understanding that is useful to my situation at Ascension Lutheran Church. I thank all the brothers in the faith who were willing to participate. I hope that what follows will be as helpful to them as it was for me.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROJECT EVALUATED

<u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this MAP was to focus on two models of church planting, namely, the planting of independent autonomous congregations and the planting of multi-site congregations. I realize there are other models of church planting, but these are the two models being studied at Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, and, recently, competing for attention among sister LCMS churches. I focused on the decision-making process through this policy capture study. Through this exploratory study, I wanted to discover how other congregations thought through and came to decide on the model they chose. I did this by looking at the positives they listed versus the negatives of each model and also by looking at the assumptions they made about the particular model they chose and whether those assumptions, in their opinion, came true. Finally, I asked them to reflect back on the process themselves by asking what they would do differently knowing what they know now.

In addition, I gathered exploratory statistical data.[174] I collected this data to discover if the assumptions made by the congregations actually produced the fruit expected by the model. I also wanted to compare each model with a multi-denominational study done concerning numerical growth and finances to see if what these LCMS churches experienced was close to the outcome of the multi-denominational study.

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[174] The statistics gathered did not include enough samples to rise to the level of an empirical study as only thirteen churches were surveyed. However, the scant statistics which were self-reported by the congregations did provide data that allowed comparison between the models and valuable questions to be studied.

In evaluating the collected data, I will first present the findings of the surveys comparing and contrasting the data from each model looking for key identifiers upon which the decision to follow the model was made. Again, Carmel Lutheran Church, of Carmel, IN, is a unique case study as it has followed both models in the recent past. Its survey and findings will receive special attention. I will be referring quite often to Appendix J and Appendix K which contain a compilation of the returned surveys and a compilation of Carmel Lutheran's surveys. Next I will present the findings of the collected statistics, which are compiled in Appendix L, and what insights, if any, can be gleaned from them.

Ultimately, the collected data is for the purpose of helping direct future church planting decisions at Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS. However, what is learned by Ascension might also prove helpful to other congregations considering expanding God's kingdom by planting additional congregations.

A. Findings and Analysis of the Surveys

A sample of the surveys sent to daughter congregations and multi-site congregations (also called sister congregations), along with letters of explanation, permission to use the data and a statistic form, can be found in the appendices.

Did the Churches That Planted Daughters Consider the Multi-Site Model?

The first question of the survey asked each church if, in the planning process, it considered the other model of church planting.[175] I first want to look at those churches which planted daughter congregations. Of the churches that planted daughter congregations, seven respondents said, "Yes" and three said, "No." (There was a

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[175] See Appendix C.

possibility of twelve respondents from each model; a pastor and the chairperson of the planting committee from each of the six churches. I received back ten of the twelve surveys from daughter church participants: six pastors and four chairpersons.)

I was not expecting so many of the daughter church respondents to answer "Yes." The daughter planting model is the most common, the most researched, the most well-known and the most historic model used in the LCMS, according to Mike Ruhl.[176] This model is what I would call the "default" model for church planting in the LCMS. Being the "default" model with the most research behind it, one would expect this model to be the model used without considering any other. I was proved wrong. This tells me that even though the daughter church model is well-established, those following this model did not blindly follow the model, but looked at alternatives.

Why Did You Plant a Daughter Congregation Rather than Add another Site?

The second question follows the first by asking why they chose the model they did.[177] It is interesting that all three who answered, "No" to the first question indicated that they did not consider the other model because planting daughter congregations had been their past experience. They were following what was familiar to them. The seven who said "yes" still followed the daughter church model for various reasons. Two of the seven indicated that the daughter church model "matched the doctrine and polity of the LCMS."[178] Two of the seven "yes" answers thought this model can reach more people because it plants "new" congregations rather than leverage the name or reputation of an existing congregation. The conventional wisdom in church planting is that "new" grows

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[176] See Appendix M.
[177] See Appendix C.
[178] See Appendix J, question 2.

faster and reaches more people than "old" or "existing." Three of the single answers can be grouped together under the issue of independence. One responder's reason for choosing the daughter model is that the mother church wanted the new place to be independent from the mother church. That church wanted the people belonging to the new plant to "own" the ministry. One responder said the mission developer wanted to be independent of the mother church. Another responder indicated that the mother church did not want competition to develop between sites.[179] This issue of independence speaks to the "control" of the new plant. As can be seen later on in this chapter, "control" of the plant is a major issue in choosing which model to follow.

Did the Churches That Planted a Multi-Site Ministry Consider the Daughter Church Model?

The same question was asked of those who followed the multi-site model that was asked of those who followed the daughter site model, except reversed: did you consider the daughter church model?[180] Of the nine respondents from the multi-site survey (six pastors and three chairpersons returned the survey out of the twelve sent), only four said they considered the daughter model. Five didn't consider it at all.[181] Analyzing their responses, most of those who answered that they did not consider it actually did, because their answers listed negative reasons for not choosing the daughter church model. If they had not considered the daughter church model, they would not be aware of the reasons they chose not to follow the daughter church plant model. These churches may have almost immediately rejected the daughter church model, but the daughter church model was the baseline from which they looked for a different approach. One pastor who

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[179] See Appendix J, question 2.
[180] See Appendix E.
[181] See Appendix J, question 2.

answered "yes" indicated that while they chose the multi-site model, the option of switching to the daughter church model is still open. In hindsight, of the five responders who answered "no," I would have liked to ask them how they came to be so certain in their choice without considering other models.

Why Did You Go Multi-site Rather than Plant a Daughter Congregation?[182]

The most frequent answer to this question was "because of closeness and connectivity with the new site."[183] The second most frequent answer was "financial reasons."[184] One church said it chose multi-site "because previous independent plants have failed." Another church said it was introduced to multi-site by the district executive as it began planning to plant another congregation. Still another church chose the multi-site model because it did not "want to lose members"[185] but keep them a part of the church. One responder saw how the church could make better use of staff by going multi-site rather than plant an independent congregation.

The issue of "control" was mentioned by one responder. He indicated that the planting congregation wanted to maintain "control over worship and doctrine."[186] The reader will note that none of the other eight responders mentioned the "control" issue whether it is control of the mission, control of worship style, control of vision and values or control of direction of ministry. As will be seen again later, these same responders have this issue in mind because it is listed as a positive reason for choosing the multi-site model.

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[182] See Appendix E.
[183] See Appendix J, question 2.
[184] See Appendix J, question 2.
[185] See Appendix J, question 2.
[186] See Appendix J, question 2.

Conclusion

The vast majority of respondents indicated they looked at more than one model before making a decision on which one to follow. This means that they chose the model well aware of the decision they were making and the attendant advantages and disadvantages of each model. The decision on which model to follow was based on previous experience with planting independent congregations. Those who had positive experiences followed the daughter model again. Those who didn't have a good experience followed the multi-site model.

Another factor in the choice is what kind of outcome the congregations intended. Did they want to have a connection with the new worship site or did they want the new site to "grow to adulthood" and be its own church? Did they want the members of the new site to "own" their ministry or be a convenience[187] for members living in another area? Some may say that those who wanted to stay connected did so to make the planting church look bigger, but there was no evidence of this in the survey. It was expressed that some churches didn't want to "dilute" their membership, but "staying big" was not the reason. In fact, many wanted to remain connected for the sake of relationships. They did not want people to have to choose place over relationships.

Listed Disadvantages of the Multi-site Model by Both Groups of Responders

In presenting the findings of the disadvantages I wanted to start with the commonalities between both groups of responders. This was in response to question three of the surveys.[188] What were the disadvantages recognized and listed by both groups? I

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[187] The use of the word "convenience" is not a negative evaluation. It is simply reality.
[188] See Appendix C and E, question 3.

did this because the pattern of listed commonalities suggests important issues which are likely of significant concern.

As a general observation, if a person was asked the question, "Who would list more negatives for the multi-site model, those who planted daughter congregations or those who planted multi-site congregations?", most people would say, "The group who didn't chose the model." That would be logical. This was not the case. The churches that planted daughter congregations listed twelve negatives while the churches that chose multi-site listed eighteen negatives.[189] This tells me that the multi-site churches either chose the model they did fully aware of the negatives or, in hindsight since I am asking them to recall the decision-making process, they are living the negatives now. If the latter is the case, they are giving us insight that is important.

There are two disadvantages that topped the most frequent list. The first is that multi-site can easily degrade into a "we-they" battle (six responses). The second disadvantage most frequently listed is that multi-site congregations may become dependent on the main campus rather than taking ownership for the ministry (six responses).

Maintaining good relationships is key in any organization. No organization wants to be in competition with itself. That is self-destructive and creates pain. Whenever there is a possibility of a "we/they" struggle, people will want to avoid it. There can be we/they issues with the daughter model, but since they are two separate and independent congregations, both can go their own way without constant provocation. There may be lasting animosity, but since there doesn't have to be much contact, the issue doesn't get raised constantly like it would be with multi-site. In my research from the Contemporary

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[189] See Appendix J, question 3.

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Perspective section, there is nothing in published material that suggests that we/they issues are common with multi-site ministries, but experience with sinful human nature makes it highly probable unless the issue is noted and proactively prevented.

The second issue frequently mentioned by both groups has to do with dependence on the planting congregation. Both groups felt that additional sites could become dependent on the main campus. One responder brought up this issue in terms of human development. The thought is that congregations, like organizations, have a lifecycle. Daughter congregations eventually have to mature and become self-sufficient. It was recognized by both groups of responders that multi-sites may become dependent and never mature, never take ownership of the new ministry. Since both groups mention lack of maturity with frequency, it is significant and must be considered.

Unfamiliarity with this model was the other disadvantage listed by both groups. The multi-site model is a relatively recent model and is not widely used, although it is becoming more frequent. Being unfamiliar with the model can lead to confusion and misunderstandings about the model and how it functions. Being unfamiliar with the model leaves many with questions about structure and who is responsible for what. Using an unfamiliar model will require much more teaching and open discussion if this model is chosen.

Listed Disadvantages of the Multi-site Model by the Daughter Group

There were no really significant disadvantages listed only by the daughter group. One responder wrote that he didn't think that the multi-site model was "in accord" with the polity of the LCMS.[190] It is certainly not the model envisioned when C. F. W.

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[190] See Appendix J, question 3.

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Walther, one of the founding fathers of the LCMS, wrote the constitution of Trinity

Lutheran Church, St. Louis, which became the model constitution of many LCMS

churches. However, as noted in the Historical Context section of this study, Walther

practiced a form of multi-site ministry himself adding Zion, Holy Cross and Immanuel in

St. Louis, MO, to Trinity.[191] Trinity Lutheran Church's constitution became the model,

but there is nothing in the corporate LCMS constitution requiring a specific church model

be used. There are, however, some prescribed theological requirements that have to be

met in church constitutions that can be met by the multi-site model.

One disadvantage listed by a daughter church responder makes the assumption

that preaching happens via video. The most recent research indicates that video preaching

happens in only twenty percent of the time while forty-six percent use "live" preaching

and thirty-four percent use a combination.[192]

Another daughter church responder mentioned that the cost of technology is a

disadvantage. In the study done by Warren Bird and Kristen Walter, technology is the

major expense for multi-site churches that use video sermons.[193] However, as noted

above, the majority of multi-site churches use live preaching. Technology doesn't have to

be a major expense.

Listed Disadvantages of the Multi-site Model by the Multi-site Group

As I have mentioned before, either the multi-site group did extensive research

ahead of time or they listed more negatives because they are now "living" the model.

Either way, their list provides additional insight.

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[191] See pages 72-76 of this MAP.
[192] Warren Bird and Kristen Walters, 17.
[193] Warren Bird and Kristen Walters, 8.

The negative most frequently listed only by this group was the cost of facilities. This reflects how the surveyed congregations chose to become multi-site. One doesn't have to build a building to become multi-site, but many did. Ascension Lutheran, the congregation I serve, chose to build a daycare as part of the second site. We didn't have to, but chose to. Many multi-sites rent space and so don't invest in facilities.

Another negative was the recognition that the multi-site model may spread the staff too thin. It may have them going in too many directions and responsible for too many ministries so that nothing is done well and in an excellent way. Other negatives listed by the multi-site group were the complexity of structure and the financial burden on the main campus.[194] While it is possible to "foresee" such issues, the answers given by the responders indicate that these are disadvantages that were discovered through "living the model." These responses add to the base knowledge of the multi-site model.

Conclusion

While each group listed negatives that the other group didn't list, the ones that both groups listed are significant. Again, the negatives cited by both groups were: 1) multi-site may become a "we/they" competition, 2) multi-site may promote dependence rather than maturity, and 3) multi-site is unfamiliar to most LCMS congregations.

Listed Advantages of the Multi-site Model by Both Groups

Next I asked both groups to list the advantages they considered when deciding between planting a daughter congregation or a multi-site ministry.[195]

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[194] See Appendix J, question 3.
[195] See Appendix C and E.

Starting again with a general observation, when it came to listing the positives of multi-site, seven responders of the daughter church group listed ten positives (three responders did not answer this question), while the nine responders of the multi-site group listed twenty-four positives.[196] The multi-site group, even though they listed many negatives, listed many more positives. Most of the positives from the daughter group were focused on the ability to control the direction of ministry and leveraging the name and reputation of the church within that community.

There were two major areas of agreement between both groups responding to this survey. The most frequent response was that multi-site is financially easier. Seven responders listed this – eight if you add "less up-front cost." The second most frequent response was control over ministry, culture and direction. This is often called the "DNA" of a congregation. "DNA" is shorthand for the culture, core values and vision of a church.

In regards to the first response, both groups recognized that multi-site ministries can be established using gifts and talents already on staff. This would lower the staff cost. Both groups also recognize that if they start another venue in a different part of the same campus, the cost of facilities is greatly reduced. Facility and staff are every congregation's biggest expense. Anything that reduces these would make it "financially easier."

It's interesting that both groups recognized the influence the first campus or planting church would have with the second site. I intentionally sought out congregations from both ends of the theological spectrum, which, in my opinion, isn't very wide in the LCMS, to fill out the surveys. The issue of control was not the exclusive domain of either end of this narrow spectrum. The churches who listed it obviously did not view this as a

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[196] See Appendix J, question 4.

negative as they listed it as a positive. They didn't view it as big brother telling little brother what to do as much as providing "support," "direction" or "focus." The main concern was furthering the mission, that is, to keep the new congregation focused on the mission and not let it get sidetracked by issues of survival.

The other reason given for listing "control" was that the planting congregation wants to have recourse if the site pastor or mission planter strays from the founding vision and principles. The multi-site model provides some assurance to a congregation being asked to put significant resources into a project that their resources will not be squandered or pilfered. According to the research, the four year survivability rate of daughter churches is sixty-eight percent[197] while the survivability rate for multi-site is ninety percent.[198] Survivability rate and a previous bad experience with a daughter church plant make this control issue very significant.

Another significant area of agreement was "better utilization of staff gifts."[199] Proper utilization of gifts is part of the proper stewardship of God's resources. One church explained it as each staff person can concentrate using the gifts he has been given rather than become a generalist as a pastor would have to do in a daughter congregation. If a pastor is good at preaching, he can concentrate on writing and proclaiming the sermon for all the campuses. If a pastor is particularly good at teaching, he can oversee the teaching ministry at all campuses. If a staff person is good at children's ministry, that person can oversee the children's ministry at all campuses. Dr. Buchko called this

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[197] Ed Stetzer and Philip Conner, *Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 2007* (Center for Missional Research, February 2007), accessed April 12, 2011, http://www.centerforusmissions.com/Portals/0/pdfs/Church%20Plant%20Survivability%20and%20Health%20Study%202007%20Report.pdf, 18.
[198] Warren Bird and Kristen Walters, 24.
[199] See Appendix J, question 4.

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"efficiency of resources." In an autonomous daughter church, the pastor is usually expected to perform a much broader range of function and doesn't have the luxury of concentrating on one or two gifted areas.

Listed Advantages of the Multi-site Model by the Daughter Group

The only additional advantage listed by the daughter group that was not listed by the multi-site group was "leveraging a well known name."[200] I thought this was interesting because it was not mentioned by the multi-site group. Perhaps "name" isn't the reason behind going multi-site, or at least it isn't significant to the multi-site group. However, as mentioned in the Contemporary Perspective section, it was noted that multi-sites grow faster because they leverage a recognized name within the local community.[201]

Listed Advantages of the Multi-site Model by the Multi-site Group

Of the advantages listed by the multi-site group, the three areas of focus were the connectivity with the original site, the greater amount of resources available at launch, and the ability to quickly go into a new area.

A document compiled of recent research indicates that the bigger the launch in terms of people, staff and programs, the better the survivability rate.[202] With the backing of the main campus, two churches working together can more effectively serve God's kingdom than one church by itself. This was also the theory behind the *Gesammtgeminde* initiated by Dr. Walther when Trinity planted Zion, Holy Cross and Immanuel.[203] The

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[200] See Appendix J, question 4.
[201] See pages 97 of this MAP.
[202] Glenn Smith, comp. "Improving the Health and Survivability of New Churches" (Leadership Network, 2007), accessed April 29, 2011, http://media.leadnet.org/blog-content/leadnet/downloads/State%20of%20 Church %20Planting%20Report_Health.pdf, 5.
[203] See pages 72-76 of this MAP.

congregations acting in concert could do more to meet the mission possibilities than each

acting individually.

Conclusion

Financial burden is a real issue as it comes up often in the survey. It was the most

frequently listed advantage of the multi-site model. The other significant areas of

agreement were control over the ministry and direction of the new plant and the efficient

use of resources.

Listed Advantages of the Daughter Church Model by Both Groups

In order not to give any indication of which model the congregation I serve

follows, which is the multi-site model, I switched the order. While I asked for the "pros"

and "cons" of the multi-site model first, I intentionally asked that the disadvantages be

listed first. With the daughter church model I asked that the advantages be listed first.[204]

Thus, I will first be looking at the advantages of the independent daughter church model

that were considered during the decision-making process.

As a general observation, those who chose the independent daughter church

model listed more positives (nineteen) than the multi-site group (thirteen). People

commonly make decisions based on the positives outweighing the negatives. Since this is

the model those of the daughter group chose, they would be able to list many positives.

There were several areas of agreement between the groups as to the advantages of

the daughter congregation model. One significant area of agreement was on this issue of

independence. The daughter church respondents mention "independence" five times.

Three times they listed "Isn't like the 'mother' church's DNA" and two times they listed

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[204] See Appendix C and E, question 5.

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"independent from mother church." The multi-site churches listed "independence" five times with the response "independent from the mother."[205]

Independence has its advantages as both groups realize. Being independent does not pass along bad "DNA." Independence allows the daughter to mature into self-sufficiency, sometimes forced to mature because it is independent. One could perhaps add to the number listing independence as the main advantage if you include the two responders from the multi-site group who cited that the financial obligation to the daughter church ends.[206] This isn't always a bad thing because it promotes ownership of the new congregation. This is the counter to the issue of dependence listed as a negative for the multi-site model.

Another area of agreement is that this is a familiar model (three responses). Planting daughter congregations, as Rev. Ruhl points out, is the most common model used in the LCMS. He estimates it is used by seventy percent of planting churches.[207] Two churches from the daughter group cited familiarity with this model as the reason they did not choose the multi-site model stating, "It's been our pattern."[208]

Both groups listed as a positive the belief that new congregations reach more people. As Rev. Ruhl pointed out in the interview, new churches are more effective in reaching unchurched or dechurched people.[209] I don't think this is a positive exclusive to daughter congregations. Why, then, was it listed under the daughter church model? The answer comes in the advantage listed most frequently – independence. A second or third site in a multi-site setting is new as well. If "newness" is what attracts the unchurched

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[205] See Appendix J, question 5.
[206] See Appendix J, question 5.
[207] See Appendix M, question 1.
[208] See Appendix J, question 5.
[209] Rev. Mike Ruhl, personal interview, 11 March 2011.

and dechurched, then this conventional wisdom would apply to both models. However, the multi-site, in trying to leverage name recognition, will also bring with it the negatives associated with the original campus. The daughter church is distinctively new.

Listed Advantages for the Daughter Model by the Daughter Group

The amount of agreement by both groups in listing the advantages of the daughter church model was so significant that the advantages listed exclusively by only one group are small. Two responders noted that they think the daughter church model is better connected with the community because its identity is not connected to the planting church as in the multi-site model.[210] This relates to the issue of being independent from all other churches. If a church doesn't have a great reputation in particular community, one doesn't want to carry that forward to a new church plant. To be sure, there is always a connection with the planting church because of the people resources being invested in the new site. However, the community is not usually cognizant of this fact.

An advantage that a responder listed from the daughter group is that the daughter church model is in line with LCMS polity. This was discussed earlier on pages 123-124 of this MAP. Again, while it is more in accord with the model constitution of Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO, there is nothing in our constitution that prescribes a certain structure. For further insight into theological issues, please refer to the Biblical and Theological Foundation section of this MAP.[211] Likewise, the listed advantage of "the gospel is direct and not via video" was addressed in the same section of this MAP.[212]

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[210] See Appendix J, question 5.
[211] See pages 56-57.
[212] See pages 49-54.

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Listed Advantages for the Daughter Church Model by the Multi-site Group

A positive that the multi-site group noted that the daughter did not was that the structure of the congregation is less complex. For churches, complexity of structure is a real issue. This was also brought out as a significant issue in several of the books reviewed in the Contemporary Perspective section.[213] The structure of a daughter congregation is rather simple. LCMS churches typically have a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer and then a number of boards. However, with multi-site ministry you have structures at two different sites, and the need for coordination of effort and communication between campuses or venues complicates things greatly. With multi-site one has to ask: "Which boards need to be replicated at the new site and what areas do we need to keep consolidated?" "How will we ensure proper representation for the multiple sites?" Complexity can add up quickly.

Another advantage brought up by the multi-site group is that it focuses resources on the local community. What the responders were getting at is that the preacher may be one part of the community and the second site or additional sites may be another area or another town. If the message comes from the main campus, then it might not address issues of the local community. In addition, since the finances are all put into one pot, the needs of another area may get priority over local needs. With the daughter plant model, everything is local.

Conclusion

It was fairly obvious to both groups that the main advantage of the daughter church plant is its independence. With independence come various related items. The

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[213] See pages 102-103.

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congregation can mature. Ownership of the new plant must happen. The new plant

doesn't have to deal with much of the negative baggage of the planting congregation. It is

distinctively new and new is attractive to people.

Listed Disadvantages of the Daughter Model by Both Groups

As a follow-up to listing the advantages of the daughter church model, the

responders were asked to list disadvantages of the daughter church model.[214]

When it came to listing the disadvantages (cons) of planting daughter churches,

those who planted daughter churches listed nine negatives while the multi-site group

listed fifteen negatives. Comparing the nine listed negatives from the daughter group to

the nineteen listed advantages, for this group the positives certainly outweigh the

negatives.

The negative response that was listed most frequently was the financial cost (eight

responders).[215] Both groups realize that up-front costs are significant. Earlier I mentioned

that Ascension chose to build an Open Arms daycare ministry as its second campus. In

this case, the up-front cost for the multi-site was significant. There is no requirement to

build new facilities with either model. Why, then, was this listed by both groups as a

disadvantage for the daughter church model? The listing of other disadvantages provides

some potential reasons. There is the cost of members who join the daughter congregation.

There is the loss of income from those members transferring to the independent daughter

church. There is the cost of a full-time pastor rather than sharing a pastor. Adding these

factors together, the initial cost of a daughter plant is seen as more expensive. It has also

been my experience, since I have helped plant both a daughter congregation and a multi-

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[214] See Appendix C and E, question 6.
[215] See Appendix J, question 6.

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site ministry, that a permanent worship facility is more crucial for daughter plants than it is for multi-site plants.

Both groups listed as a negative that there is no recourse in daughter plants if the members of the mission plant "hijack" the mission or change direction and vision of the daughter church (six responders).[216] The daughter is independent and incorporated separately from the planting congregation. Thus the planting congregation, which has provided significant resources, has no authority at all. As I mentioned above, this was a concern from both ends of the narrow LCMS theological spectrum.

Three responders listed disconnection with the mother church as a disadvantage. This is the "opposite side of the coin" of independence. Relationships are vital to people and quite often they either slowly erode or are ended because people do not "see" each other at church in this model. They choose one place to worship over the other. However, this is not exclusive to the daughter church model. It happens with multi-site as noted above in the caution of multi-site becoming a "we/they" issue.

Listed Disadvantages of the Daughter Church Model by the Daughter Group

It is significant that four from the daughter group listed no negatives. I can understand this if they meant that planting a new church is never a negative. It is always good to be about expanding God's kingdom. However, if they truly meant that there were no negatives associated with the daughter model, to me that would be a bit naïve.

The only other negative listed most by the daughter group not listed by the multi-site group was the work involved in writing a new constitution and by-laws.[217] There is much time and effort involved in having a new congregation's constitution and by-laws

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[216] See Appendix J, question 6.
[217] See Appendix J, question 6.

work their way through the district officials to the district convention. It is ironic that some of the churches that followed the daughter church model indicated independent congregations are more inline with LCMS polity, but then turned around and listed it as a negative of this model. I think this is a realization that even though the daughter church plant is the historic model of the LCMS, it doesn't mean it is easy or has been streamlined over the years.

Listed Disadvantages of the Daughter Church Model by the Multi-site Group

One negative listed by the multi-site groups not listed by the daughter group is that daughter plants do not survive as often as multi-site plants. According to a study done by Ed Stetzer and Philip Conner in 2007, sixty-eight percent of daughter plants survive four years.[218] The most recent research on multi-sites finds they have a ninety percent survival rate.[219] While sixty-eight percent is not a bad survival rate, in fact good enough to debunk the myth that most church plants fail, ninety percent survival rate is significantly better. When an existing congregation is investing so much into a new congregation, even a sixty-eight percent success rate is a negative when compared to a ninety percent success rate.

Some additional negatives listed by the multi-site group not listed by the daughter group were more volunteers in administrative roles than in ministry, fewer programs or ministries available at start of the new plant, and the daughter church model forces staff to be generalists rather than leverage the talents of staff.

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[218] Glenn Smith, comp., 2.
[219] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, 24.

Concerning the first negative listed, the upper administrators in a multi-site plant are usually from the main campus, however, there still has to be some structure at the second site unless it is simply another venue on the same main campus. The number "in ministry" as compared to "in administration" depends more on the ministry model than the church plant model of the new congregations.

Likewise, a daughter plant doesn't always have to start with less staff or programs. Two churches from the daughter church group sent a significant number of "missionaries" and more than one staff person to plant the daughter congregation. The concern with the number of people and services at start-up is a concern for viability. The more people and services a place has at launch, the more likely it will survive and thrive.[220] This, again, begs the question: Why is this listed as a disadvantage for the daughter church model? Analysis of the surveys suggests two reasons: 1) sending large numbers of members and staff to a daughter church plant is not the historic pattern and 2) because it does not leverage the staff talents and gifts of the planting congregation. As discussed above, the daughter church model forces the pastor to be a generalist and doesn't allow for efficiency of resources.

Conclusion

The most significant disadvantages of the daughter church model, because they are listed with frequency by both groups, are the up-front costs of planting a daughter congregation and the lack of control after the daughter congregation is launched. One can easily realize why these are of significant concern. No one likes to see resources squandered. Control over the plants provides some assurance that this will not happen.

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[220] Glenn Smith, comp., 5.

Listed Assumptions Made by Each Group Concerning the Model They Chose

This question asked about assumptions made in regards to the model the congregation eventually chose.[221] This question goes beyond the simple positives and negatives and starts to look at the assumed outcomes, the desired hopes and wishes of the congregation. It seeks to determine which of the listed positives and negatives were influential in the decision-making process.

As a general observation, both groups make the assumption that planting new ministry sites is a particularly effective way to extend God's kingdom. As I have reported above, this is not only an assumption, but empirically supported.[222] This speaks to the motivation behind tackling such a huge endeavor which entails significant costs no matter which model one chooses. Both groups feel they are following the impetus of the *missio Dei* and are heeding God's desire that all nations come to the knowledge of Him and be saved.

It is interesting that several responders of both groups (six total responders; three from each group)[223] make the assumption that their model grows faster. Obviously, both groups can't be right and the responders didn't provide any supporting data. In my research I haven't found any empirical evidence to prove one grows faster than the other. Obviously, the books reviewed in the Contemporary Perspective section contain anecdotal evidence since they were written by multi-site practitioners. However, that their model grew faster was the working assumption by one-third of the responders from each group. Having a church plant grow quickly is the hope and desire of every congregation that seeks to extend God's kingdom via church planting. This assumption

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[221] See Appendix C and E, question 7.
[222] Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, xi.
[223] See Appendix J, question 7.

would be highly influential in deciding which model to follow. Common reason would not suggest choosing a slow growing model unless there are greater issues that would override such reasoning.

Perhaps that "greater" reason is provided by responders to the daughter church survey as three of them indicated that they assume the daughter church planting model is "more inline with historic LCMS doctrine and polity."[224] For some traditional congregations, this issue alone would preclude any other model of church planting.

Some of the daughter church responders did not follow the multi-site model because they thought that multi-site churches depend too much on the personality and talents of the senior pastor. They are afraid that multi-site churches could become personality cults. This is a legitimate concern if one does any research into the multi-site church phenomenon. Looking at the most well-known multi-site churches across the United States, they are all driven by the senior or preaching pastor. The only exception to this was New Hope Christian Church in Honolulu, HI. The model of the lead pastor, Wayne Cordeiro, is to get the site pastors teaching as soon as possible.[225] Otherwise, most of the biggest multi-site churches are driven by the lead pastor whether it is Greg Surratt of Seacoast, Craig Groeschel of LifeChurch.tv, or Larry Osborne of North Coast Church.

This can be good and it can be bad. It is bad when the ministry centers on the preacher and people attend because of the charisma of the preacher rather than the message preached. When the lead pastor leaves, retires or, heaven forbid, is caught in gross sin, then the whole organization crumbles. This can be good, however, in

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[224] See Appendix J, question 7.
[225] Surratt, Ligon and Bird, *A Multi-site Church Road Trip*, 37.

leveraging the gifts of a talented preacher, reaching more people than he could in a church meeting in only one location.

Some responders from the multi-site group listed as an assumption that multi-site church plants have a better success rate. As demonstrated by Ed Stetzer, this assumption has empirical support as ninety percent of all multi-site starts are still worshipping communities.[226] The only caution I would add is that this contemporary version of multi-site ministry is only ten years old, maybe twenty at most. Some pertinent information here is that many multi-sites are started by large, well-resourced congregations.[227] It is not that only large, well-resourced churches become multi-site or that these types of resources are needed for the multi-site model. However the majority of multi-site churches are large and well-resourced having followed this model to leverage their name recognition and their talented staffs. Having such resources behind a plant, multi-sites can keep a plant going a lot longer than could be done if the plant would be independent of the planting congregation. Since the contemporary model is so new, the current data about the success rate of multi-sites may be skewed.

Even though many multi-site plants are started by well-resourced congregations, it is significant that three responders made the assumption that multi-site is more cost efficient. There is no empirical data to support this assumption; however, there is much anecdotal evidence in the literature written about multi-site ministry. Financial concerns seem to be determinative in many of the decisions made by the responders. This was brought out in the Contemporary Perspective section as well.

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[226] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, 24.
[227] Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, 5.

One last finding that needs to be brought out is that several (three) responders assumed that multi-site would maintain their membership numbers. Some chose multi-site because they didn't want to lose members as they changed styles of music or location. Some wanted their current members to feel they could attend either site without having to choose a place. This would remove guilt when people worshipped at other campuses. I didn't detect any "domain building" statements. No responders said they went multi-site for the sake of their local church. It was always in response to mission.

Did Your Assumptions Come True?

This question asks if the assumptions they made in choosing the model they chose actually came true, and why or why not.[228] Both groups have the majority of responders marking "Yes." However, the multi-site group had seven "yes" answers with only one "I don't know" answer. Two responders said it was too early to tell. None from the multi-site group answered "no." The daughter group had five "yes" answers, but four "no" answers with only one saying it was too early.[229]

This suggests that the multi-site group was marginally more pleased with the outcome of their planting effort. The daughter group only had one positive answer to "why or why not" and this church invested one hundred twenty members and two staff to the plant. It planted "large" providing more people and resources than normal. The negative answers came from churches where the daughter plant is struggling. This is indicated by them in using phrases such as "growth in area never materialized" and "members weren't committed."[230] On the other hand, the multi-site group used mostly

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[228] See Appendix C and E, question 8.
[229] See Appendix J, question 8.
[230] See Appendix J, question 8.

positive answers to "why or why not" including phrases such as "growth has been phenomenal," "doing very well" and "connection with main campus has been maintained."[231] The two negative answers were from the same church. They answered "yes" that the assumptions came true, but not as rapidly as hoped.

Some of the negative issues listed by those who followed the daughter church model as well as the positive issues listed by those who followed the multi-site model can be attributed to the control issue that has been so prominent in this study. The multi-site model, with its ability to "control" the plant, would lead to better oversight. It would have peers actively directing ministry and a ready evaluation group to provide feedback. From the comments listed above, many daughter congregations discover that they are "out of sight and thus out of mind." Being independent has its advantages in not being controlled by a "big brother," but the other side is "big brother" isn't there to protect you in times of struggle or crisis.

What Would You Do Different?

This question asked each group to reflect on the experience. Knowing what they now know, what would they do different?[232] While I intended the surveyed churches to reflect on the decision-making process, they reflected more on the launch of the planted church or site. One daughter church answered it would not do anything different while five multi-site congregations said they would not do anything different. Again, this suggests that the multi-site group was more pleased with the outcome of the plant than the daughter group. In fact, one pastor from a church that planted a daughter congregation

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[231] See Appendix J, question 8.
[232] See Appendix C and E, question 9.

indicated that he should have "considered the multi-site model more."[233] Both groups had responders who said they needed to pray more for God's direction.

Most of the rest of the answers go more toward a change in tactics while following the model they chose rather than a change in models altogether. Some of the tactical changes listed by those following the daughter church model were having the mission planter spend more time with the mother church, start worship sooner, and look more closely at the mission planter. Tactical changes listed by those who followed the multi-site model were to rent space rather than build, not target just "20-somethings," and work for higher quality music.[234] These suggestions serve as important factors to consider during the decision-making process for any church which is looking to plant.

Overall, though, it seems both groups were mostly pleased with the decisions they made in following the model they chose.

Perceived Relationship between the Planting Church and the Planted Church

This question asked the responders to rate, on a scale of 1-7 with 1 being poor and 7 being great, the perceived relationship between the planting church and the daughter or new site planted.[235] I intentionally used the word "perceived" for two reasons, 1) because there is no way for the lead pastor or the chairperson of the planting committee to know for sure what the relationship is, and 2) because, again, this is an exploratory study and not an empirical study. Since for many people perception is reality, I am confident that the perceived relationship is fairly accurate to reality.

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[233] See Appendix J, question 9.
[234] See Appendix J, question 9.
[235] See Appendix C and E, question 10.

In tabulating the results for the daughter group, the returned values ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 7. The median and mode score were 5 while the mean score was 5.28. For the multi-site group the returned scored ranged from a low of 4 to a high of 7. The median and mode score were both 6 with mean score being 5.94.[236] I realize that the sampling of churches is too small to make any empirical conclusions, but this small sampling suggests that those who followed the multi-site model were marginally more pleased with the result of the plant. The daughter churches which scored the relationship lower than a 5 did so because they perceived a loss of control and a change of direction by the independent daughter congregation. This has adversely affected the relationship between mother and daughter. To be able to influence the direction and values of the new congregation was a reason several multi-site churches chose to follow that model.

Analyzing the multi-site responses, many have a very good relationship and connection with the new site. This was a stated goal of two surveyed multi-site congregations. The responder that scored the relationship the lowest in the multi-site group was disappointed in the growth rate of the plant, not in the model the church chose to follow. In fact, the rest of his responses about the multi-site model were very positive.

Additional Comments

This allowed the responders to add any comments or clarifications to the answers they gave in the survey. Several responders did not make any additional comments. The "no comment" people were not those who scored their relationship lowest. Some who scored the relationship a 7 made no comments. The perceived relationship score did not factor in who or who did not make comments.

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[236] See Appendix J, question 10.

Several additional comments from the daughter planting group were given to illustrate how the congregation provided resources to the new plant above the norm. One comment from a congregation following the daughter model mentioned that they were sending one hundred twenty people and two staff to the new congregation.[237] One congregation mentioned how the mission planter was assimilated into the vision and values of the planting church before being sent to the new site.[238] The few negative comments made by the daughter group came from the church that scored its perceived relationship the lowest.

The additional comments from the multi-site group were all positive. One congregation which seemed to be wrestling with the direction of the new plant did not make any comments. One comment from the multi-site group lists the "efficiency of resources" advantage of the multi-site model. The responder wrote, "one budget/ leadership structure for both sites is a real plus."[239] Another pastor was happy that the people of the main campus had "real buy-in" to the multi-site model.[240] This goes to the significant concern many expressed about the multi-site model becoming a "we/they" competition and to the unfamiliarity of this model. One responder wrote that it was "too expensive to relocate so went multi-site."[241] This suggests that the multi-site model wasn't the first choice, but the best alternative.

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[237] See Appendix J, Additional Comments.
[238] See Appendix J, Additional Comments.
[239] See Appendix J, Additional Comments.
[240] See Appendix J, Additional Comments
[241] See Appendix J, Additional Comments.

B. Findings and Analysis of Carmel Lutheran Church, Carmel, IN

I chose to pay special attention to Carmel Lutheran Church of Carmel, IN, because as I discovered that it had planted four daughter congregations before deciding to follow the multi-site model. I thought investigation as to why Carmel switched models would provide valuable information for Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, as we look to future planting opportunities. I have received special permission from this congregation to use its name and the data it provided. It would have been nice to find a multi-site church which has since decided to follow the daughter church planting model as a counter balance to Carmel Lutheran. However, having made many telephone calls and inquires, I could not find one.

The first question I asked Carmel Lutheran's leaders on a survey designed just for them[242] was to recall what assumption they made in choosing to plant independent daughter congregations. Neither the pastor nor the leader of the planting committee spoke directly to that. They spoke more to why they decided to switch to multi-site. This is what was asked in question two.[243] They noted that one of the daughter congregations had failed. So they wanted to plant a congregation that would have the "DNA" of the planting congregation. Looking at their answers, they noted that the reasons they switched to multi-site was because of the past experiences with daughter congregation plants which failed. They wanted any new plant to "hit the ground running." They also noted the better accountability, which I would interpret as more control over the direction of the ministry.

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[242] See Appendix H, question 1.
[243] See Appendix H, question 2.

Both responders indicated that multi-site makes more efficient use of staff and other resources.[244]

Carmel's experience follows the findings of the multi-site group and the findings of the daughter group. The "efficiency of resources" (stewardship) speaks to cost and, as the reader has seen in several areas of this MAP, cost is a major driving force in the mission work congregations undertake. Good stewardship of resources means less staff which, after facility expenses, is the second most expensive part of a church's budget. Carmel's experience parallels what both groups mentioned as an advantage of the multi-site model – there is oversight and control of the mission plant.

When asking them about the negatives of multi-site, both responders indicated that their main concern was with stretching the staff too thin. In addition, the lead pastor noted multi-site could dampen the sense of ownership and cause resentment toward "big brother." It is interesting that all these were also listed as negatives by several of the responders from the twelve other surveyed churches. This indicates that these are real, not just perceived, negatives and must be taken seriously.[245]

The positives that the responders from Carmel Lutheran listed were also like those listed by the other twelve surveyed churches. Carmel also listed sharing resources, better accountability, members can attend any site without guilt and better utilization of the resources already available without having to "reinvent" ministry again.[246]

Carmel Lutheran was then asked to consider the positives of the independent daughter church model. They listed the sense of ownership and the ability to do something completely brand new apart from any connection to or reputation of the

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[244] See Appendix K, Question 2.
[245] See Appendix K, Question 3.
[246] See Appendix K, Question 4.

planting congregation.[247] Again, these same issues were listed by several other responders.

The negatives that Carmel Lutheran listed did not contain any new information or insight. They listed loss of control of the direction of ministry and a lack of spiritual oversight.[248] Since the issue of control was raised by churches that planted daughter congregations and by churches that followed the multi-site model, and is a big issue for Carmel Lutheran because of past experience, control of ministry or setting and maintaining a direction of ministry is a significant issue for those considering multi-site ministry. The control issue must be raised and how much control well thought out before any congregation decides to plant another worshipping community. The vast majority of congregations that plant other worshipping communities are healthy congregations. Diseased congregations don't usually plant other churches. Healthy congregations usually have strong ministries, excellent vision and values, and a thriving spiritual life. Why a planted church would want to deviate from what is working is beyond my ability to answer. Perhaps it arises out of the ego of the mission planter or site pastor. Perhaps the new site believes it is culturally different from the planting church. This is speculation, but the issue of control seems to be a major issue.

When asked whether the assumptions made about each model have come true, the answer was "so far." Nothing was added to answer "why or why not."[249]

When asked if they would make any changes knowing what they now know, the lead pastor said, "The last two daughter plants would have been multi-site." This shows a clear preference for the multi-site model by Carmel. Why there is a preference was

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[247] See Appendix K, Question 5.
[248] See Appendix K, Question 6.
[249] See Appendix K, Question 7.

clearly indicated by their responses. What tipped Carmel to prefer multi-site was the ability to set direction and oversee the new sites. Carmel's experience of not having the ability to set and maintain direction of ministry with past church plants caused them to switch models. This follows the finding of the survey. The ability to set direction and ministry was one of the main reasons the multi-site group chose to follow the multi-site model.

Only one other comment was added. One responder added a word of caution not to launch a new site too soon. The leadership needs to be "solidly" in place before you begin a new site.[250]

As to the perceived relationship between mother and daughter churches, the lead pastor gave it 5 out of a 1-7 scale. It was noted that two of the daughters continue to be "like-minded" while two other daughters went their own direction which has caused strained relationships. As for the multi-site venues, the relationship was given a 5 with no further explanation.[251]

There were no additional comments or clarifications.

C. Findings and Analysis of Collected Statistical Information

The self-reported data from the statistical form proved to be difficult to interpret. First of all, I want to acknowledge that this was not a true empirical study. This was an exploratory study. There are no hard empirical facts that can be drawn from the gathered statistics. The sample was way too small and there was no verification of reported statistics. That is why I have always said these are "self-reported" statistics. Secondly, the statistics kept by the surveyed churches were sporadic. I have been to many district

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[250] See Appendix K, Question 8.
[251] See Appendix K, Question 9 and 10.

conventions where the district president encourages pastors to keep good records and turn in reports. Fellow brothers in the ministry do not lead their congregation in doing a good job of recordkeeping.

As I also mentioned above, gathering attendance data in half-year increments proved impossible. Nobody, not even Ascension, keeps attendance data in half-year increments. I used only whole year attendance data. In addition, to have any data worthwhile, I added together the attendance numbers from both mother and independent daughter congregations into one attendance record for the year. I did this because some of the multi-site congregations do not keep separate attendance records for the various sites. They simply combined the campuses when reporting attendance on the yearly form submitted to the Office of Rosters and Statistics of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The following graph shows the yearly average worship attendance from those surveyed churches which provided such statistics.

Figure 2 - Graph of Average Worship Attendance (MD = Daughter, MS = Multi-site)
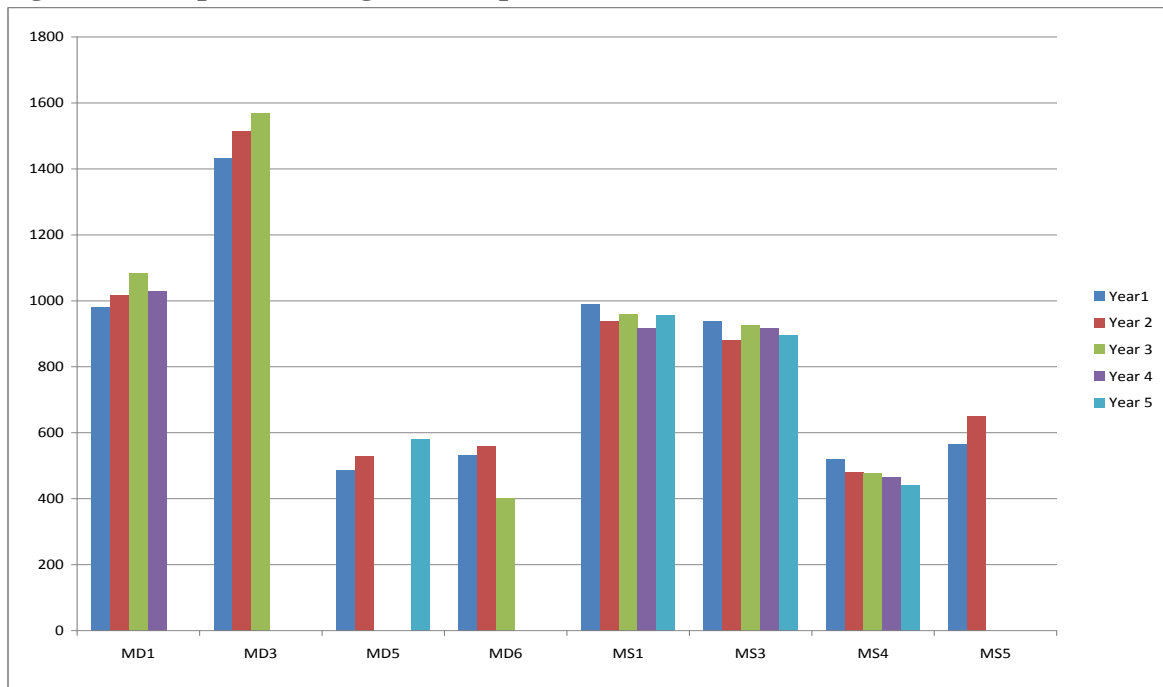
This graph shows some surprising results. In three of the four daughter church plants there was growth. One daughter church showed growth initially but was hit especially hard by the recession as much of the workforce in that location is employed in the automobile manufacturing industry. We know what happened to the automobile industry, including having to be bailed out by loans from the federal government. Overall, the trend is positive for the combined attendance of mother and daughter.

However, when looking at the multi-site churches that self-reported attendance, only one had a positive trend and the rest showed a negative trend. The one positive trend church has only been multi-site for two years. (I would be interested in discovering if this trend continues.) The negative trend of three of the congregations was surprising for me since the conventional wisdom is that multi-site grows better and is easier than a daughter church plant. This was listed by two responders as an advantage of the multi-site model.[252]

When talking with Dr. Buchko about this observation, he mentioned that in the business world this shows what is called "cannibalism." What is meant by this is that people are just switching from one site to another with no real growth. This was the case of half of the multi-site group. While the mother/daughter combination showed a positive trend, the multi-site group was really a wash, not positive and just slightly negative. This "cannibalism" was warned about by some of the authors reviewed in the Contemporary Perspective section. They warned that a congregation should not become multi-site to start growing, but only to continue to grow.[253]

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[252] See Appendix J, question 4.
[253] See Footnote 152.

In trying to account for why the daughter model outperformed the multi-site model among the surveyed churches, there seems to be several factors. One factor was two daughter church plants were given significant resources by the mother congregation. This would be an unselfish act putting the larger kingdom of God above the local parish. These parishes were focused on the growth of the church. Another factor mentioned by two multi-site congregations was that the economic downturn and the corresponding housing bust hit their communities particularly hard. A question that would need further study is whether the multi-site model focuses more on leveraging resources while the daughter model focuses on growth since it has to be self-sufficient rather quickly.

Carmel Lutheran and the church I serve, namely, Ascension Lutheran did not have the same experience of no growth or a slight decline. Carmel Lutheran has had good success with the multi-site model. Its growth is trending upward at a fairly significant rate. Ascension's growth isn't rocketing upward, but it does show steady growth with the exception of one year. Below are trend graphs from Carmel and Ascension.

Figure 3 - Average Attendance Carmel Lutheran Church, Carmel, IN[254]

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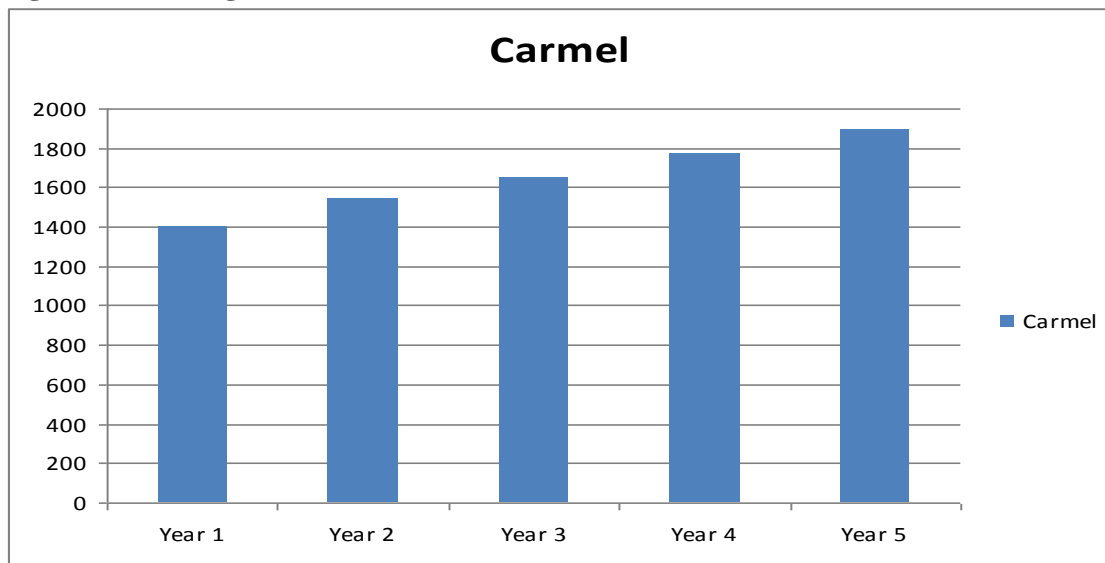
[254] See Appendix L for raw numbers.

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Figure 4 - Average Attendance Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS[255]
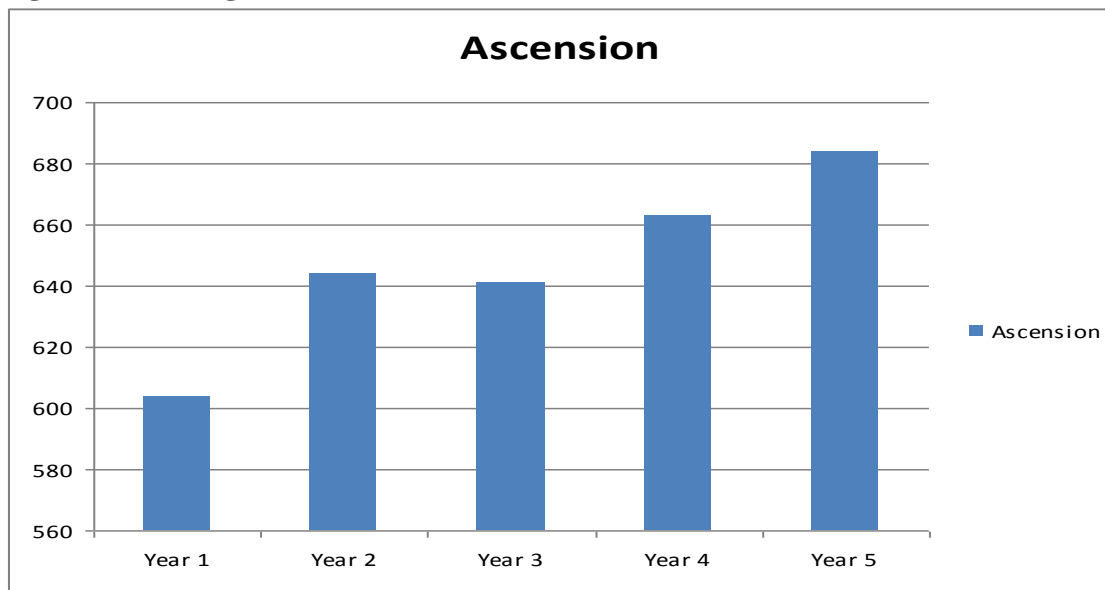
Both Carmel and Ascension showed an overall positive trend in membership after the launch of their second site. Granted, Ascension's growth isn't rapid, but there is steady growth. Carmel's growth is at a quicker pace than Ascension's growth. Both churches go against the trend of the multi-site group that reported average worship attendance. There doesn't seem to be any cannibalism taking place at Carmel or Ascension.

I can't speak for Carmel, but for Ascension, I think the reason we haven't experienced noticeable cannibalism is because of the geographic area in which we planted the second site and because we targeted a certain demographic that is very prevalent in that geographic area. The third year was down by an average of three people per Sunday as Ascension experienced a vacancy in the senior pastor position. Its senior pastor was elected as district president. For churches deciding which model to follow, they need to be aware of the issue of cannibalism. This can be avoided with close

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[255] See Appendix L for raw numbers.

planning and targeting a demographic not served at the original site. Geographic distance between campuses can also help prevent this.

Ascension, in becoming multi-site, was not trying to leverage unique resources such as a great preacher, a special ministry or creative style of worship service. Our focus was on extending God's kingdom into an area not being served. Many of the highlighted churches in the Contemporary Perspective section became multi-site to leverage a unique resource. Some were leveraging a great preacher (i.e. Craig Groeschel or Greg Surratt) and some were leveraging a unique style of worship (i.e. North Coast). Care has to be taken when leveraging resources that the focus of the ministry doesn't become a person or the ministry itself, but the *missio Dei*. Leveraging resources isn't automatically wrong. However, caution needs to be exercised so that the focus of the mission remains the Great Commission.

I also wanted to compare rate of growth between the surveyed congregations and the "national norm" as reported in *The Plant Survivability and Health Study* written in 2007 by Ed Stetzer and Philip Conner. In this study all Christian denominations in America returned surveys with the study receiving 2,266 samples.[256] I wanted to look specifically at the rate of growth of the planted site. The following graph shows the national average rate of growth for all models of church planting over the first four years.

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[256] Ed Stetzer and Philip Conner, 1.

Figure 5 - Mean Annual Growth Rate for Worship Attendance[257]
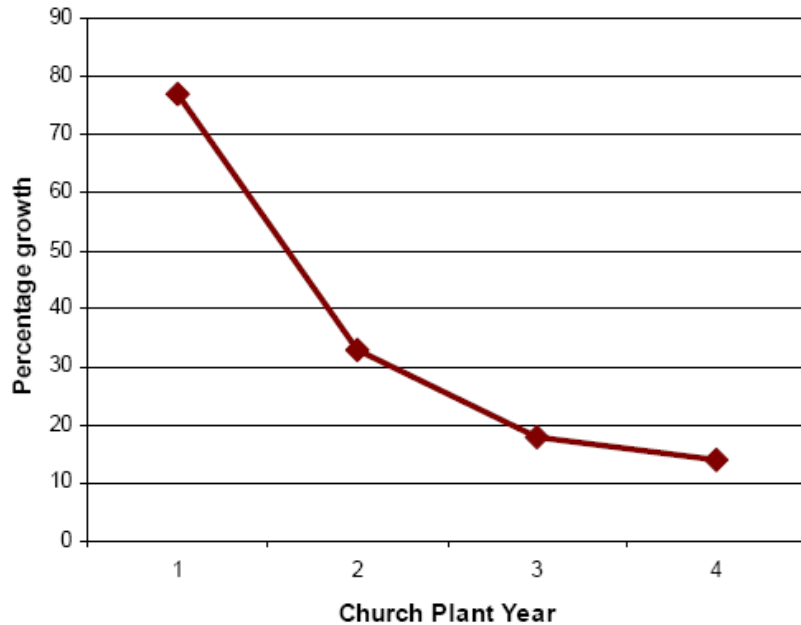
     This graph indicates that the average first year growth of all planted sites, including daughter congregations, multi-site congregations and other models, is seventy-seven percent. In the second year, the growth rate drops to around thirty-three percent. The third year the growth rate drops to twenty-eight percent and the fourth year it drops to fourteen percent. Remember, we are talking rate of growth. If you start at twenty people and grow to forty people, the growth rate is one hundred percent. If in the next year you add another twenty people, the growth rate is only fifty percent. In the third year, if you add twenty more people, the growth rate is down to thirty-three percent. You are adding the same number of people each year, but the larger starting point means a lower rate of growth. It is difficult to maintain a high rate of growth.

     In comparison, the following graph shows the average growth rate of the first four years of mother/daughter congregations (MD) and the average growth rate the multi-site

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[257] Ed Stezter and Philip Conner, 15.

congregations (MS) that reported average worship attendance. It also includes the growth rate of Carmel (C) and Ascension (A) Lutheran.

Figure 6 – Average Growth Rate of Studied LCMS Church Plants[258]
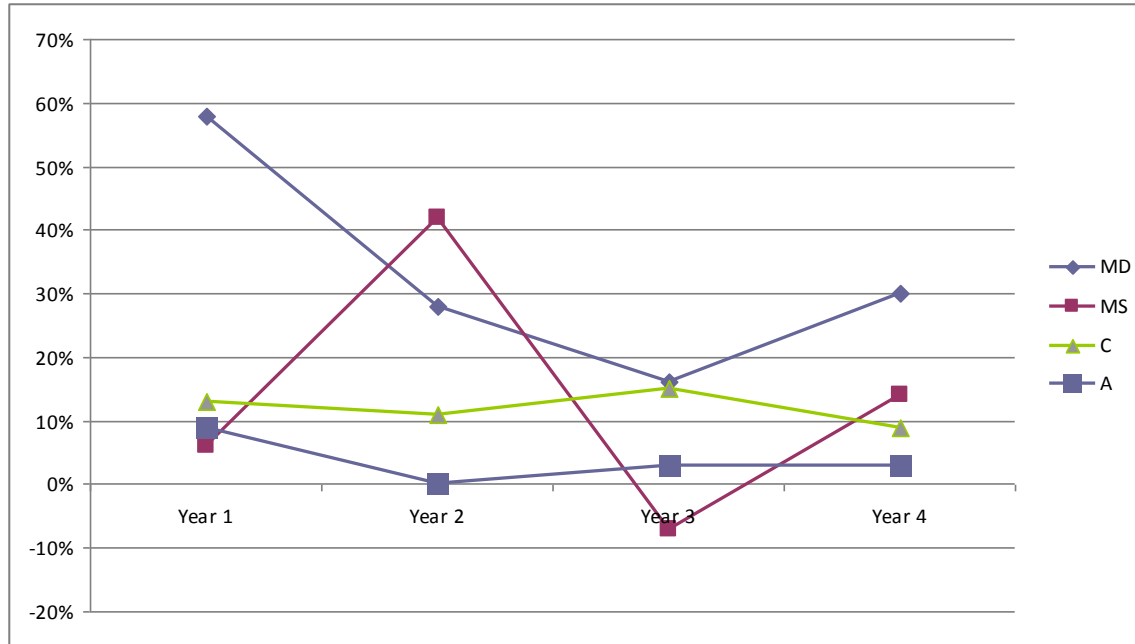
Again, I understand that my sample is too small to make any generalizations across all the LCMS, but in this graph you can see that the percent of growth for daughter congregations was better than the percent of growth multi-site congregations except for one year. Overall, the percent of growth of the daughter plants was much better than the multi-site plants. The daughter plants averaged thirty-three percent growth a year. The multi-site churches averaged ten percent a year. Carmel Lutheran averaged twelve percent growth a year. Ascension averaged four percent growth a year. The Stetzer and Conner study showed an average growth of thirty-five percent a year. Carmel Lutheran's percent of growth is near what the other multi-site churches report with Ascension lagging behind. Of course, since Carmel and Ascension are large congregations in the

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[258] See Appendix L for raw numbers.

context of LCMS congregations, the numbers look more impressive than actual percent of growth.

I did not deal with the reported financial information. The recession made that data unusable. One could not tell if growth or decline in offerings was due to the plant or the economy. Dr. Buchko concurred with this conclusion. Neither did I use any information about membership gains/losses or baptisms/confirmations. The data was too sporadic and not defined in such a way as to make any comparisons or conclusions. Again, Dr. Buchko concurred with this conclusion.

Concluding Observations

Writing this chapter, while very time consuming and labor intensive, has provided valuable information to help my ministry at Ascension Lutheran Church. In analyzing other LCMS churches in similar contexts of ministry, understanding their thought processes in making the decision of which church planting model to follow and what information they used, and then looking at the results of their efforts has helped provide answers to the proposed problem, the reason I undertook researching and writing this MAP.

One observation I gained is to be careful and not fall for the hype of any model. While the use of the multi-site model has grown in the LCMS, it hasn't, in Ascension's case or in my experience of having planted daughter congregations, proved to be more effective in overall growth. This was also the case of the churches surveyed. While it does allow people to attend different campuses without feeling as if they are disloyal to the church in which they hold membership, multi-site churches need to be aware of those

who just switch from one place to another with no attendant growth from the outside. Either model of church planting works and is viable.

That means when a congregation is planning on planting a new congregation, it needs to do its research regarding each model. The congregation needs to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each model and pitfalls that are there. A strength of the daughter model is that it requires the new site to take ownership of the ministry. This would perhaps develop a more healthy stewardship life. A strength of the multi-site model is that it allows the planting congregation to keep the ministry focused on the mission. It can provide the vision and administrative needs so that the church can focus on outreach. Another strength of the daughter model is that it doesn't have a long tradition and the "baggage" of the mother church and so can be more adaptive to the needs of the new location. Another strength of multi-site ministry is that it has the backing of a successful congregation. The new site can leverage the name of the planting congregation, especially if it is a particularly well known church in the community. A pitfall of the daughter model is the huge up-front costs in finding a worship site. A pitfall of the multi-site model is the complexity of the structure which allows feelings that the second campus is a "step-child." Another pitfall of the daughter church is that it usually has fewer ministries or programs to offer at its start. Another pitfall of the multi-site is that it lacks, by definition, independence from the mother church.

The following table is a quick reference to the perceived advantages and disadvantages as I have come to understand them from my research into this subject and from what others using these models have listed.

Figure 7 – A Quick List of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Model

Advantages of the Independent Daughter Church Plant.	-The site has ownership of the plant. -Most familiar and well-known model. -Doesn't become dependent on original campus. Allows the congregation to mature. -Has a distinct identity. -Isn't dependent on skills of Senior Pastor of original site. -Easier in term of complexity and structure.
Disadvantages of the Independent Daughter Church plant.	-Upfront financial costs are usually more considerable. -Members with strong personality can "hi-jack" the mission. -No recourse if mission planter strays from original vision. -Mission planter must be a generalist pastor. -Fewer ministries and programs at launch. -The separation and/or disconnect with mother church often happens too quickly.
Advantages of a Multi-Site Ministry.	-Leverages skills and resources of planting congregation. -Better utilization of staff gifts (efficiency of resources/stewardship). -Fewer up-front financial costs allows a congregation to start more sites. -Lower risk (a congregation can "pull the plug" without as much loss or perceived wasted resources). -Keeps congregations connected. -Allows worship at any site while still being connected with all sites. -Allows control of doctrine, vision and values. -More resources in terms of programs and services available at start-up. -Can leverage name recognition if the name means something in the community.
Disadvantages of Multi-site Ministry	-It is more complex structurally and relationally. -Must constantly guard against "we-they" mentality. -Allows sites to think of themselves as "step-children."

	-Is not a familiar model to most LCMS congregations.
	-May further stretch an already stretched staff.
	-Doesn't allow worshipping community to have its own identity.
	-May dampen maturity of new site if too dependent on original site.
	-Currently LCMS polity limits voting right to one pastor and one lay delegate at district and synodical conventions.
	-People lack ownership of new site, just become spectators.
	-Potential to become a "personality cult."
	-Greater threat of "cannibalism."

In the planning process the congregation doing the planting needs to be clear of its goal in planting another congregation. What does it want to accomplish? If the goal is simply to meet the needs of a group of Lutherans in another geographic area, then either model will work, with the daughter model probably being better since ownership will be local. If the goal of the congregation is to serve another area with the unique gifts and talents given to a particular church, then multi-site appears to be the way to go. If the goal of the congregation is not to split its membership, but use its membership to help another place grow, then multi-site seems the way to go. The congregation needs to be clear on the goal of the plant.

Finally, the planting congregation needs to know itself. It needs to do an inventory of its resources. Can it afford to send members as missionaries to a new congregation? Can it afford the startup costs or does it need help from the district? What about the staff? Is the staff talented enough to handle another site or does the new site need a mission planter? Is the senior pastor especially talented at preaching which needs to be shared and which could possibly extend God's kingdom? With all honesty, the

congregation needs to know if its "DNA" is good "DNA" to pass along, or are there things that shouldn't be passed along.

No matter what model a congregation chooses to follow, it should choose the model with its eyes wide open. There are positives and there are negatives with each model.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

<u>Introduction</u>

When I started the Doctor of Ministry program, one of the reasons I decided to undertake this journey was to "retool and re-energize" for what I termed the second half of my ministry. I had been out of the seminary for 20 years, the half-way point to age 65. I had been involved with the Pastoral Leadership Institute and had also been involved with teaching parts of the curricula with the Southeastern District's *Wellspring* leadership development program. I had come to realize that to be effective in serving God's kingdom, I needed to become more current with the theological and academic trends that the United States was experiencing. From my matriculation in 1986 from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis to my application for the Doctor of Ministry program, the cultural mindset and worldview had changed dramatically from modernism to post-modernism.

This Major Applied Project has been one of the most time consuming projects I have ever undertaken. Much time and effort, research and writing have gone into this project all the while fulfilling my duties as Director of Ministries to Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS. This program, I believe, has allowed me to function at a higher level, being able to accomplish more through better time management and development of skills. The MAP is always the most daunting task of the doctoral program, but in the end proves to be the most valuable piece of the program as it allows you to focus on issues that are pertinent to the context of your ministry and where your individual passion lies.

A. Contributions to Ministry

Ascension Lutheran Church

       To contribute to the ministry of Ascension Lutheran Church is the main reason this policy capturing study was conducted. As I have said earlier, Ascension serendipitously became a multi-site ministry when in 2000 it was decided to build and open an Open Arms Child Development Center 4.5 miles to the southwest of the Tyler campus. It was always the intent to begin worship services there, but the whole paradigm of multi-site was not intentionally chosen nor was it researched and thought through. This MAP has allowed me to gain a thorough understanding of the multi-site ministry model. It has allowed me to become aware of the advantages and disadvantages of planting both autonomous daughter congregations and multi-site congregations which remain structurally and financially connected. Just being aware of the pitfalls of each model was well worth the study.

       In addition, my leadership skills have been enhanced through the Doctor of Ministry program. I followed the Missional Leadership route of the doctoral program. Through the readings, classes and seminars, I was able to grow in my leadership, vision and planning skills. The courses I took exposed me to possible ways I could help the members of Ascension grow in involvement in the community in both service and witness. The Pastoral Leadership Institute courses helped me develop technical skills like planning, change theory and visioning. These new insights were put into practice in how we introduced the structural changes we have made. The seminary courses helped me focus more on the community I serve and ways Ascension could connect with the community.

One change that Ascension has made that was a direct result of this program was in how our lay ministers function and what their responsibilities are. We decided to scrap the one-lay-minister-to-thirty-families approach and bring the lay ministers back to be ministers on a spiritual level. They are now organized around key moments of spiritual need in the lives of people, such as the birth of child, the death of a loved one, at confirmation, when they first join the congregation, at the time of divorce or when they, due to age, are not able to make it to church. In a congregation as large as Ascension, this has proven to be a much better way to touch people's lives with the love of Jesus Christ.

However, the greatest way this program has helped Ascension is through this MAP. As we begin the process of planting a third campus, the research and writing of this MAP has provided information and insight that have had direct bearing on the planning and execution of planting the third campus. It has helped answer questions of structure and location, dealing with start-up costs and staffing by discovering how other places have handled these issues. The study has introduced us to creative solutions to problems all planting congregations face.

The Church at Large

It is too early to tell how this MAP will impact the church at large. It is my hope that the information contained in this MAP can be used by mission executives of our LCMS districts and perhaps other church bodies as they read through the experiences of LCMS churches. It is hoped that the listing of the major positive and negatives in a compact and concise way will provide a check list of subjects that need to be a part of any planning process for a church seeking to do the Lord's work of extending His kingdom through planting another worshipping community. As pointed out above,

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planting new congregations is the single best way to extend and expand God's kingdom. It has been that way from the time of the apostles in Acts to today.

It is also my hope that I can be a resource to any church or district mission executive who may want information about these two models of church planting. While I am called to Ascension, being a resource to the church at large is a privilege.

B. Contributions to Personal and Professional Growth

I have already mentioned some of this, but the doctoral program and the MAP have changed me personally and professionally.

As Director of Ministry at Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS, my primary responsibility is being a leader. This program allowed me to develop this skill through the Pastoral Leadership Institute courses that I attended and by doing the additional work required to receive credit. The PLI courses helped me develop technical skills such as planning, leading change, visioning and leading staff. The seminar courses of "Leadership and the *Missio Dei*" and "The Gospel in Cross-Cultural Contexts" opened my eyes to new possibilities and exposed me to ways I could help get Ascension more involved in the community.

As equipper of staff and those I serve, the growth in both knowledge and practical skills has helped me design curriculum to deepen discipleship. It has also enabled me to revamp the Commission of Lay Ministry so that this group of men focuses on the spiritual life and welfare of the congregation and is not distracted by mundane business issues. As a result of some of the elective courses that I have taken, I was able to write Bible studies and design sermon series that would encourage those I serve to become more engaged in sharing the faith whether at home, in their neighborhood or at work. My

project for "Leadership and the *Missio Dei*" was designed to help people think about how they can be an evangelist in their daily work vocation. Through scenarios and role play, people had a chance to think about how they can be a witness to Jesus Christ at work in a safe environment before sharing their faith in the workplace.

The program has also addressed my need to grow in missionary development. It has helped me develop and focus the message that the people of Ascension are missionaries in west Wichita. They don't have to go overseas to be a missionary. They are missionaries where God has called them through their vocation. Ascension has taken field trips with those interested to show them the various ethnic cultures in Wichita. It has helped them learn about the people so that they are not afraid to talk with them, ask questions and show interest in them. The hope, again, is that when they encounter those who are not white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, they will not be afraid to begin a conversation through which they can share their faith.

This program has also addressed my personal need of thinking theologically. The course work, especially the three core classes, was of tremendous value in getting me up-to-speed on the theological trends of the day. It increased my knowledge base greatly and helped me more understand what post-modernism is and how post-modernism manifests itself in the worldview and through processes of the people I serve. Then with the emphasis in the systematic theology class on the difference between a theology of glory and a theology of the cross, the coursework really helped sharpen my theological thinking and my preaching of Law and Gospel, and in particular, sanctification.

C. General Recommendations

The purpose of this MAP was to study two models of church planting: 1) planting autonomous daughter congregations and 2) planting multi-site congregations that remain structurally and financially tied to the planting congregation. I focused on the reasons why a church chose one model over the other, what they saw as the advantages and disadvantages of each model, what assumptions were made about each model and what they would do differently knowing what they now know. From my research on these models through the Contemporary Perspective section and through the responses obtained through the survey of thirteen congregations the following are recommendations for those considering extending God's kingdom through the planting of another worshipping community.

1) *Don't fall for the hype of either planting model*. Multi-site is a fast-growing trend across all denominations, including the LCMS. There are many assumptions that have been made about this model that, in my exploratory study, have not proven to be true. One assumption is that multi-site campuses grow faster because they have the name recognition and resources of the original campus. Either the name of the congregations surveyed is really not that great in the communities they serve, or some other factor has limited these congregations. Carmel Lutheran and Ascension Lutheran have grown, but three of the six surveyed churches have not grown, while four of the six daughter congregations have grown.

2) *Be clear about the reason your church is planting*. While it is true that the best way to extend God's kingdom is by planting new worshipping communities, the church considering the plant needs to be clear what it wants to accomplish. Does it want to introduce a Lutheran presence into a new geographic area? Does it already have people in a particular geographic area who could be served better by another campus? Is it looking to reach a new demographic or culture? The answers to these questions will help the planting church decide which model to follow.

3) *Do your research on the various models of church planting*. Do not choose a model because it's "what we know best" or because "it's the historic pattern of the LCMS." Also, do not choose a model because "it's the new thing," or because "St. Elsewhere used it successfully." Research the models. Go into

the planning and execution phases with your eyes open to both the advantages and the pitfalls of each type of model. A summary of these advantages and disadvantages, gathered through research and anecdotal experience, can be found on page 158-159 of this MAP. By researching the models, perhaps the planting congregation will discover a resource or an insight that will help the new plant survive and grow.

4) *Know your congregation.* The planting church needs to take inventory of the resources that God has made available to it. Does it have the resources necessary to overcome the disadvantages? Does it have a vision and focus of ministry that would be advantageous to a new worshipping community? Does it have staff resources that can be leveraged to the advantage of the new site? Will both places need each other to effectively accomplish their perceived mission and ministry? Can things be done cooperatively that could not be accomplished as individual autonomous congregations? An honest and thorough inventory of resources needs to be done before any plant is launched.

5) *Be realistic about expectations.* Many of the participants in the survey were disappointed that the new worshipping communities had not grown as expected. Districts and churches need to be realistic about what they expect. As Ed Stetzer and Philip Conner discovered, when church plants meet expectations, the survivability of the new place increases by four hundred percent.[259] There is nothing more disheartening than have pie-in-the-sky dreams crushed because they were not realistic.

6) *Have a stewardship program in place.* There are costs for whatever model a church chooses. Know at the start, as much as possible, what the real costs in terms of finances, staff and members, will be. God's people are willing to invest in expanding God's kingdom if they see their resources will be used wisely, not in speculation. Having a good stewardship program in place will put the planting church in a better position to launch the new worshipping community.

D. Specific Recommendations for Ascension Lutheran Church, Wichita, KS

1) *Review the advantages and disadvantages listed on page 158-159.* This will help the planning committee at Ascension Lutheran Church understand the difference in the two models and their associated pros and cons. With this information, the committee will be better able to choose which model to follow.

2) *Continue on with the multi-site model.* Now that Ascension has lived with this model for the past 10 years, you are well aware of the disadvantages and are

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[259] Ed Stetzer and Philip Conner, 14.

living the advantages. The Open Arms site demonstrates how the multi-site model can be flexible and very effective in planting new worship sites that are not the typical church plant.

3) *Plant another atypical site*. Look at planting another site to minister to the community of west Wichita that doesn't follow the historic LCMS model of church and yet seeks to meet the needs of God's people. Perhaps an independent living retirement community with a building for worship, dining and recreation would be an option. Perhaps a store front in Goddard or Maize could be an option. Both are not typical ways of planting a new worshipping community yet still seek to meet the spiritual and physical needs of God's people.

4) *Keep seeking to overcome the complexity of structure*. Don't get frustrated by the complexity issue. In your situation, the fruit of the multi-site model has been too great to let organizational complexities frustrate and prevent Ascension from planning new ways to reach people for Christ.

5) *Be intentional about promoting relationships between campuses.* It was recognized in the study that a "we-they" mentality can easily develop and become a potentially divisive issue. Don't assume relationships will continue without intentional work. Ascension needs to plan events with the purpose of bringing the campuses together. Perhaps working together on a third or fourth site can become an event that keeps the campuses together in mission.

6) *Deal with the debt issue.* The Open Arms plant was expensive, but most would agree, it was well worth it. As stewards of God's resources, deal with the debt so that resources are available for new ministry starts.

E. Questions for Further Exploration

This study brought up several questions for study that were beyond the scope of

this MAP. The following are topics for further study.

> What role does ownership vs. convenience play in the models and how does it affect the decision of members on which church to attend?

> An empirical study comparing the percent of growth between daughter and multi-site congregations to answer the debate of which model grows faster, if either.

> Why do multi-site plants have a higher survivability rate? Is it because of the resources infused by the main campus or are there other significant factors?

> Does "starting large" really increase the survivability rate of church plants? This seems to be the new conventional wisdom which affects both daughter plants and multi-site plants.

> Is multi-site ministry too dependent on the personality and skills of the senior pastor? What happens to multi-site plants when the senior or visionary pastor accepts a call elsewhere?

> At what point does it make sense for a multi-site campus to become an independent congregation?

Answers to these questions would provide further information to help guide congregations considering planting new worshipping communities.

Conclusion

This has been a challenging project to undertake and write. I have personally grown tremendously through this study. I don't think a person ever becomes completely up-to-date on the trends nor does a person ever become totally competent. The Doctor of Ministry program has certainly helped me in knowledge and skills. I pray that this MAP proves to be beneficial to Ascension Lutheran Church and to others who read it. As in all things, all glory belongs to our Triune Creator who has loved us with an everlasting love in Jesus Christ.

+Soli Deo Gloria+

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church
- Missouri Synod

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer
Pastor,
Director of Ministries

Rev. Scott Goltl
Pastor,
Director of Outreach

Cynthia Twillman
Director of Christian
Education for Education
& Family Life Ministries

Ryan Legler
Director of Christian
Education for Youth &
Young Adult Ministries

Lynae Reith
Business Manager

Erica Mason
Acting Open Arms
Director

Diane Nelson
Kendra Herbig
PreSchool CoDirectors

842 North Tyler Road
Wichita, KS 67212-3239
316-722-4694
Fax 316-729-7027

12885 West Maple
Wichita, KS 67235-8717
316-721-5675
Fax 316-721-5690

E-mail:
ascenlut@swbell.net

January 19, 2011

Rev. _____
_____ Lutheran Church
1000 Some Street
Sometown, SW 00000-0000

Dear Rev. _____,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research for my dissertation. I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Included in this letter are two sets of questionnaires. One, as you will see, is to be filled in by the pastor who was the visionary for planting the daughter congregation. The second questionnaire is to be filled out either by the chairperson of the planting committee (or capital campaign committee if that is where the vision was promulgated) or, if possible, the whole committee can gather to answer the questions. The later option will provide the richer answers.

You will also see a form asking for statistics from the mother and the daughter congregation. If your congregation doesn't have the statistics for the daughter congregation, would you please see that they get this sheet and return it to me. If you or the daughter do not have half year increments for worship attendance, then please fill in the years that are available.

If you could return these to questionnaires and statistics to me by March 9th, 2011, it would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please call me – (316) 258-4240.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate and for the time it will take to complete these pieces of research.

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer
Ascension Lutheran Church
842 N Tyler Rd.
Wichita, KS 67212

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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- Missouri Synod**

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Fax 316-729-7027

12885 West Maple
Wichita, KS 67235-8717
316-721-5675
Fax 316-721-5690

E-mail:
ascenlut@swbell.net

January 14, 2011

Greetings in Christ's name!

I spoke with you recently on the phone asking you to participate in a study which I am conducting for my Doctorate of Ministry degree. This study seeks to discover why some congregations chose to plant organizationally connected worship sites (multisite) and why some congregations chose to plant independent daughter congregations and if there was a statistical difference in the growth of each site.

I am seeking permission from you and your church to use the information that you provide. I will not use your name or the name of the church you serve in my dissertation. Your identity will be protected.

If I have your permission, please sign below and return to me:

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer
Ascension Lutheran Church
842 N Tyler Rd
Wichita, KS 67212

Thank you and God bless His Church through your service.

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer

You have my permission to use the data provided.

_____
Signed

Appendix C
Daughter Church Survey

1. When your congregation decided to plant another worshipping community, did you consider the multisite model? _____

2. Why did you choose to plant a daughter congregation rather than an additional campus?

3. What were the "cons" you considered against multisite?

4. What were the "pros" you considered for multisite?

5. What were the "pros" you considered for planting a daughter congregation?

6. What were the "cons" you considered against planting a daughter congregation?

7. What assumptions, if any, did you make about the model you chose? (ex. It was more cost efficient. This type a plant grows faster. This type of plant has a better success rate. Etc.)

8. Did the assumptions you considered come to fruition? _____ Why or why not?

9. If you could do it all over, what changes would you make?

10. On a scale of 1 – 7, with 1 being poor and 7 being great, how would you characterize the perceived relationship between the planting congregation and the planted congregation? _____.

Additional Comments or Clarifications:

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

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Director of Ministries

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Fax 316-729-7027

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Wichita, KS 67235-8717
316-721-5675
Fax 316-721-5690

E-mail:
ascenlut@swbell.net

January 19, 2011

Rev. _____
_____ Lutheran Church
1000 Some Street
Sometown, SW 00000-0000

Dear Rev. _____,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research for my dissertation. I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Included in this letter are two sets of questionnaires. One, as you will see, is to be filled in by the pastor who was the visionary for planting the additional sites. The second questionnaire is to be filled in either by the chairperson of the planting committee (or capital campaign committee if that is where the vision was promulgated) or, if possible, the committee can meet to answer the questions. This second option would provide richer answers. Although _____ Lutheran has planted independent daughter congregations, I am interested in why they chose to move to the multisite model. Please have the chairperson/committee involved in the multisite decision fill out this questionnaire.

You will also see a form asking for statistics from the main campus and from the second site. If you could, please provide the statistics for the most recent daughter congregation planted by _____. I am seeking just the first five years of statistics after that plant. If you do not have half year increments for worship attendance, then please fill in the years that are available.

Please return these questionnaires and statistics to me by March 9th, 2011. I would greatly appreciate it.

If you have any questions, please call me – (316) 258-4240.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate and for the time it will take to complete these pieces of research.

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer
Ascension Lutheran Church
842 N Tyler Rd.
Wichita, KS 67212

Appendix E
Multi-site Church Survey

1. When your congregation decided to plant another worshipping community, did you consider the daughter church model? _____

2. Why did you choose to plant a second (or beyond) site rather than planting an independent sister congregation?

3. What were the "cons" you considered against multisite?

4. What were the "pros" you considered for multisite?

5. What were the "pros" you considered for planting a daughter congregation?

6. What were the "cons" you considered against planting a daughter congregation?

7. What assumptions, if any, did you make about the model you chose? (ex. It was more cost efficient. This type a plant grows faster. This type of plant has a better success rate. Etc.)

8. Did the assumptions you considered come to fruition? _____ Why or why not?

9. If you could do it all over, what changes would you make?

10. On a scale of 1 – 7, with 1 being poor and 7 being great, how would you characterize the perceived relationship between the planting congregation and the planted congregation? _____.

Additional Comments or Clarifications:

A S C E N S I O N   L U T H E R A N   C H U R C H

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

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Wichita, KS 67212-3239
316-722-4694
Fax 316-729-7027

12885 West Maple
Wichita, KS 67235-8717
316-721-5675
Fax 316-721-5690

E-mail:
ascenlut@swbell.net

January 19, 2011

Rev. Luther Brunette
Carmel Lutheran Church
4850 E Main St
Carmel, IN 46033-8390

Dear Rev. Brunette,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research for my dissertation. I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Included in this letter are two sets of questionnaires. One, as you will see, is to be filled in by the pastor who was the visionary for planting the additional sites. The second questionnaire is to be filled in either by the chairperson of the planting committee (or capital campaign committee if that is where the vision was promulgated) or, if possible, the committee can meet to answer the questions. This second option would provide richer answers. Although Carmel Lutheran has planted independent daughter congregations, I am interested in why they chose to move to the multisite model. Please have the chairperson/committee involved in the multisite decision fill out this questionnaire.

You will also see a form asking for statistics from the main campus and from the second site. If you could, please provide the statistics for the most recent daughter congregation planted by Carmel. I am seeking just the first five years of statistics after that plant. If you do not have half year increments for worship attendance, then please fill in the years that are available.

Please return these questionnaires and statistics to me by March 9th, 2011. I would greatly appreciate it.

If you have any questions, please call me – (316) 258-4240.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate and for the time it will take to complete these pieces of research.

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer
Ascension Lutheran Church
842 N Tyler Rd.
Wichita, KS 67212

A S C E N S I O N   L U T H E R A N   C H U R C H

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer
Pastor,
Director of Ministries

Rev. Scott Goltl
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January 14, 2011

Greetings in Christ's name!

I spoke with you recently on the phone asking you to participate in a study which I am conducting for my Doctorate of Ministry degree. This study seeks to discover why some congregations chose to plant organizationally connected worship sites (multisite) and why some chose to plant independent daughter congregations and if there was a statistical difference in the growth of each site.

I am seeking permission from you and your church to use the information that you provide. Since you are unique to my study, having planted independent congregations and now also becoming multisite, I am asking your permission and the permission of Carmel Lutheran to be able to use your names within the body of my dissertation.

If I have your permission, please sign below and return to me:

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer
Ascension Lutheran Church
842 N Tyler Rd
Wichita, KS 67212

Thank you and God bless His Church through your service.

Rev. Michael Bingenheimer

You have my permission to use my name and Carmel Lutheran.

_____
Signed

Appendix H
Survey Sent to Carmel Lutheran Church, Carmel, IN

Your congregation has planted both independent daughter congregations and has recently started following the multisite model.

1. Recalling the daughter plants, why did the planning committee choose this model and what assumptions, if any, did they make about this model? (ex. It was more cost efficient. This type a plant grows faster. This type of plant has a better success rate. This is the most familiar model. Etc.)

2. Why did Carmel choose to move to the multisite model and what assumptions were made about this model?

3. What were the "cons" you considered against multisite?

4. What were the "pros" you considered for multisite?

5. What were the "pros" you considered for planting a daughter congregation?

6. What were the "cons" you considered against planting a daughter congregation?

7. Did the assumptions you made come to fruition? _____ Why or why not?

8. If you could do it all over, what changes would you make?

9. On a scale of 1 – 7, with 1 being poor and 7 being great, how would you characterize the perceived relationship between the planting congregation and the planted congregation(s)? _____.

10. Using the same scale, how would you characterize the perceived relationship between the outlaying campus(es) and the main campus? _____.

Additional Comments or Clarifications:

Statistical Information From:

_____

Average Worship Attendance:

.5 year after start   _____

1 year after start   _____

1.5 year after start   _____

2 years after start   _____

2.5 years after start _____

3 years after start   _____

3.5 years after start _____

4 years after start   _____

4.5 years after start _____

5 years after start   _____

Total Offerings:

First Year   _____

Second Year _____

Third Year   _____

Fourth Year _____

Fifth Year   _____

Membership Gain/Loses

First Year   _____

Second Year _____

Third Year   _____

Fourth Year _____

Fifth Year   _____

Adult Baptism/Confirmation

First Year   _____

Second Year _____

Third Year   _____

Fourth Year _____

Fifth Year   _____

Appendix J
Compilation of Surveys

Survey Question	Daughter	Multi-site
1. Did you consider the other model when planning?	Yes _7_ No _3_	Yes _4_ No _5_ -It's still an open issue.
2. Why did you choose the model you did?	-"it's been our pattern" (3) -"it matches the doctrine of the LCMS" (2) -"can reach more people with a new church" (2) -"easier to offer an different style of worship" -mission developer wanted an independent congregation (be pastor on his own). -mission congregation wanted to be independent. -didn't want to be in competition with main site. -previous experience with a "preaching station" did not work out. Multi-site too similar to failed experience.	-"better closeness and connectivity." (3) -financial reasons (2). -experiment with another model -previous independent plants have failed. -to leverage the staff -to have come control over worship and doctrine. -"didn't want to dilute the congregation or lose the members." -to build on the identity and strengths of existing ministry.
3. "Cons" of multi-site	-the permanent connection and dependence. (3) -Never considered multi-site. (2) -Creates "we/they" mentality. (2) -New model not understood by planting congregation. (2) -finding space/location. (2) -Not a church according to LCMS polity. -cost of technology for multi-site. -video preaching isn't effective in our community.	-constantly have to fight "we/they" mentality. (4) -significant expense for new facility. (3) -not independent from "main" campus(2). -financial burden on main campus. (2) -"more complex" -additional sites lack ownership of ministry. -leadership development much higher. -planting congregation unfamiliar with this model. -stretching an already stretched staff. -volunteers spread too thin. -didn't find any negatives.

4. "Pros" of multi-site	-Ability to control direction of ministry/doctrine/DNA. (3) -Never considered multi-site. (2) -Financially easier. (2) -Leverage name recognition. (2) -Reaching new geographical areas. (2) -No positives. (2) -Better use of staff.	-Financially easier/shared expenses. (5) -"better utilization of staff gifts." (4) -control over ministry/doctrine/ culture (DNA). (4) -Connectivity (go either place yet remain member). (3) -more volunteers in ministry rather than administration. (2) -more ministries/programs available. (2) -Potential for faster growth in new geographical location. (2) -Less initial "up-front" costs.
5. "Pros" of independent daughter church	-Reach more people with new congregation. (4) -Isn't like the "mother" church's DNA/culture. (3) -Already had staff to be pastor of the new sight. (2) -Familiar with model/done it before. (2) -In line with LCMS doctrine/ polity. (2) -Gospel is direct, not via video. -independent from "mother" church/more ownership. (2) -More connected with local community rather than a church. (2) -Doesn't create a "mega-church."	-It's independent of mother church. (5) -Didn't consider the model. (4) -Less complex structurally. -Focus resources on local community needs. (2) -Financial obligation to daughter ends. (2) -Allows "daughter" to mature to independence/local ownership. -Familiar with model. -New is attractive to people
6. "Cons" of independent daughter church	-financial costs. (5) -There aren't any. (4) -Unknown of planting pastor. (2) -Work involved with writing new constitution and bylaws. -Members with strong personalities my "hi-jack" the mission/direction/doctrine. -Disconnection with planting congregation.	-No recourse if you get a "bad" church planter that changes direction/doctrine. (3) -Didn't pursue it because felt less viable. (3) -Greater upfront costs/financial burden. (2) -Fewer ministries and programs at start of new plant. (2) -No relationship with planting

		congregation. (2) -Greater staff costs. -Forces Staff to be generalist/ doesn't leverage talents of staff. -More volunteers in administrative roles than ministry roles.
7. What assumption did you make about the model you chose?	-Independent daughter congregation in-line with historic LCMS doctrine and polity/model. (3) -Daughter congregation grows faster (new). (3) -For any plant to succeed it needed adequate staff and finances. (2) -Planting churches is best way to extend God's kingdom. -Daughter congregations won't grow as fast. -Multi-sites rely too much on personality/talents of senior pastor.	-Better success rate than daughter plant. (4) -more cost efficient. (3) -Multi-site grows faster. (3) -Maintain membership numbers (3) -We control the practice/polity of new site. (2) -Could reach more people with two sites. (2) -More ministry opportunities from the start. -Leverage name recognition.
8. Did assumptions come true?	Yes _5_ No _4_ Too early to tell _1_ -Two staff people worked. -Apathy of people ruined plant. -Growth in area never materialized. -Members weren't committed.	Yes _7_ Don't know _1_ Too early to tell _2_ -Connection with main campus has been maintained. (3) -Name recognition has helped. (2) -"Growth slower than anticipated due to economic downturn (2) -"Growth has been phenomenal" -"doing very well."
9. Knowing what you now know, what changes would you make?	-Better communication with mother church/more involvement. (4) -Better planning by mother church. (3) -More prayer to discern God's direction. -None -Mission pastor spend more	-Nothing, yet. (5) -Need solid pastoral leadership. -Consistent quality music -Not target just 20 somethings -We would rent space rather than buy. -Overestimated rate of growth. -Pray more

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	time in community. -Start worship services sooner. -considered the multi-site model more. -Partner with other churches in the area.	-Hire a general contractor rather than doing it ourselves. -Evaluate staff fit before launch
10. On a scale of 1 – 7, what is perceived relationship between campuses	3 1 4 1 5 4 Median 5.28 6.5 1 7 2	4 1 4.5 1 6 4 Median 5.94 7 3
11. Additional comments	-Sending 120 people and staff to ensure growth. (2 from same church) -We had mission planter on staff for 18 months before sending. -The planting congregation has supported it financially, but not physically.	-Didn't foresee how much economy would go down and housing bubble burst. -We hope to do many more sites. -Site pastor and members became involved in the community months before launch. -One budget/leadership structure for both sites is a real plus. -Main campus had "real buy-in." -Too expensive to relocate so went multi-site.

Appendix K
Compilation of Carmel Lutheran Church Survey

Your congregation has planted both independent daughter congregations and has recently starting following the multisite model.

1. Recalling the daughter plants, why did the planning committee choose this model and what assumptions, if any, did they make about this model? (ex. It was more cost efficient. This type a plant grows faster. This type of plant has a better success rate. This is the most familiar model. Etc.)

> -Carmel planted 4 "daughters." One failed. We started a second venue on same campus. We have 15 acres for which we are raising money for an Open Arms start. We are also looking at Fisher, IN for a multi-site.

> -Easier to transfer DNA that has already facilitated significant growth at current site.

2. Why did Carmel choose to move to the multisite model and what assumptions were made about this model?

> -Sharing resources, staff
> -Better accountability
> -Gets more people into leadership
> -Better chance to make disciples
> -Don't have to "reinvent" ministry
> -plant can "hit the ground running."

3. What were the "cons" you considered against multisite?

> -Stretches staff too thin
> -Could dampen sense of ownership
> -Independent spirit could cause resentment for "big brother."

4. What were the "pros" you considered for multisite?

> -see #2
> -plus, disciples can go back and forth without guilt or feeling like they are betraying a church
> -more efficient use of resources (personnel, capital and financial)

5. What were the "pros" you considered for planting a daughter congregation?

  -Better sense of ownership
  -Can reach a whole other segment of culture (cross-cultural)

6. What were the "cons" you considered against planting a daughter congregation?

  -There is little spiritual oversight and the daughter may rebel and lose sight of mission.
  -Loss of control

7. Did the assumptions you made come to fruition? ___so far____ Why or why not?

8. If you could do it all over, what changes would you make?

  -Our last two plants would have been multisite.
  -Do not launch too soon. Leadership needs to be solidly in place.

9. On a scale of 1 – 7, with 1 being poor and 7 being great, how would you characterize the perceived relationship between the planting congregation and the planted congregation(s)? ____5____.

  -two plants are likeminded and two plants have gone their own way.

10. Using the same scale, how would you characterize the perceived relationship between the outlaying campus(es) and the main campus? ____5____.

Additional Comments or Clarifications:

Appendix L
Compiled Statistical Data

Average Worship Attendance

	1 Yr After	2 Yrs After	3 Yrs After	4 Yrs After	5 Yrs After
Carmel Main	1000	1100	1150	1200	1270
Carmel 2nd Site	400	450	500	575	625
Ascension	604	644	641	663	684
M1a Main	904	848	832	784	808
M1b 2nd Site	87	90	188	168	149
M2a Main	24	100	120	200	350
M2b 2nd Site	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M3a Main	836	790	832	826	775
M3b 2nd Site	102	92	95	93	121
M4a Main	483	433	424	415	378
M4b 2nd Site	38	47	54	50	62
M5a Main	465	529	n/a	n/a	n/a
M5b 2nd Site	116	120	n/a	n/a	n/a
M6 Main	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
D1a	830	818	885	775	712
D1b	151	199	200	254	276
D2	15	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
D3a	1213	1245	1218	n/a	n/a
D3b	220	270	350	n/a	n/a
D4a	45	65	n/a	n/a	n/a
D4b	45	55	n/a	n/a	n/a
D5a	450	475	n/a	n/a	500
D5b	38	55	n/a	n/a	80
D6	521	538	373	n/a	n/a
D6b	10	22	30	35	47

Membership Gain/Loss

	1st Yr	2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr	5th Yr
Carmel Main	100	100	120	125	130
Carmel 2nd Site	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ascension	80	94	67	119	86
M1a Main	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M1b 2nd Site	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M2a Main	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M2b 2nd Site	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M3a Main	73	62	56	90	33
M3b 2nd Site	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M4a Main	-35	35	44	-5	-3
M4b 2nd Site	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M5a Main	45	30	n/a	n/a	n/a
M5b 2nd Site	3	2	n/a	n/a	n/a
M6 Main	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
D1a	-76	133	-144	-194	-92
D1b	20	55	51	24	n/a
D2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
D3a	1	55	89	n/a	n/a
D3b	50	20	29	n/a	n/a
D4a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
D4b	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
D5a	45	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
D5b	45	n/a	n/a	n/a	112
D6	-81	51	4	n/a	n/a
D6b	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	6

1. What are the two most common models used for church planting?

    -Daughter congregation is #1
    -Open Arms model #2

    -New starts attract 60% - 80% unchurched or dechurched people.

-Do you have a percentage for each?

    -70% #1
    -15% #2

2. Are you familiar with the multi-site model?   yes   How often do you think it is used in the LCMS?   -20% of the time.

3. Why do you think churches choose to go multi-site rather than daughter?

    -Pastors of main campus are entrepreneurs
    -Creative leaders

4. Why do think church choose daughter rather than multi-site?

    -Fear of new
    -Theologically inferior
    -Planting Pastor may be empire protective rather than have kingdom perspective.

5. What were the "cons" you have heard about multisite?

    -New site gets "left-overs" of main site.
    -"Achilles Heal" of multi-site is that its attractional rather than incarnational. It too much depends on personality of lead pastor.

6. What were the "pros" you have heard about multisite?

    -Reach more people = ONE church accelerates multiplication
    -Stewardship = finances better/more efficient
    -Name recognition

7. What were the "pros" you have heard about a daughter congregation?

   -Well established and researched model
   -Most comfortable model.

8. What were the "cons" you have heard about a daughter congregation?

   -Financial commitment upfront

9. What assumptions, if any, have you heard churches make about the multi-site model?

   -It's more economical
   -Uses staff better
   -Less up-front risk
   -Adaptive

10. What assumptions, if any, have you heard churches make about daughter model?

   -Biblical model
   -C. F. W. Walther's Model
   -Reaches new people because it is new

11. If you were counseling a church which was debating which of these two models to follow, what would your counsel be? What important issues would you raise during the decision-making process?

   -Depends on location in the United States and people involved, particularly the senior pastor.

12. On a scale of 1 – 7, with 1 being poor and 7 being great, how would you characterize the perceived relationship between the planting congregation and the sister congregation? ____6____.

13. On a scale of 1 – 7, with 1 being poor and 7 being great, how would you characterize the perceived relationship between the planting congregation and the daughter congregation? ____5____.

Appendix N

Curriculum Vitae

Aaron Anthony Buchko

Address:

Office: 326 Baker Hall   Home: 1719 W. Tiffany Ct.
        Foster College of Business   Peoria, IL 61614
        Bradley University   Phone: (309) 693-7133
        Peoria, IL 61625   FAX: (309) 693-3124
        Phone: (309) 677-2273
        FAX: (309) 677-3374

Education:

1990   Ph.D., Management, Graduate School of Business, Michigan State University.
        Minors: Strategy/Policy, Sociology.

1983   M.B.A., College of Business Administration, Bradley University.

1977   B.S., B.S., Ferris State University. Majors: Management, Business
        Administration.

1975   A.A.S., Grand Rapids Junior College.

Academic Experience:

Teaching:

1989 -   Professor of Management, Bradley University. Teaching undergraduate
present   and graduate capstone course in Strategy and Policy, graduate course in
            Executive Development, undergraduate course in Principles of
            Management.

1988 -   Senior Associate, Program Director, Michigan State University.
1989   Teaching and developing graduate course in Executive Development with
            Dr. Eugene Jennings.

1988   Instructor, Michigan State University. Teaching undergraduate capstone
            course in Strategy and Policy.

1984 -   Teaching Assistant, Michigan State University. Teaching undergraduate
1988   Principles of Management course, graduate course in Executive
            Development.

1983 -   Instructor (part-time), Illinois Central College. Teaching undergraduate
1984   course in Sales Management.

Research:

1997 -   Senior Researcher, Purchasing/Supply Executive Mobility Program,
1999   Center for Advanced Purchasing Studies, Tempe, Arizona (an affiliate of
          Arizona State University).

1988   Research Assistant, Michigan State University, with Dr. James
          Skivington.

1986   Research Assistant, Michigan State University, with Dr. John Wagner.

Corporate Experience:

1983 -   Director of Marketing, PJS Publications, Inc., Peoria, Illinois.
1984   Senior marketing officer of magazine publishing company.

1979 -   Assistant Sales Manager, Foster & Gallagher, Inc., Peoria, Illinois.
1983   Responsible for marketing programs of direct marketing firm.

1979   Account Executive, Johnson & Johnson, Peoria, Illinois.

1977 -   Sales Representative, ABC Records & Tapes/Lieberman
1979   Enterprises, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Peoria, Illinois.

Publications:

Books/Monographs:

Buchko, A. A. (1998). The Making of the CPO: The Mobility Patterns of Chief
Purchasing Officers. Center for Advanced Purchasing Studies, Tempe, AZ.

Gundry, L. K., and A. A. Buchko (1996). Field Casework: Methods for Consulting to
Small and Startup Businesses. Sage Series in Entrepreneurship, Jerome L. Katz, series
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Refereed Journals:

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Buchko, A. A. (1988). The effects of employee ownership on employee behaviors. <u>Best Papers Proceedings of the 48th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management</u>, pp. 181-185.

Professional Publications:

Buchko, A. A. (1998) Who's the Chief? <u>Purchasing Today</u>, 9, 10 (October 1998), p. 50.

Instrumentation:

Buchko, Aaron A. (1993). Employee Ownership: Background and Demographic Information (HAPI online database record). Pittsburgh, PA: Behavioral Measurement Database Services (Producer). McLean, VA: BRS Search Service (online Vendor).

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Buchko, A. A. (1991). A business planning framework for small companies. 1991 SBIDA – Great Lakes Region conference.

Skivington, J. E., and A. A. Buchko (1988). Developing distinctive competence in manufacturing: A path analysis. 48th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management.

Wagner, J.A., A. A. Buchko, and R. Z. Gooding (1988). Aston research on organizational structure: A meta-analytic examination of generalizability. 48th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management.

Moch, M., A. A. Buchko, and P. Rubin (1986). Heuristics and biases in decision-making: an empirical investigation. Annual Conference on Decision Making, SUNY-Buffalo.

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Wexley, K. N., A. A. Buchko, P. Wright, and E. Whitener (1985). Training for new technology: how companies make the strategic plan - technical linkage. Meeting of the National Advisory Committee, Policy Study: Training for New Technology. Work in America Institute, New York.

Dissertation:

Institutional Isomorphism and Homogeneity of Business Strategy in Organization Fields. Michigan State University, 1990.

Miscellaneous Professional Activities:

Past President, Midwest Division of the Academy of Management.

Proceedings Editor, Midwest Academy of Management, 1995 – 1999.

Program Chair, 1995 Annual Conference, Midwest Academy of Management.
Member, Editorial Review Board, Journal of Small Business Strategy.

Member, Editorial Review Board, Journal of Managerial Issues.

Ad Hoc Reviewer, Sloan Management Review.

Ad Hoc Reviewer, Academy of Management Journal.

Ad Hoc Reviewer, Administrative Science Quarterly.

Ad Hoc Editorial Review Board, Journal of Contemporary Business Issues.

Reviewer, Panelist, and Session Facilitator, 1996 Midwest Academy of Management annual conference.

Reviewer, 1996 Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Business Planning and Strategy division.

Reviewer and Session Chair, 1995 Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Business Planning and Strategy division.

Discussant & Session Chair, 1994 Midwest Academy of Management annual conference.

Reviewer, Business Planning & Strategy division, 1994 Academy of Management annual conference.

Reviewer, 1994 Midwest Academy of Management annual conference.

Discussant, 1993 Midwest Academy of Management annual conference.

Discussant, 1993 Midwest Business Administration Association annual meetings.

Reviewer, 1993 Midwest Academy of Management annual conference.

Reviewer, 1993 Midwest Business Administration Association annual meetings.

Session Chair, 1992 SBIDA Midwest regional meeting. Session: Research Roundtable; Issues in Small Business Research.

Discussant, 1992 Midwest Academy of Management annual conference.

Discussant, 1992 Midwest Business Administration Association annual meetings.
Reviewer, 1992 Midwest Academy of Management annual conference.

Reviewer, 1992 Midwest Business Administration Association annual meetings.

Discussant and Session Chairperson, 1991 Annual Conference of the Midwest Division of the Academy of Management.

Discussant, 1991 Midwest Business Administration Association annual meeting, Chicago, IL, 1991.

Reviewer, 1991 Annual Conference of the Midwest Division of the Academy of Management.

Reviewer, 1991 Midwest Business Administration Association annual meeting.

Session chair and discussant, 1990 Annual Conference of the Association of Management, Orlando, Florida.

Reviewer of numerous textbooks and manuscripts, primarily in the area of business planning and strategy and principles of management.

Honors and Awards:

Francis C. Mergen Award for Outstanding Public Service, Bradley University, 2002.

Strategic Plan for Peoria City/County Health Department (Facilitator) selected as one of four national benchmark programs by the National Association of City/County Health Organizations, 1999.

Outstanding Reviewer, Academy of Management, Business Planning and Strategy Division, 1996.

Outstanding Reviewer, Academy of Management, Business Planning and Strategy Division, 1995.

Outstanding Faculty Advisor, Foster College of Business Administration, Bradley University, 1995.

Richard D. Irwin Distinguished Paper Award, 1994 Midwest Management Society, Midwest Business Administration Association.

New Faculty Achievement Award in Teaching, Bradley University, 1992.

Beta Gamma Sigma (National Honor Business Fraternity), Michigan State University, 1990.

Selected to the Doctoral Student Consortium, Business Policy and Planning, 48th Annual Academy of Management Meetings.

Professional Affiliations

Strategic Management Society
Academy of Management
Midwest Business Administration Association
Midwest Academy of Management
Sigma Iota Epsilon (National Business Professional Fraternity)

Other Activities

Member, Board of Education, Concordia Lutheran School, Peoria, Illinois

Member, Board of Directors, Peoria Symphony Orchestra

Member, Board of Directors, Peoria Association of Retarded Citizens (PARC).

Member, Advisory Board, Salvation Army Heartland District.

Member, Steering Committee, Cancer Care Center of Central Illinois

Instructor, "Competing to Win" and "Becoming a Values-Based Organization."
Programs offered through the Center for Executive and Professional Development,
Bradley University.

Instructor, Bradley University/Samara Aviation Institute Executive Development
Program.

Instructor, "Management for the 21st Century." Caterpillar Inc. executive development
program, Bradley University.   Management and Planning/Strategy modules.

Frequent speaker and seminar leader for several organizations, primarily on issues of
business planning, competitive strategy, executive development, and management.

Confidential Advisor/Consultant/Planning Facilitator for several organizations.

Member, Leadership Task Force, Tri-County Community Partnership, Peoria, Illinois,
1993 - 1995.

Member, Business Development Advisory Board and Nominating Committee, Peoria
Area Retarded Citizens, Peoria, Illinois, 1993 - 1995.

Member, Board of Directors, Northside Planning and Development Corporation, Peoria,
Illinois. 1989 - 1995.

Advisor and consultant on strategy and planning, Executive Committee, Northside

Planning and Development Corporation, Peoria, Illinois. 1990 - 1996.
Academic Advisor, Beta Gamma Sigma (national business honor fraternity), Bradley University chapter, 1991 - present.

Faculty Advisor, Delta Tau Delta fraternity, Bradley University. 1990 - present.

Recipient of Instructional Improvement Grant, Bradley University, May 1990. Project to enhance the use of video technology in the teaching of Principles of Management and Business Planning and Strategy.

Co-Principal Investigator and author (with Dr. C. Stoner and Dr. B. Goitein), "Target - Tri-County Needs." Community needs assessment, Heart of Illinois United Way, 1990.

Member, All-Academy Task Force on Divisions and Interest Groups, Academy of Management, 1990.

Committee Memberships

Sabbatical Review Committee, Foster College of Business Administration, 1999 – present.

AACSB Accreditation Committee, Foster College of Business Administration, 1999 – 2000.

Graduate Committee, Bradley University, 1998 – 2000.

Ad Hoc University Senate Committee, Procedures for Evaluation of Associate Provosts, 1993 - 1996.

Teaching Excellence Committee, Bradley University, 1993 - 1996.

University Conference Committee, Bradley University, 1992 - 1993.

Ad Hoc Committee, Graduate Curriculum evaluation, College of Business, Bradley University, 1991 - 1993.

College of Business Curriculum Committee (Chairperson), College of Business, Bradley University, 1990 - 1997.

Strategic Planning Committee, College of Business, Bradley University, 1990 - 1992.
Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee, Center for Business and Economic Research, Bradley University, 1990 - 1998.

Curriculum and Regulations Committee, Bradley University, 1990 - 1991.

Ad Hoc Dean's Committee on College Statistics Package Selection, College of Business,

Bradley University, 1989 - 1990.

Community Service

Provided services *pro bono* or for nominal fees in strategic planning, management, and program facilitation; or have delivered presentations for the following charitable, not-for-profit, or governmental organizations:

Not-for-Profit Organizations:

- Goodwill Industries
- Friendship House of Christian Service
- Peoria Historical Society
- Christmas in April
- PARC
- Peoria Symphony Orchestra
- Salvation Army
- Cancer Center for Healthy Living
- Cancer Care Center of Central Illinois
- Illinois Sports Hall of Fame
- Susan B. Komen Cancer Center
- Counseling & Family Services
- Tri-County Urban League
- Ada S. McKinley Foundation
- Lutheran Home of Greater Peoria
- Lutheran Senior Ministries
- Redeemer Lutheran Church
- Grace Presbyterian Church
- The American Red Cross
- Door – to – Door Transportation
- Children's Hospital of Illinois
- University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria
- The ARC of Illinois
- Central Illinois Agency on Aging
- Heart of Illinois United Way
- St. Jude Midwest Affiliate
- Hult Health Education Center
- Canton Area Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Peoria YMCA
- Illinois Association of YMCAs
- Peoria Area Labor/Management (PALM)
- Children's Home
- Wildlife Prairie Park
- Glen Oak Zoo, Peoria

Civic/Governmental Organizations:

- City of Peoria
- Team Peoria
- Peoria Chamber of Commerce Leadership Academy
- Canton Area Leadership Program
- Peoria Housing Authority
- Peoria County Health Department

Professional Service to the Business Community

Member of the Board of Directors of 3 corporations

Confidential Advisor to the CEOs of numerous corporations and business organizations

Strategic planning advisor and facilitator for numerous organizations

Carry out individual projects relating to strategic planning and management for numerous corporations

Speaker/Presentor for meetings and seminars of several for-profit and not-for profit corporations and associations

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Hauerwas, Stanley and William H. Willimon. *Resident Aliens*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1989.

Kimball, Dan. *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 2003. For an understanding the Emergent Church movement, here is a good read.

---. *They Like Jesus, But Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 2007.

Kirk, J. Andrew. *Mission under Scrutiny: Confronting Contemporary Challenges*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.

Kotkin, Joel. *The Next Hundred Million: America in 2050*. New York: Penguin Press, 2010.

McLaren, Brian. *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007.

Mortensen, Viggio (ed.). *Theology and the Religions: A Dialogue*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003.

Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989. An important read in understanding the issues and barriers faced today when trying to speak the Gospel in public.

---. *Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt and Certainty in Christian Discipleship*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.

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O'Murchu, Diarmuid. *Quantum Theology: Spiritual Implications of the New Physics*. New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1997.

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Smart, Ninian. *Worldviews: Cross-Cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995.

Sweet, Leonard (ed.). *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*. Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 2003.

Vieth, Gene Jr. *Postmodern Times – A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994. Vieth is an LCMS theologian who addressed the topic of post-modernism from a distinctly Lutheran view. A must read for the LCMS Lutheran to understand contemporary societies' impact on religion.

Wheatley, Margaret. *Leadership and the New Science: Learning about Organizations from an Orderly Universe*. San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler Publishing, 1992.

Church Planting

Allen, Frank W. "Your Church Planting Team Can Be Booby-Trapped," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. July, 1991: 294-297.

Brock, Charles. *The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981.

Corwin, Gary R. "Church Planting 101," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. Apr. 2005: 142-3.

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Hasselgrave, David J. "Essential Elements of Church Planting and Growing in the 21st Century," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. Jan. 2004: 24-32.

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Payne, J. D. "Problems Hindering North American Church Planting Movements," *Evangelical Mission Quarterly*. Apr. 2003: 220-228.

Ruhl, Rev. Mike. Telephone Interview. 11 March 2011.

Searcy, Nelson and Kerrick Thomas. *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch*. Ventura: Regal Books, 2006.

Smith, Glenn, comp. *Improving the Health and Survivability of New Churches*. Leadership Network, 2007. Apr. 29, 2011 <http://media.leadnet.org/blog-content/leadnet/downloads/State%20of%20Church%20Planting%20Report_Health.pdf>. This compilation provides good information about factors that help a church plant survive and thrive.

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Allwardt, Erich. "The St. Louis *Gesammtgemeinde* – Its Demise." *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*. 57:2 (1984): 60-80. A fascinating article of how C. F. W. Walther

and Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Louis, actually practiced a form of multi-site ministry. The main purpose was cooperation for the furtherance of parochial education.

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---. *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip: Exploring the New Normal*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. This book and the previous book are currently the seminal books in understanding the contemporary multi-site movement.

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Walther, C. F. W. *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt)*. Trans. J. T. Mueller. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987. The seminal theological writings on the doctrine of Church and Ministry for the LCMS.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006. For a broad and extensive study of the *missio Dei*, there is no other book, in my opinion, which does a better job.