

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Is Multisite on the Downslope?

Episode 108

A Conversation with Geoff Surratt on the Evolution of Multisite Strategy

Recently, some high profile multisite churches made the decision to *un*-multisite. For a variety of reasons, their ministry strategy has shifted from “one church in many locations” to “multiple independent churches,” some even boldly downsizing to one location. Do these public shifts in strategy signal the beginning of the end for the multisite era? In this episode, Tony sits down with Geoff Surratt, pastor and author of [The Multisite Revolution](#), for a conversation on the future of multisite church, and whether or not it's still an effective strategy in today's culture.

Is Multisite a Tired Strategy?

- Our message is constant, but our strategies have lifespans. (Think door-to-door evangelism, bus ministry, cassette tape messages recordings, etc.)
- The decisions by some large, well-known multisite churches to become individual churches is something to ponder. Assuming it was the right decision for those churches, Geoff encourages church leaders to ask a few questions before jumping to the conclusion that this signals the end of multisite:
 - Has multisite as a strategy ceased being effective for us?
 - Was it the right strategy for us *to begin with*?
 - If we're not yet multisite, do we have the right mix of ingredients that suggest it could be a healthy next step for us?
- Going multisite is more expensive and more complicated than you think it's going to be, but there are many instances where it also has explosive potential that you're never going to see with another strategy.
- Overall, multisite strategies are morphing. We can't all just copy one model, which is what many churches did early on.

“We're having to figure out in our context what it looks like. In the two high profile cases, they have decided that it's not the right strategy for them anymore. I don't think this is a harbinger of the end of multisite. I think it is a sign of maturity of this idea and what it looks like to be one church in multiple locations.” -- Geoff Surratt

Evaluating Whether or Not Multisite Is Right for Your Church

- **Is your church growing?** If not, figure that out first. What's holding back growth now? A couple having marital problems should know having a baby won't turn things around.
- **Are people coming to Christ at your church?** Is there some kind of evangelism going on? Is real discipleship happening? If you're growing, where are those people coming from?
- **Do you have the right *why*?** Have you run out of space? Do you have a strong contingent of people driving a long distance to be part of your church? There are a handful of good reasons to give multisite strategy a try, but there are many bad reasons.

"We just have a tendency in the church world to watch what a handful of high profile churches are doing and decide we need to follow their lead both in and out of some fads in ministry approaches. I've seen pastors chase multisite, as an example, for the wrong reasons. But I'm concerned pastors will chase un-multisiting for the same wrong reasons." -- Tony Morgan

Next Steps

- Have recent announcements of un-multisiting given you pause about continuing with this strategy yourself? Start by asking answer questions:
 - Why did they do it, and do we have the same *why* that needs to be addressed?
 - What were the results, and will we see the same results that they experienced?
- Check out [how The Unstuck Group helps multisite churches](#) clarify organization-wide ministry strategy and how it can be replicated effectively to reach more people in more places. [Let's talk](#). We've helped churches navigate both going multisite and un-multisiting.

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode108.