

Multi-Site Churches – Foundation or Fad? (Examining the Highlands church Model)
www.uvachurch.com

Introduction: Our culture is in a constant state of change.

- A. Powerful forces are trying to press us to change how we think! (Eph 6:12, Jn 14:30)
- B. The power of Christ is far greater than any force in the world. (Eph 1:19-23)
 - 1. We have that power IF and only IF Jesus is our head. (Lk 6:46)
 - 2. When He is our head then every thought will be brought under His will!
 - 3. Any approach that does not have this foundation will fail. (Eph 2:20)
 - 4. Churches and families that fail to build on this foundation will be pulled by the culture! For many there is a harvest being reaped because of years of neglect.

I. Multi-site churches are the latest trend among the religious world

A. What is a “multisite church?”

- 1. It often has a combination of features. It is in fact multiple groups with a limited local oversight and control by a mother church. The most common feature is a sermon from the mother church shown at all sites.
- 2. This approach has multiplied significantly in recent years.

In 1990, there were 10 multisite churches. In 1998, that number had expanded to about 100. In late 2005, there were more than 1,500 multisite churches in the United States. In mid-2008, there are an estimated 2,000 multisite churches in the US. It is likely that every major city and large community in America will have many multi-campus churches by 2010.

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- 2. What happens over time when problems are neglected?
- 3. The approach by some mega churches can be described as “doctrine-light.” They make common experience to be emphasized over doctrine.
- 4. The “Vineyard movement” is a predecessor to this approach. They surveyed the community and gave them what they wanted! This brought great numbers!

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II. We will examine one example of this movement - the Highlands Church

A. I do not want to misrepresent anyone. Revealing the teaching of this group is difficult because of the general nature their public teaching. Many beliefs are downplayed.

- 1. They believe that miraculous gifts such as healing and speaking in tongues are practiced today. Many who attend there would never know this!
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B. The “pastor” of the Highlands church, Chris Hodges, is part of a group of called the “Association of Related Churches.” (ARC)

- 1. There were six men that started this in 2000. One of these men is Chris Hodges.
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1. The use of instruments did have regulations and purposes! **(2 Chron 5:12-13)**
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 2. Is this view correct when we carefully examine in context all God has said?
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 1. The use of instruments did have regulations and purposes! **(2 Chron 5:12-13)**
 2. Worship guided by a reverence for God and His word. There is a necessary control!
 3. This view of “being led by the spirit” allows emotion to trump discernment.
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 1. They do not recognize the differences in the Old and New Testament. **(Col 2:14-17; Heb 8:6-8, 13; 10:9-10)**
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- D. Consider some foundational truths concerning our assemblies.
 1. Worship was always based upon understanding and conviction. Emotion was a by-product of that. **(1 Cor 14:15)**
 2. The spirit of the worshipper was to under control at all times. **(1 Cor 14:32)**
 3. When we make emotion the focus, we can easily use approaches that are based upon fleshly desires and not upon the teachings of the Spirit! **(Col 2:8, 18-19)**
 4. All singing in the New Testament is for a specific purpose. We speak, teach and exhort “one-another” from our hearts! This is not entertainment. **(Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)**
 5. Singing involves everyone, not just the most talented. (see chart)

IV. How do they use small groups?

- A. In the Highlands church you will be expected to take part in small groups.
 ... Then, we as the church must admonish new believers. This means we warn them of sin and the need to change. This happens best in the safety of a few people. The deep and confrontational part of Highlands where we learn to take up our cross and get the junk cleaned up out of our lives happens most effectively in a small group setting. It’s there that we get real and honest and get the accountability that we need. Life Groups, in particular, are small groups designed to help people close the door on yesterday. The vision of Highlands is that every member be connected in a small group. (P.7)
 1. Here some are taught to “speak in tongues” and to “witness healings and miracles.”
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Multi-Site Churches – Foundation or Fad? (Examining the Highlands church Model)
www.uvachurch.com

Introduction: Our culture is in a constant state of change.

- A. Powerful forces are trying to press us to change how we think! (Eph 6:12, Jn 14:30)
- B. The power of Christ is far greater than any force in the world. (Eph 1:19-23)
 - 1. We have that power IF and only IF Jesus is our head. (Lk 6:46)
 - 2. When He is our head then every thought will be brought under His will!
 - 3. Any approach that does not have this foundation will fail. (Eph 2:20)
 - 4. Churches and families that fail to build on this foundation will be pulled by the culture! For many there is a harvest being reaped because of years of neglect.

I. Multi-site churches are the latest trend among the religious world

A. What is a “multisite church?”

- 1. It often has a combination of features. It is in fact multiple groups with a limited local oversight and control by a mother church. The most common feature is a sermon from the mother church shown at all sites.
- 2. This approach has multiplied significantly in recent years.

In 1990, there were 10 multisite churches. In 1998, that number had expanded to about 100. In late 2005, there were more than 1,500 multisite churches in the United States. In mid-2008, there are an estimated 2,000 multisite churches in the US. It is likely that every major city and large community in America will have many multi-campus churches by 2010.

B. The approach that many churches take is to minimize doctrine and make “unity” on the basis of “community service” and “worship experience.”

- 1. The “whole council of God” must be given to a local congregation. (Acts 20:26-28)
- 2. What happens over time when problems are neglected?
- 3. The approach by some mega churches can be described as “doctrine-light.” They make common experience to be emphasized over doctrine.
- 4. The “Vineyard movement” is a predecessor to this approach. They surveyed the community and gave them what they wanted! This brought great numbers!

“Dependence on experience rather than Scripture, leading to both a pragmatic (if it works, it must be from God) and a subjective approach (talent and style of musical performance, personal warmth of the speaker, etc..) -- “experience first, then mold theology to fit the experience.” seems to be the Vineyard's motto.”

II. We will examine one example of this movement - the Highlands Church

A. I do not want to misrepresent anyone. Revealing the teaching of this group is difficult because of the general nature their public teaching. Many beliefs are downplayed.

- 1. They believe that miraculous gifts such as healing and speaking in tongues are practiced today. Many who attend there would never know this!
- 2. They powerfully use small groups to connect others based upon personal interests. This could be greater Bible study or something else (ex. Cooking)

B. The “pastor” of the Highlands church, Chris Hodges, is part of a group of called the “Association of Related Churches.” (ARC)

- 1. There were six men that started this in 2000. One of these men is Chris Hodges.
- 2. They financed the planting of over “135 churches in 33 states” and have lots of \$.
- 3. Why are these men in charge? Who oversees the overseers? Can an answer as simple as what they are being paid be answered?

4. They will tell us that the Holy Spirit is directly speaking to them and that we should accept that!
- C. The Bible provides for how a local church should be governed and local problems solved!
1. The only organization God gave is the local church. **(Acts 14:23; 1 Pt 5:1-2)**
 2. Many in history have tried to make a universal organization for the church.
 3. When there is a concentration of money and power, regardless of the motives there will be very predicable consequences over time. (See chart)
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