

**ASIA PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**A MULTISITE CHURCH MODEL FOR IMMANUEL  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP TO THRIVE IN THE GROWING MINISTRY**

A Capstone Project Presented to  
Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Divinity

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Submitted to  
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Taytay, Rizal  
April 15, 2024

## ASIA PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WE HEREBY APPROVE THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

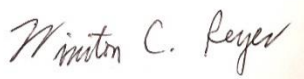
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AS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF DIVINITY


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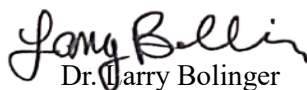
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## ABSTRACT

This research examines the necessity of a multisite church model for Immanuel Christian Fellowship to effectively reach and serve its eight congregations and future church plants. Despite the growing trend of multisite churches, limited attention has been given to smaller churches like Immanuel, which could also benefit from this model.

The study investigates the Immanuel multisite church model, analyzing its advantages and challenges and proposing solutions for success within our context. The main leader of each of the eight congregations provided respondents for the study. Additionally, interviews were conducted with four expert pastors from multisite churches to offer further insights for comparison and learning.

Using *Qualitative Thematic Inductive In Vivo Analysis*, the researcher followed a six-step process: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. Primary data was collected through recorded 40-minute interviews structured around four questions, allowing respondents to share their thoughts and stories.

Analysis revealed insights into perceptions of multisite models, highlighting variations in organizational structure, identity, and strategic support, with differing emphasis on preaching. Practical benefits such as convenience and shared resources, along with strategic strengths like unified discipleship and resource management, were identified. However, challenges in pastoral care, preaching, and organizational alignment were also noted.

Proposed solutions included clarifying leadership roles, tailoring discipleship programs, implementing synchronized, solid sermons, enhancing communication, and establishing permanent places of worship. Additionally, maintaining organizational values, ensuring

leadership alignment, nurturing constant communication, and balancing unity with autonomy were deemed crucial for success.

The study concludes that the multisite model shows promise for effective ministry, provided that recommended solutions are considered and implemented. Immanuel leaders are reminded to address highlighted challenges by improving pastoral care and implementing solutions like synchronized, solid preaching, establishing permanent places of worship, and achieving leadership alignment. Drawing insights from experts like megachurch pastors, Immanuel may enhance the multisite church model by implementing four key solutions: maintaining organizational DNA, ensuring leadership alignment, maintaining constant communication, and balancing unity with autonomy.

Future research is recommended to investigate the importance of synchronized, substantial sermons for success in multisite churches and to explore differences in pastoral care experiences between mega-multisite churches and smaller ones like Immanuel.

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## **DECLARATION**

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.



Cecilio A. Solito

(Researcher)

April 15, 2024

(Date)

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this Capstone Project to Immanuel Christian Fellowship, whose steadfast dedication to ministry within the context of multisite Church amidst challenges and complexities serves as a beacon of inspiration. Moreover, I extend this dedication with heartfelt remembrance to Akane Yuasa Saban (1974-2023), whose selfless contributions profoundly enriched Immanuel's ministry.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

II Corinthians 9:12 says, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” This has been true to me in my Graduate school journey which is 25 years in the making. I praise God for his sustaining and sufficient grace.

A deep gratitude to my family: To my beloved wife, Vanj, for your unwavering love and understanding throughout my educational journey and our shared ministry. I love you! To my three children, Jordan, Luke, and Kyouna, for being a constant source of inspiration and for offering comforting shoulder massages when Daddy is exhausted from crafting this paper. Daddy loves you!

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Special thanks to my professors and mentors who have been a constant source of inspiration throughout my academic journey. I am deeply grateful to my Capstone adviser, Dr. Winston Reyes, for his guidance and support. To my Capstone Instructor, Dr. Erlic Sagud, and my Program Director, Dr. Modine, for their help and encouragement. Thankful also for the valuable insight of Dr. Joy Faraz in the area of qualitative research, and to Dr. Anacleto Carag, my cousin, whose probing questions have challenged me to think analytically and critically. Grateful as well to my Dad in the ministry, Rev. Jun Sabate who believes in me and mentors me over the years. Thankful also to Dr. Chua, Chung Kai for his mentoring in the area of leadership and cultivating my inner life and to Dr. Terry Casiño, who continues to check in on me from time

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## **CHAPTER 1: NATURE OF THE PROJECT**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this capstone is to investigate the necessity of a multisite church model for Immanuel Christian Fellowship to have a thriving ministry in reaching and serving its eight congregations and the future church plants. The multisite church is a remarkable phenomenon among growing churches. “Twenty years ago, there were only 200 multisite churches across the United States. By 2019, that number grew to more than 5,000 multisite churches. 70% of megachurches are multisite.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the multisite church became synonymous with the mega churches. In fact, according to Bird, “The typical multisite begins in the 1,000 size range. In our survey churches had an average (median) attendance of 1,200 when they became multisite.”<sup>2</sup>

However, there is not much study about the smaller churches, such as Immanuel, whose membership is below 60 people per congregation and which can also benefit from the multisite model. Therefore, the researcher would like to investigate the multisite church model, identify the advantages, the challenges, find solutions, and implement the necessary steps to make the multisite church work in our given context.

### **Background of the Study**

Immanuel church started as one church in a single location with a single leadership and budget. The rapid spread of small groups paved the way for the gathering of those small groups in

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<sup>1</sup> Tony Morgan. “The Future of Multisite Strategy,” Episode 182, The Unstuck Church Podcast, accessed February 16, 2024, <https://theunstuckgroup.com/the-future-of-multisite-strategy-episode-182-the-unstuck-church-podcast/>.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Bird. Preach and Teach It: How Multi-Site Churches Start and Grow: Latest Trends <https://preachitteachit.org/hu/articles/how-multi-site-churches-start-and-grow-latest-trends/> (Accessed: February 14, 2024)

one place according to their proximity, which gave birth to a worship service and eventually became a congregation. The church's distinct condition in Japan, such as no clear legal identity, limited resources, a lack of leaders with theological education, and no owned facilities, organically led us to a multisite church to be effective and keep up with the expanding ministry. Thus, based on its unique location and situation, Immanuel envisioned the church to be one church in multiple locations with the same brand, board, and budget.

### Definition of Terms

**Multisite church** – It is one church in multiple-locations. It is defined as single church in separate locations “connected by a budget, brand, and board. They share a theology, vision, and philosophy of ministry, as well as the administrative mechanism for coordinating their work together.”<sup>3</sup> It is a paradigm shift from the traditional local congregation.

**Immanuel Christian Fellowship** – It is a Filipino multisite church with eight congregations in Japan. One of those is a Japanese church. Each congregation typically sees an average attendance of 60 people or fewer. The church denomination is under the Evangelical Free Church of the Philippines and the Evangelical Free Church of Japan, Central District.

**Thrive** – It is an intransitive verb that means to grow vigorously *flourish*<sup>4</sup>. It means that Immanuel is growing and flourishing in the multisite church model.

**Congregation** – It is a local site or branch with its own worship service and ministry head leaders.

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Leeman, “MultiChurch a More Biblical Version of Multisite?” December 17, 2018, accessed October 31, 2023, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/multichurch-exploring-future-multisite/>

<sup>4</sup> Merriam Webster, Accessed, February 16, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/thrive>

**Church DNA** – “DNA is the foundational information that makes the church what it is. It’s the beliefs, values, purpose, mission and unwritten rules that govern how a church operates. DNA is important. It makes humans who we are. It defines churches and determines who they are.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Statement of the Problem**

Why is it necessary to have a multisite church model for the Immanuel Christian Fellowship to thrive in reaching and serving its eight congregations and the future church plants in ministering to Japan?

### **Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

This study seeks to focus on the Immanuel Christian Fellowship’s eight congregations, namely: Main, Kita Nagoya/Kasugai, Tokai/Chita, Oharu, Immanuel Japanese, Sagara, Mikawa, and Ichinomiya, which are all located in Japan. Seven of those are inside Aichi Prefecture, and one is in Shizuoka Prefecture. To give a geographical picture and the distance of each congregation from each other, consider the following: Main is 13 km away from Nagoya train station. Kita Nagoya is 25 km away from Main. Tokai/Chita and Japanese, which use the same venue, are 14.3 km away from Main. Oharu is 23.5 km away from Main. Ichinomiya is 31 km away from Main. Mikawa is 36 km away from Main. And last is Sagara, which is outside of the Aichi Ken prefecture and is 163 km away from Main.

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<sup>5</sup> Mark J. Lenz, “The DNA difference—church plant versus multisite,” Biblical Leadership (blog), August 2, 2018, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.biblicalleadership.com/blogs/the-dna-difference-church-plant-versus-multisite/>.



Figure 1: “Immanuel Multisite Church”

This study will also cover four pastors of megachurches to seek to understand their perspective on a multisite church for comparison as the experts who are practitioners and successful.

Below is a breakdown of the demographics considering the social and cultural context, highlighting important factors that could shape how respondents view and answer questions.

RESPONDENT A:		GENDER	NATIONALITY	EDUCATION	CHURCH POSITION	CONGREGATION: Permanent Place
IMMANUEL						
IM1		Male	Filipino	College	Church Board	No
IM2		Female	Filipino	College	Church Board	Yes
IM3		Male	Filipino	College Grad	Pastor	No
IM4		Male	Filipino	College	Pastor	No
IM5		Female	Filipino	College Grad	Church Board	No
IM6		Female	Filipino	College	Church Board	Yes
IM7		Male	Filipino	College Grad	Church Board	Yes
IM8		Male	Japanese	College Grad	Church Board	No
Note: "Permanent place" means fixed location of worship .						
RESPONDENT B:		Gender	Nationality	Education	Position	Multisite Category
Mega Church Pastors						
MEGA1		Male	Singaporean	MDiv, MD	Center Pastor	Full
MEGA2		Male	Filipino	DMin	Senior Pastor	Transitioned
MEGA3		Male	Filipino	MDiv Student	Special Ministry Pastor	Full
MEGA4		Male	Filipino	DMin	Special Ministry Pastor	Semi
Note: Full: One brand, name and board Transitioned: From multisite to network church Semi: Hybrid –Full and autonomy						

*Figure 2: "Demographics"*

### Feasibility of the Study

The research commenced in February. Data analysis, interpretation of results, drawing conclusions, and final adjustments will be conducted in the second week of April. The defense is scheduled on the third week of April. The budget was ¥35,000 with the following breakdown:

1. Internet: ¥18,000 - ¥6,000 per month, from February to April 2024
2. Gift for respondents: ¥12,000 - ¥1,000 each respondent, with 12 interviewees
3. Contingency fund: ¥5,000 – Emergency fund in case of an unforeseen cost



## CHAPTER 2: SURVEY AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Exploring the Multisite Church Model: A Literature Review

The multisite church model has gained significant attention in contemporary discussions on church growth and expansion. According to multisite church experts in the US survey, “multisites have a 90% success rate. Only 10% of surveyed churches report that they’ve had a campus closure.”<sup>6</sup> Confirming this growth not only in the US, Bird reported that,

Multisite is also thriving elsewhere around the world. By God’s grace, most everything is working right now in our multisite model, says a church leader in the Philippines. “We are seeing growth across almost all our satellites, in spite of having just opened a new 10,000-seat facility. We have planted at least ten new satellites this year, including several outside of our own country.” This growth is multifaceted, with faster growth, more new believers, and greater lay participation.<sup>7</sup>

It is therefore clear that the multisite church model is thriving with effective reach and expansion.

Moreover, the fascinating thing is that this model also works in small churches. With a great backup from Leadership Network data collection, Surratt, Ligon, and Bird claimed in their study that multisite church effectiveness is not a fad. You do not need to be a mega church to do the multisite. “Healthy churches with attendances of less than two hundred can do certain forms of multi-site with good success.” They continued saying, “In short, the multi-site phenomenon is growing dramatically among churches of all sizes, bringing it soon enough to every city, every denomination, and every style of ministry.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Bird, Warren, and Kirstin Walters, "Multisite Is Multiplying Survey Identifies Leading Practices and Confirms," *New Developments in the Movement's Expansion* (2010), accessed February 14, 2024, [https://pastoralized.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/LN\\_multi-site\\_report-1.pdf](https://pastoralized.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/LN_multi-site_report-1.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Warren Bird, "Leadership Network/Generis Multisite Church Scorecard: Faster Growth, More New Believers and Greater Lay Participation" (Leadership Network, 2014), accessed February 18, 2024, [https://www.beboldacademy.org/images/uploads/Multisite\\_Church\\_Scorecard\\_Report\\_v2.pdf](https://www.beboldacademy.org/images/uploads/Multisite_Church_Scorecard_Report_v2.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 12.

Thus, in exploring this multisite church model, the researcher consulted an extensive variety of literature reviews to understand the evolution, Biblical perspective, challenges, adaptations of the model for small churches, and future studies for multisite churches as documented in scholarly literature.

### **A. Emergence of the Multisite Church Model**

1. Historical development – The brief history of the multisite church can be traced as far back as the early church. From the apostolic era, transitioning to Roman Catholicism. According to Gregg Allison and Brad House, “The one-bishop framework, initiated in the second century, developed into the early church’s organization of a regional bishop leading all the churches in a geographical area. These provincial churches were part of one church under the bishop’s authority, even though they existed as separate, geographic congregations.”<sup>9</sup> The statement of the Nicene Creed, “I believe in one holy, apostolic church,” echoes it. The church’s collaboration with centralized leadership became productive in addressing the growing church. Thus, from the New Testament to the present church, we will see the multisite church model’s effectiveness in maximizing its reach and impact.
  - a. Biblical Precedent – The multisite church model is not explicitly or implicitly prohibited in the Scripture, though others may question its Biblical precedent. It is an open discussion for the pros and cons. However, it can be supported by Biblical principles such as the great commission in Matthew 28:19-20 to go and make disciples of all nations. Not only that, but we can also argue the idea of the New Testament church as one meeting in different locations and times as Gear states,

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<sup>9</sup> House, Brad, and Gregg Allison. *Multichurch: Exploring the Future of Multisite*. Zondervan, 2017, 19.

Throughout the New Testament, we see evidence of single local churches that apparently met in multiple locations. Roger Gehring's landmark study on the early church, *House Church and Mission*, has amply demonstrated that this kind of house church network was prevalent in the first century. New Testament and archeological evidence show us that Corinth, Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Philippi, and Laodicea were referred to as one "church" even though the Christians there gathered in various houses. The new congregation in Jerusalem, for instance, is frequently referred to in the singular, one church (Acts 8:1; 11:22; 15:4).<sup>10</sup>

- b. Methodist Circuit Riders – In the 1800's the Methodist circuit riders were pastoring multisite churches before even the word multisite church was put in the church terminologies. According to Catchings, "Wesley organized his followers into territory called circuits. They established systematic plans for regularly visiting his followers by communities and cities. The circuits were composed of large group called societies."<sup>11</sup> Wesley served as the senior pastor organizing the circuit riders to minister in different places. This model was followed a lot in the US in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- c. Civilization and globalization – The rise of multisite churches is greatly impacted by global technological advancements, improved access to information, and improved mobility. People are so receptive to learning about new concepts, and globalization has emerged as the primary culprit. Catchings continued that "The primary factors that advanced multisite churches are economics, advanced mobility of the population and technological breakthroughs."<sup>12</sup>
- d. Online church during pandemic – The Covid-19 online church worship shifted to mono-site. It was the same with the experience of Immanuel. Our eight congregations suddenly became one through online worship service. However, experts observed that

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<sup>10</sup> Greear, JD. "Is Multi-Site A Biblically Sound Model?," JD Greear Ministries Blog. Accessed November 1, 2023. <https://libguides.msubillings.edu/c.php?g=242157&p=1610540>.

<sup>11</sup> Lionel R. Catchings, "Pastoral Leadership Strategies for a Multisite Church in a Small Church Setting in the African American Community," PhD diss., Liberty University, 2021, <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3945&context=doctoral>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

post-pandemic even amplified its growth. Tomberlin states, “COVID-19 did not change the multisite trends we were already seeing pre-pandemic, but, rather, it accelerated them.”<sup>13</sup> What he meant is that a small venue with less cost can now handle the church’s reach. Church mergers increase instead of closing churches, and the pandemic legitimizes the church online. Thus, the reach area became unlimited across the world. It vindicates the statement of John Wesley that “the world is my parish.”

However, it also affected the thinking of having a large or expensive venue or campus. According to Cronin, COVID-19 shifted the thinking of risking much investment in having a building and shift to a small staff and low budget.<sup>14</sup>

2. Motivation for the multisite – Why go on multisite when you can just take care of one single church and location, just like the traditional church? The reason behind multisite is more significant than just following the latest and most popular trend. According to Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, “The primary motive behind the multi-site approach is to obey the church’s God-given directives. The Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39) is to love God and one another, the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) is to make disciples of all nations, and the Great Charge (1 Peter 5:1-4) reminds us to involve all believers in ministry.”<sup>15</sup> This is the starting point more than any other practical reason. It is the Great Commandment and the Great Commission that compel us to do what we are doing regardless of the model, as long as it is not against the word of God. Multisite churches are Great Commission-driven, for we are taking the church to the people. On the side of

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<sup>13</sup> Jim Tomberlin, "Welcome to Multisite Church in the New Normal," The Unstuck Group, March 23, 2021, accessed February 19, 2024, <https://theunstuckgroup.com/multisite-new-normal/>.

<sup>14</sup> Cronin, Sean. “Multisite Churches After COVID-19.” New Churches Multiply the Mission Blog (blog), March 23, 2020. Accessed February 19, 2024. <https://church-planting.net/multisite-churches-after-covid-19/>.

<sup>15</sup> Surratt, Ligon, and Warren Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations*, 10.

the strategic approach, Morgan stated that the motivation for multisite churches is reaching more people, increasing outreach, maximizing resources, and increasing volunteer engagement.<sup>16</sup> Dotts echoed Morgan's sentiments when she outlined the primary motivations behind adopting a multisite model. In her blog, Dotts expounded Seven Little-Known Advantages of Multisite Churches, which are:

- a) They enable untapped talent to emerge
- b) They improve stewardship resources.
- c) They enjoy the benefits of both big and small churches
- d) They help struggling churches thrive
- e) They create a platform for intentional discipleship
- f) They protect against cult personality
- g) They foster an evangelistic strategy.<sup>17</sup>

This is to say that the discovery of talent, the involvement of volunteers, the evangelistic impact as well as the sharing of resources from different congregations have been massive. This would have been difficult to do if had only done in a single location.

3. Key influencers – There are several key influencers in the area of multisite. The three major names are Warren Bird, Gregg Ligon, and Geoff Surratt who were co-authors of *The Multi-site Church Revolution: Being One in Many Locations*. Villoria, in his paper "A Church with Multiple Satellites," highlights the significance of this book, noting that, "A search in Google using 'multi-site church' will direct the user to 29,900,000 hits with the number one hit being the website of Multi-Site Church Revolution."<sup>18</sup> Additionally, these authors collaborated on another notable work, *The Multi-site Church Road Trip*.

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<sup>16</sup> Tony Morgan, "Effective Multisite Ministry: The Ultimate Guide for Multisite Church Strategy," The Unstuck Group, November 13, 2023, accessed February 19, 2024, <https://theunstuckgroup.com/effective-multisite-church-strategy-guide/>.

<sup>17</sup> Kylie Dotts, "7 Little-Known Advantages of Multisite Churches," Portable Church Industries Blog, August 19, 2019, accessed March 1, 2024, <https://www.portablechurch.com/2019/mobile-churches/multisite-church-advantages/>.

<sup>18</sup> Joselito G. Villoria. "Developing A Theological And Ecclesiological Foundation For Greenhills Christian Fellowship - A Church With Multiple Satellites." PhD Dissertation, South Western Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010, 22.

Their common denominators are that half of my readings have their names quoted in multisite churches and church multiplication, or they are the co-authors. Their bold prediction in their book, *The Multi-site Revolution* stated that “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.”<sup>19</sup> Not only that, they also foresee that “30,000 American churches will be multi-site within the next few years, which means one or more multi-site churches will probably be in your area.”<sup>20</sup> This is remarkable because 18 years have passed, and the trajectory is in that direction. Bird even supported that direction, for he stated that “in the United States alone, 5 million people worshipped at one of 8,000 multisite churches last weekend, according to the National Congregations Study sponsored by Duke University”<sup>21</sup>

Below is a brief synopsis of the authors drawn from various sources:

- a) Warren Bird – Birch in his interview with Warren Bird, introduced him as a great source of insight for the multisite movement. He is the VP of EFCA. He also leads The Leadership Network which conducts frequent research concerning multisite and church multiplication.<sup>22</sup>
- b) Greg Ligon – As one of the key speakers, The Extotogether website (Exponential, 2020) mentioned that Greg “directed many of the experiences related to multisite

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<sup>19</sup> Geoff Surrat, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations*, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Bird, “Leadership Network/Generis Multisite Church Scorecard: Faster Growth, More New Believers and Greater Lay Participation.”

<sup>22</sup> Rich Birch. “Lessons Learned from Studying the Multisite Church Movement with Warren Bird.” Unseminary, October 3, 2019. Accessed March 3, 2024. <https://unseminary.com/lessons-learned-from-studying-the-multisite-church-movement-with-warren-bird/>.

churches, Leadership Training Network and spearheaded strategic services for the organization.”<sup>23</sup>

- c) Geoff Surratt – As one of the key speakers, The Exponential website (Exponential, 2020) mentioned that Geoff is “the Director of Multisite Strategy for Generis and coaches churches and leaders around the country. He previously served in executive leadership at Seacoast Church, Saddleback Church, and Exponential.”<sup>24</sup>

4. General criticism – Whatever good the model brings, there is always criticism. A Theological Critique of the Multisite Church by Riddle asked the following questions: Is multi-site ministry consistent with the Biblical model of church growth? Is multi-site ministry consistent with the Biblical model of pastoral care and shepherding? Is multi-site ministry consistent with the Biblical model of church government? He even pressed a provocative question, “Do you really want your local church to be like the local Starbucks, McDonald’s, or Wal-Mart?”<sup>25</sup> The opinion of Riddle is that a multisite church is more pragmatic than Biblical. Moreover, he also cited *The Deliberate Church* by Mark Dever and Paul Alexander. The book argues, “By definition and by use, an *ekklesia* is a corporate singularity—one group of people who are all in the same place at the same time. The very definition of the word “church” then makes it difficult to embrace multiple services as a format for the main weekly “gathering” of church members.” It is

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<sup>23</sup> Ex Together, "Exponential 2020," March 2, 2020, accessed March 5, 2024, <https://m.exponential.org/2020orl/speakers/speakers-62.html#:~:text=Greg%20is%20also%20one%20of,Southern%20Methodist%20University%20in%20Dallas.>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Jeffrey T. Riddle, "A Theological Critique of Multi-Site Ministry," n.d., accessed March 4, 2024, 8-15. [https://www.academia.edu/20012812/A\\_Theological\\_Critique\\_of\\_Multi\\_Site\\_Ministry](https://www.academia.edu/20012812/A_Theological_Critique_of_Multi_Site_Ministry).

therefore much better to give a young pastor a copy of *The Deliberate Church* than *The Multi-Site Church Revolution*.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, with regard to its adverse effects on church governance, Villoria, in his research, referenced Whites and Yeats, highlighting,

One of the major issues against the multi-site church is its negative impact in church polity, particularly the creation of “minidenominations, which remove local church autonomy. The major concern is that multi-site churches will lose its “right to elect its own leaders”, “right to exclude members from its fellowship,” and “right to admit members into its fellowship.”<sup>27</sup>

5. General justification – The common justification for the said model is the biblical precedent and the Methodist circuit rider approach to biblically fulfilling the Great Commission and the proactive approach to effectively reaching people by bringing the church to the community. In defense of a multisite church, Allison cited, “Francis Asbury (1745-1816), the founding bishop of American Methodism, traveled more than a quarter of a million miles on foot and horseback, preaching about sixteen thousand sermons as he worked his circuits.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, it worked before and can still work now.

**B. The Challenges** – There is no perfect church model. It always has potential problems and challenges. We will see from the experts the problems that they have seen or experienced.

1. Identity and community - Catchings in his study, mentioned that at Logos Church, one of the greatest challenges is the attachment to the campus location and pastor, which look at themselves as two separate churches instead of one. The perception that the other site is a

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas White and John M. Yeats, *Franchising Mcchurch: Feeding Our Obsession with Easy Christianity* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), 173-4. Quoted in Villoria, Joselito G. “Developing A Theological And Ecclesiological Foundation For Greenhills Christian Fellowship - A Church With Multiple Satellites.” PhD Dissertation, South Western Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Gregg Allison, "Theological Defense of Multi-Site," 9 Marks, February 26, 2010, accessed March 11, 2024, <https://www.9marks.org/article/theological-defense-multi-site/>.



separate church often stems from the lack of shared community experiences during weekly small groups and worship services.<sup>29</sup>

2. Pastoral Care - Caring for the flock may not be equally experienced, which may lead to disconnection and feeling overlooked. Greear stated that one of the objections that he hears a lot about the multisite strategy is this: “In a multi-site church, I don’t know the pastor (and the pastor doesn’t know me).”<sup>30</sup> The perception of the lack of accessibility to pastoral care exists. There is no personal attachment.
3. Gap between the Pastor and the Congregation - Since the ministry is expanding with more people, the pastor can be detached and personal connection with people loses. Strong quoting Bird said, “Bird highlights that this gap is perceived to be a personal one. In other words, the preacher does not know each congregant in a personal way, thus creating a gap.”<sup>31</sup>
4. Unity and Autonomy - Maintaining unity regarding the DNA and the autonomy of each congregation may lead to tensions and friction. According to Volbeda, “Failure to manage this tension can be catastrophic.” He further claimed that “Many of the horror stories of rogue campus pastors or unsuccessful launches can be traced to this dynamic.”<sup>32</sup> The goal is to understand where the church should be united, as well as the level of diversity and autonomy. Proper alignment and adjustment should be considered.

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<sup>29</sup> Catchings, “Pastoral Leadership Strategies for a Multisite Church in a Small Church Setting in the African American Community.”

<sup>30</sup> Greear, “Is Multi-Site A Biblically Sound Model?”

<sup>31</sup> Surratt, Ligon and Bird, 203. Quoted in Gerad G. Strong. “A Multisite Church Model In The Rural Context.” (MA Thesis, e Graduate School of Trinity Bible College and Graduate School, 2019), 29.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Volbeda, “4 Tensions Every Multisite Church Must Manage - Part 1,” 2024, accessed March 5, 2024, [https://www.michaelvolbeda.com/post/4-tensions-every-multisite-church?fbclid=IwAR2G\\_omz-HDT-6m5bnx6zTGQSh5YEY-NCZmNyT48atNhotj-iK3Tc9cEqpQ](https://www.michaelvolbeda.com/post/4-tensions-every-multisite-church?fbclid=IwAR2G_omz-HDT-6m5bnx6zTGQSh5YEY-NCZmNyT48atNhotj-iK3Tc9cEqpQ).

## 5. Financial resources

- a. **Allocation** - The resource distribution is very vital to the success of the multisite.

In his podcast, Birch asked his guests a relevant question,

“How much ‘control’ do you give to the campus vs. central location regarding budgets and spending plans? Do you give each campus their own budget and spending plan and ask them to do all the purchasing or do you give them a trimmed-down budget and ask them to use that only contextually for the ministry at their campus with the majority of the budget done at the central campus? Or is there a third way?”<sup>33</sup>

There is always tension concerning finances with the central and the local. Citing the Meeting House Church with 19 locations, Natalie Frisk answered that “there is a central campus budget that covers the basic things that are done for all of the sites such as teaching, training, music licensing, and so on. Then each campus has a budget for site-specific compassion initiatives, site-specific training and events, and location and youth pastors with their budgets for their teams.” In other words, there should be a centralized budget that should be identified and the local budget for each site to work out the tension. A trial and error should be explored to close the gap.

- b. **Funding** - Counting the cost or the question of who will pay is very important. “If your church is in prayerful discussion about joining the world of multiple-location churches, it is important to count the costs”<sup>34</sup> according to Surratt, Ligon, and Bird . The said authors identified the answers for funding of the multi sites such as special offerings, pay it forward, pay it locally, tapping into grants, and other options. Citing the Willow Creek church, the authors mentioned that ,

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<sup>33</sup> Rich Birch, "All About Multisite: Financial Approaches, Structuring for the Future & Church Online," Passion for Planting, May 7, 2018, accessed March 6, 2024, <https://church-planting.net/all-about-multisite-financial-approaches-structuring-for-the-future-church-online-unseminary/>.

<sup>34</sup> Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations*, 97.

Other churches have started their new sites from their operating budgets, much as they would begin new ministries. Some churches use part of their designated mission money to start new outreaches into a new community. Occasionally leaders in a community will raise the money themselves, or the core team will be challenged to commit to give toward the new campus, much as they would pledge to a capital campaign.<sup>35</sup>

In the end, a sustainable financial model should be something that needs further study for the stewardship of the overall budget.

#### 6. Decision making - Who decides on what is another important factor in the multisite church?

Multiple congregations mean multiple problems if not addressed or a blessing of multiple opportunities if handled well. Gregg Allison and Brad House said, “Tensions develop as churches seek to balance centralized authority and governance with the desire to contextualize the gospel to local congregations and give greater freedom to local leadership.”<sup>36</sup> The authors pressed that the balance of control and ownership in the context of multisites or congregations should be achieved to iron out the common tension in this model. They also cited the US system of federalism “that seeks to balance the interests of the states with a central federal authority.”<sup>37</sup> In other words, the board, or central leadership who is the overall authority that takes care of the whole organization should know its role and recognize also the input and innovations of local leadership.

Micromanagement and macromanagement synergy are necessary to at least achieve balance.

#### 7. Congregation pastor/leader - The local leader or local pastor in the particular congregation is very vital to the success of the multisite church model. The success of the local congregation lies with it. The local leadership and the implementation of the overall mission and vision of the multisite are relatively in the hands of the congregational leader/pastor. He needs to make sure that everything is in the proper alignment to avoid breakaway groups and make the centralization

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>36</sup> House, and Allison. *Multichurch: Exploring the Future of Multisite*, 32.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

and decentralization work. Surratt, Ligon and Bird said, that “The role of campus pastor is a paramount factor in whether a new campus grows or dies.”<sup>38</sup> By catching the vision of the senior pastor and the organization, the congregation pastor/leader implements it. Their influence on the local church is significant in bringing them to the overall vision of the church.

8. Sustainability and Continuity - Churches are evolving and so the next question would be the sustainability of the multisite model. Given the complexities of maintaining it, the next question would be, will it be forever or when is the time for the multisite to transition to local autonomy?

Blair cited, the Senior Pastor of Village Church in Texas, Matt Chandler when he said, that

The multisite church has an expiration date. The reason is not because of growing pains but it is just simply God’s will to end it.’ Chandler continued, ‘We continued to pray about what was happening until all the elders of the church came to a unanimous decision to work toward making all five campuses of The Village Church autonomous by 2022. This would allow for increased localized and global missions and those churches could also move on to plant more churches as well.’<sup>39</sup>

The same with the church of Timothy Keller. His multisite church was well planned and was not intended to continue. It has a timetable. According to Keller, “The multi-site model is a transition design for us. Redeemer has a timetable for turning each site into a congregation in its neighborhood, with its pastoral leadership.”<sup>40</sup> Before Keller’s stepping down as senior pastor and his death, Redeemer’s church separated into independent smaller churches as reported by Belz as early as 2015.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Road Trip*, 231.

<sup>39</sup> Leonardo Blair, "Why many multisite churches are now moving toward autonomous congregations," *The Christian Post*, May 12, 2019, accessed March 7, 2024, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/multisite-churches-now-autonomous-congregations.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Timothy Keller, "The 'Multi-Site' Model—Thoughts," *The Gospel Coalition*, January 29, 2010, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-multi-site-model-thoughts/>.

<sup>41</sup> Emily Belz, "After Keller’s Death, Redeemer Members Carry on His Small Church Vision." *Christianity Today*. August 28, 2023. Accessed March 10, 2024. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/tim-keller-issue/tim-keller-church-members-small-church-megachurch.html>.

**C. Modifying Multisite Church Model for Small Churches** - The multimillion-dollar question is: what about the small churches? Is this applicable to them, or is this only for megachurches with thousands of people?<sup>42</sup> Yes, is the resounding answer according to Suratt, Ligon, and Bird. They argued that this is possible provided that you can answer these three questions which are: How healthy is your church? Is there a driving impetus behind your desire to go multi-site? Are the key leaders behind the decision?<sup>43</sup> If you can answer affirmatively then you will see that the beauty of this model is that its principles are very transferable. Small churches can learn a lot from the multisite and have the freedom to do all the tweaking that will help them achieve their maximum potential in ministry.

Therefore, adaptations and innovations be considered. While the grounding principles exist, the context is considered to result in a workable model rather than a clone. Thus, the synergism of the content and context can produce a dynamic local approach to ministry. In the article, “3 Strategies for Creating More Adaptable Ministries,” Megan Hatcher points out that “Adaptable ministry models are capable of shifting in response to the needs and assets of a community so that more people experience the transformative love and grace of Christ.”<sup>44</sup> She is on point because, in the multisite model, enormous opportunities for innovations exist. You bring the church to the community rather than the community to the church.

**D. Synthesis** - The emergence of the multisite church model, as outlined above, has led to phenomenal growth in research, not only in books but particularly in theses and dissertations. This implies that many pastors and practitioners are curious about this phenomenon. However, I

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<sup>42</sup> Suratt, Ligon, and Bird, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations*, 52.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>44</sup> Hatcher, Megan. “3 Strategies for Creating More Adaptable Ministries.” Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary. The Lewis Center of Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary, October 26, 2021. Accessed March 10, 2024. <https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/3-strategies-for-creating-more-adaptable-ministries/>

found little study regarding a small church that adapted this model, whether successful or not. I tried to look for articles, journals, and whatever studies were available about the case studies done for a small church that runs this model, and I found none so far. This research gap limits our understanding of whether the multisite church model will apply to a small church of less than one hundred.

## **.CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

### **Method for Research**

Qualitative Research was used for this study as it was described by Tenny, Brannan, and Brannan as “A type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems. Instead of collecting numerical data points or intervene or introduce treatments just like in quantitative research, qualitative research helps generate hypotheses as well as further investigate and understand quantitative data.”<sup>45</sup> The researcher believes that this type of research was the best way that brings results to the study since “one of the strengths of qualitative research is its ability to explain processes and patterns of human behavior that can be difficult to quantify.”<sup>46</sup>

### **Research Questions**

Four similar questions for two groups of people guided the research project to find a common understanding or misunderstanding about the multisite church, the advantages they are enjoying, the challenges they are experiencing, and the possible solutions that they think will solve the challenges. The first group of respondents consists of the leaders from Immanuel, who were interviewed to assess their actual knowledge and experience with the present model. The second group of respondents consists of pastors from megachurches. This group was selected to assess their advanced knowledge of the multisite model, as well as to understand the advantages and challenges they are experiencing and to gather insights into possible solutions.

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<sup>45</sup> Janelle M Brannan, Steven Tenny, and Grace D. Brannan, “Qualitative Study,” National Library of Medicine: National Center for Biotechnology and Information, September 18, 2022, accessed March 4, 2024, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/>.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

**Research Question #1.** How does a multisite church model look to you?

The purpose of this question is to help the researcher gauge if the respondents, particularly in Immanuel, know what a multisite church model is. This is important to know if the leaders are on the same page and with the same understanding of one brand, one board, and one budget. For the second group of respondents, it is to know whether they have the same definition of the multisite church since multisite can vary depending on a church context.

**Research Question #2.** What do you think are the advantages of the multisite church model for your church?

By asking this question, the researcher prompted reflection and appreciation from the respondents about what they have been enjoying in the context of the multisite church. They may even acknowledge the wisdom behind the church model that the present leadership is using to make the ministry of the church grow and thrive.

**Research Question #3.** What are the challenges that you have experienced in your present set-up?

This is to identify and understand the obstacles, difficulties, or frustration that the Immanuel congregation and the church of the respondent may be facing within their current church multisite model. This will help the researcher see from another perspective that he may be blinded by his passion to make the multisite church work. The result of this is an objective assessment based on the experiences of the respondents.

**Research Question #4.** What do you think are the possible solutions to the challenges that you are facing?



By asking this question, the researcher empowers and encourages the Immanuel respondents to take ownership of the problem and engage in critical analysis. Their answers are analyzed as the basis for recommendations for Immanuel. For the respondent pastors, their answers are analyzed as the expert's opinion for possible solutions that will help Immanuel.

In the end, the overall answers from the two groups of respondents will be compared. One is treated as the internal opinion, and the other is the expert opinion. Both are good bases for the recommendations and future studies.

### **Participants**

The nature of the research required two different groups of respondents. An intentional selection of one leader from each congregation and one pastor from megachurches with multiple sites for their expertise to gain perspective on the success of their multisite church.

### **Criteria for Selection**

The respondents interviewed for this study met the following criteria:

1. Congregation pastor/leader in charge of each congregation. They are the main leaders of each congregation and are accountable to the Church Board and the Senior Pastor.
2. The campus pastor and senior pastor of a well-known megachurch. They are chosen for their deep knowledge of the successful multisite church model that they are running. One is from Singapore and the other three is from the Philippines.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher emailed the respondents ahead of time with the four questions mentioned above and asked for a Zoom appointment for those who are far away and an onsite interview for those who are near and available. The researcher sought consent from the respondents by providing the letter. The content of the letter is in the appendix. The conversations were recorded in an iPhone voice memo with approval acquired from the respondents by saying “yes” before recording the interview. Numeric codes will be used in place of the respondent’s name for privacy.

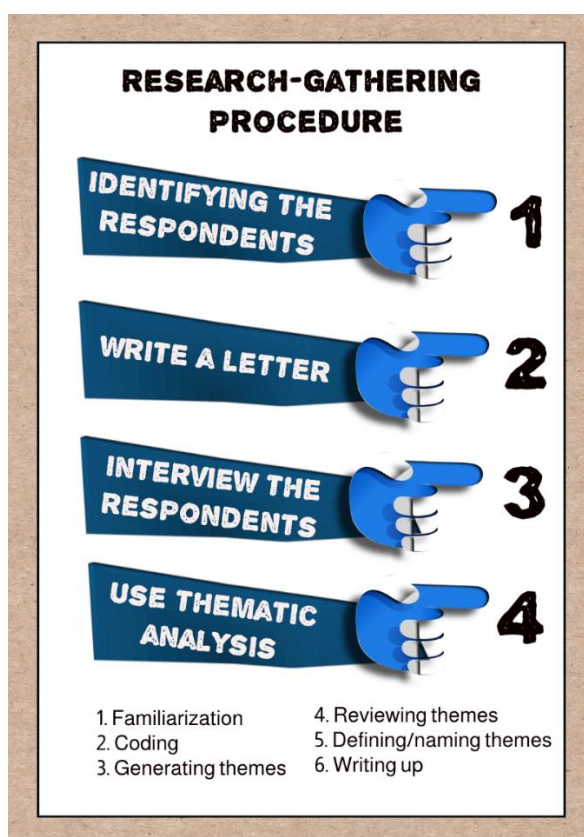
### **Data Collection**

The researcher used primary data collection through recorded interviews. The interview lasted for 40 minutes and revolved around the four questions mentioned. It has approximately 10 minutes per question to allow the respondent to not only answer questions but also tell their stories. It helped the researcher to listen and gain more insights. An article by Roberts reminds us that “The goal, when creating interview questions, is to develop open and broad questions, capable of capturing a detailed account of the participant’s perception of their experience that the researcher can use to answer the research question.”<sup>47</sup> This makes the interview not only insightful but also creates synergism with the interviewee and, therefore, a productive outcome. Follow-up questions were also given by the researcher to make sure that the questions are answered well and a natural interaction can happen resulting to a meaningful interview.

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<sup>47</sup>Rosanne E. Roberts, “Qualitative Interview Questions: Guidance for Novice Researchers,” *The Qualitative Report* 25, no. 9 (September 5, 2020): 9, Accessed March 4, 2024 <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4640&context=tqr>.

The tool that the researcher used was thematic analysis. It was originally created for psychological study by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke who devised this procedure. It has a six-step process which are: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up.<sup>48</sup> It is appropriate since, using this technique, “the researcher extensively scrutinizes the data to find recurring themes, subjects, concepts, and patterns of meaning.”<sup>49</sup>



*Figure 3: Research Gathering Procedure*

<sup>48</sup> Caulfield, Jack. “How to Do Thematic Analysis | Step-by-Step Guide & Examples.” Scribbr, September 6, 2019. Accessed March 20, 2024. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/#:~:text=Thematic%20analysis%20is%20a%20method,meaning%20that%20come%20up%20repeatedly>.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

Upon transcription of the interview, the researcher has done his best to familiarize himself with the answers of the respondents. This was followed by coding to make sure that the data is valid. Grad Coach, Emma in her tutorial video presented that “Coding is a way of making sure that your data is valid. It helps ensure that your analysis undertaken systematically and that other researchers can review it.”<sup>50</sup> Inductive coding technique was used to avoid a predetermined set of codes but allow codes to emerge from the data. *In vivo* coded method was used to quote respondents words to maintain the integrity of their answers and lessen or if possible eliminate the researcher’s own interpretation of the data. It was followed, by line by line coding to be detailed and find the specifics.

Careful analysis was given to the code with code categorization and thematic categorization which finally leads to clearly identifying themes. “This is the part of the analysis that you will find meaning from your data and produce a narrative,”<sup>51</sup> according to Emma in her tutorial video.

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<sup>50</sup> Emma [Grad Coach], “Qualitative Coding Tutorial: How To Code Qualitative Data For Analysis (4 Steps + Examples),” January 27, 2022, accessed March 23, 2024, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MHkVtE\\_sVw&t=202s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MHkVtE_sVw&t=202s).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Results**

This qualitative study explored why is it necessary to have a multisite church model for the Immanuel Christian Fellowship to thrive in reaching and serving its eight congregations and the future church plants in ministering to Japan. To probe this topic, the following research questions were asked:

1. How does a multisite church model look to you?
2. What do you think are the advantages of the multisite church model for your church?
3. What are the challenges that you have experienced in your present set-up?
4. What do you think are the possible solutions to the challenges that you are facing?

Transcription, coding, themes were used for a thorough thematic analysis that will make an objective interview and validity of result. Relevant excerpts from the interviews were organized according to the questions that prompted them, forming the basis for coding. The codes, generated themes and the analytical themes are in the appendix. The comprehensive visual coding framework, serving as the foundation for analysis is presented in the next page. The general transcription record is also included in the appendix.

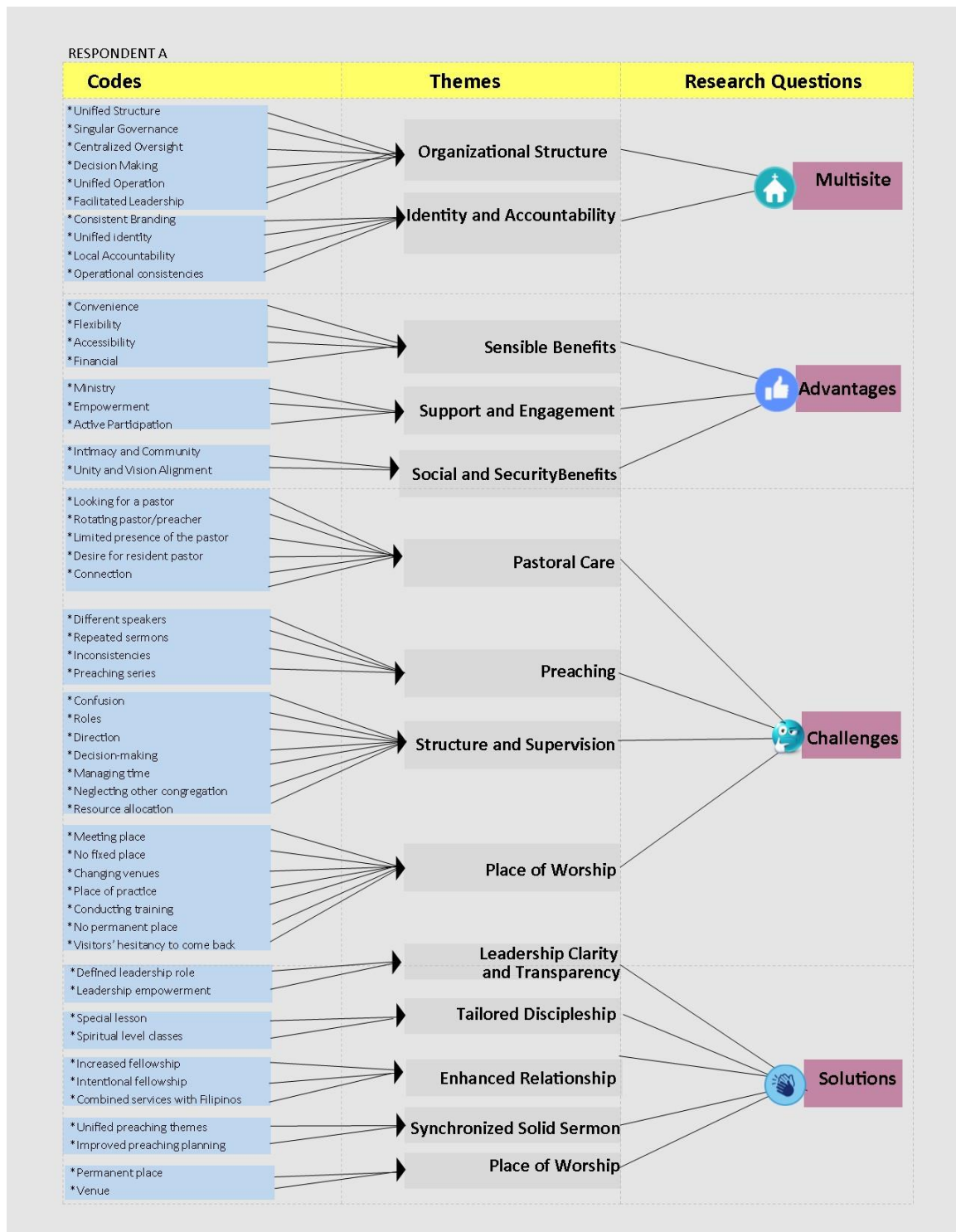


Figure 4: “Visual Coding Framework” for Immanuel

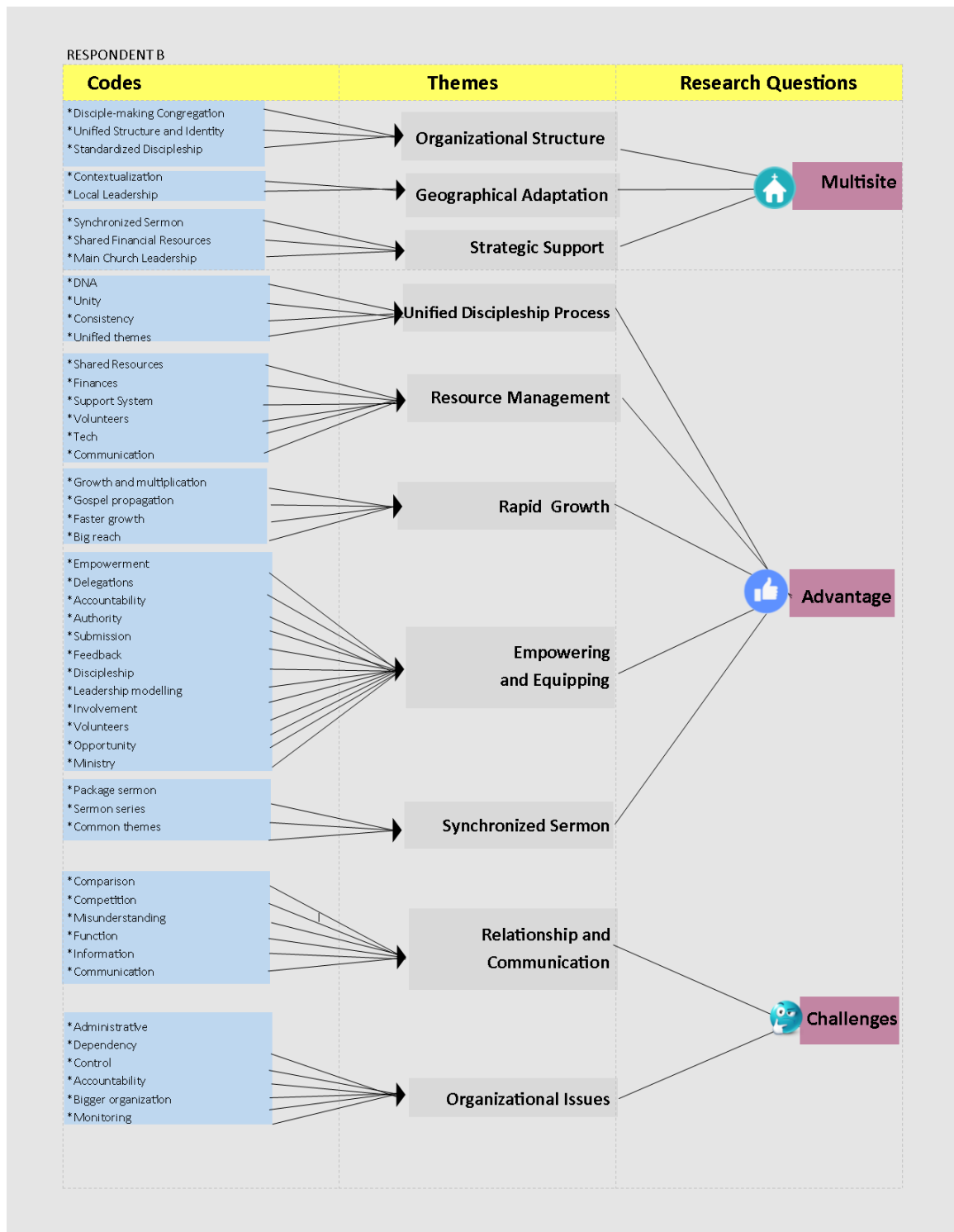


Figure 5: “Visual Coding Framework” for Mega Pastors

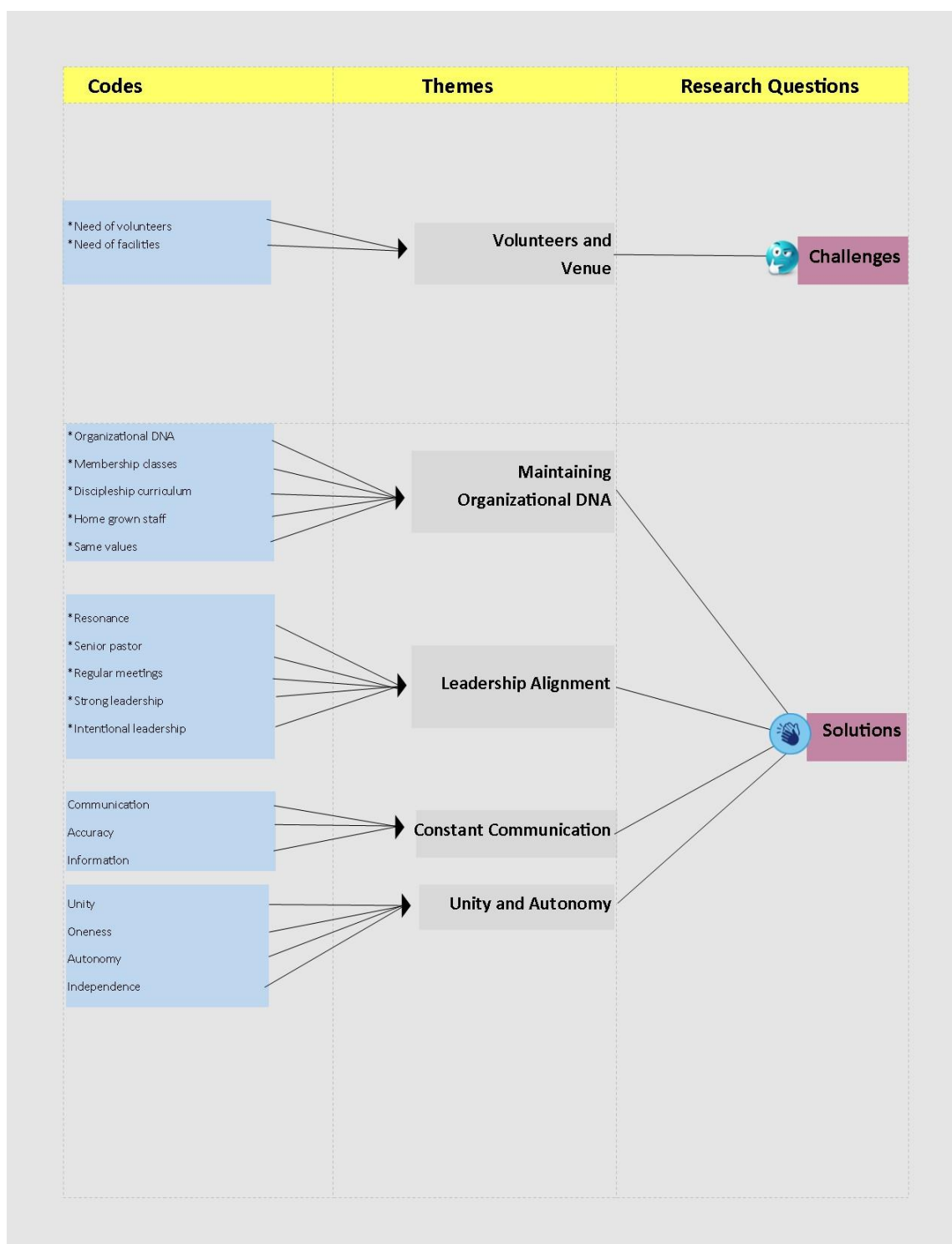


Figure 6 (Continuation): “Visual Coding Framework” for Mega Church Pastors



### Multisite Church

Let us revisit the definition of a multisite church. It is described as one church in multiple locations, “connected by a budget, brand, and board. They share a theology, vision, and philosophy of ministry, as well as the administrative mechanism for coordinating their work together.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, multisite means one church with one brand, one board and one budget. The initial inquiry posed to respondents, "How does a multisite church look to you?" aims to assess whether they share a common understanding or hold diverse interpretations or experiences of this model. Through their responses, we aim to ascertain the extent to which respondents align with the anticipated concept of multisite churches. Below are the findings.

**A. Immanuel Respondents** – The key themes derived from the coded responses of the participants include organizational structure, identity and accountability. The identified codes are as follows:

Organizational Structure	Identity and Accountability
Unified Structure Singular Governance Centralized Oversight Decision Making Unified Operation Facilitated Leadership	Consistent Branding Unified identity Local Accountability Operational consistencies

1. Organizational Structure – The common answer is that there is one church in multiple locations with the same DNA. Im1 said, “It is one church in multiple locations.” For Im2, “One church meeting in multiple locations, has a common leadership, vision and board. Im3, “There is only one church in different locations, one system, one DNA and supposedly one pastor.” Im5 answered, one church in different location. It is like Victory or CCF.” The background of Im5 is CCF church which is why she has a familiar picture. The respondents' answers were unsurprising, considering that the church recently hosted a seminar on the multisite church, which was

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<sup>52</sup> Leeman, “MultiChurch a More Biblical Version of Multisite?”

conducted twice: once in January and again in February. On the other hand this will be tested with the other three questions whether the statement is ideal but not experiential.

Moreover, Im6 stated the picture of a department store with many branches. Im7 answered from the perspective of a previous experience when he said, “We have a senior pastor overseeing the congregation and the local pastor for the local congregation.” Im8 has a picture of a Filipino church scattered in Nagoya with unified leadership. He is seeing it from the perspective of Immanuel Japanese church.

2. Identity and accountability – It has the same branding and accountable to Main church or senior pastor. Im1 commented the sense of accountability. Since the church is still small the leaders know the people and there is the intimate relationship. Im3 believes that the sense of belongingness in a bigger body is evident. He said further, “they may be in a different location, but they belong to one church.” Im5 said that “unified leadership will help to avoid breakaway group.”

Overall the essence of the multisite church was captured in the definition based on the codes and themes. Multisite church for the Immanuel leaders is about the same organizational structure with a clear identity and accountability.

**B. Mega Church Pastor Respondents** - The key themes derived from the coded responses of the participants include organizational structure, geographical adaptation, and strategic support. The identified codes are as follows:

Organizational Structure	Geographical Adaptation	Strategic Support
Disciple-making Congregation Unified Structure and Identity Standardized Discipleship	Contextualization Local Leadership	Synchronized Sermon Shared Financial Resources Main Church Leadership

1. Organizational structure - It is one church in multiple locations with the same DNA but not necessarily one senior pastor for all the satellite churches. It is obvious that the definition of a multisite church varies according to the multisite church model that they are running. The demographics of the respondents served as valuable indicators of the factors influencing their responses. For example, Mega 1 and Mega 3 have the same full meaning of multisite. Mega1 said, "It is one church with the same DNA, leadership, and budget." Mega3 claims, "It is one church with more than 100 satellite churches." What he meant is literally one church, for it has only one senior pastor who is like the face of the franchise or church. The sermon is even livestreamed in all satellite churches." While Mega 2 says that, mentioned that it is one church with different leaders and resident pastor. Mega4 mentions that it is one church in different locations with own local senior pastor and leaders. Four respondents agree as one church with the same DNA but varies in the area of senior pastor leadership. Each church has its own senior pastor.

Nevertheless, a prevalent theme among the respondents is the organizational structure, which is strongly oriented toward intentional discipleship.

2. Geographical adaptation - Program and discipleship approach is tailored on the geographical context. It is contextually friendly as they implement the church's programs, they tailor them to fit geographical context. Mega1 noted that certain programs in their centers may not be replicated elsewhere. Mega2 underscores the role of local leaders. He even said further that, "it has the same name but has autonomy by having their own local pastor and church board." On the other hand, Mega3 mentioned using trained breakout group leaders to facilitate reflection on the livestreamed sermon, ensuring adaptation to the local context. Geographical adaptation makes the centralization and oneness with a touch of autonomy and effectively meeting the needs of the congregation.

3. Strategic Support – Each group benefits from strategic support in areas such as technology, communication, and program delivery. What particularly stands out across all groups, in addition to centralized leadership, is the synchronized delivery of sermons or sermon series. This uniformity is noteworthy, especially considering that not all groups operate as fully multisite; some are hybrid or transitioning into networks of churches. This shared attribute serves as their solid common ground regarding the advantages or key factors contributing to the success of the multisite approach.

Mega1 stated that there are more resources in terms of finances and available volunteers. In terms of volunteers, Mega2 said that there is a ministry support and the pastor leading the satellite is not alone. Mega3 said that empowerment and delegations are experienced. Mega4 highlighted that there are more resources with the discipleship materials and church planting effort. Tech and communication are also given.

**C. Comparison** – The difference between Respondent A and Respondent B is that for B, the importance of strategic support in terms of sermon preparation, discipleship methods or materials, and geographical adaptation makes the multisite church work effectively. This is understandable since strategic support is still evolving at the Immanuel church.

### **Advantage**

The question on this point is for Immanuel to prompt reflection and appreciation about the multisite model for. They may even acknowledge the wisdom behind the church model that the present leadership is using to make the ministry of the church grow and thrive. Let us then identify that advantages that they are experiencing.

**A. Immanuel Respondents** - The key themes derived from the coded responses of the participants include sensible benefits, support engagement and social and spiritual benefits. The identified codes are as follows:

Sensible Benefits	Support and Engagement	Social Benefits
Convenience Flexibility Accessibility Financial	Ministry Empowerment Active Participation	Intimacy Community

1. Sensible benefits – The practical benefits are convenience, flexibility, accessibility and shared financial resources. The respondents acknowledge the advantage of bringing the church near their place. Im1 said that “the place of worship is accessible to the place of members.” Im7 reminded the researcher of his firsthand experience of calling him to inquire about the location of the church. He was immediately referred to the nearest Immanuel, which is less than two kilometers from their place. In addition, Im6 mentions that if you meet someone, you can just ask her or his address and refer her or him to the nearest place or church. Im8 agrees when he says that “you can bring people to where they are since the church is all over the place.” About flexibility. Im3 mentioned that Immanuel can start a new congregation in different places which does not require a full-time pastor.

Regarding finances, Im3 reiterated that centralization of funds can be an advantage regardless of the number of members or income. Im6 says, “We can help each other,” pertaining to the centralization of funds. Im8 acknowledges, “Supporting each other in financing and helping smaller churches.”

2. Support and engagement - The multisite model enables efficient resource deployment across different congregations. Pastors can oversee multiple congregations, aided by trained volunteers who play essential roles in ministry activities. Im4 confirms this by saying, “Pastoral team takes

care of the churches with the help of volunteer preachers. By doing that, we can still do other functions such as trainings and teachings.” Im6 claims that, “We are empowered. When pastors are not around, we can decide and exercise leadership.” Im7 mentions, “The division of this ministry is manageable.” Moreover, it also fosters a collaborative and supportive environment where congregations work together to achieve the church's mission and vision. Im8 says, “The help of leadership volunteers are extended to all churches.”

3. Social benefits – There is intimacy and a sense of community. Since the congregations are still small, there is a sense of “intimate relationship since it is small,” according to Im1. Im7 says the congregation is “easy to manage since the congregation is still small. This was also highlighted by Mega2 pastor when he said, “multisite is good for small churches.” This is true since our common statement is that the bigger we are, the smaller we should be. Intimacy and a sense of community are indeed experienced. Im8 mentions that meeting different church members for fellowship and friendship is one of the advantages.

About the overall advantages, Dotts mentioned the 7 Little-Known Advantages of Multisite Churches which the researcher also quoted in the literature review. Here are the 7 advantages and the experience of Immanuel.

- ✓ They enable untapped talent to emerge - This is true in our experience. The discovery of talent and involvement by our volunteers came from our different congregations, which would have been difficult to do if we had only a single location.
- ✓ They improve stewardship resources - Our unified resources have been a blessing to the entire organization. We could pay the salaries of pastors, rent buildings, and take care of the operation of the ministry. We could give more to missions.
- ✓ They enjoy the benefits of both big and small churches - We know that each congregation is a part of a larger group when it is combined. The sense of being big, although we have small congregations, has been an encouragement to all.
- ✓ They help struggling churches thrive – There is strength in numbers. The struggling churches are recovering and thriving.
- ✓ They create a platform for intentional discipleship – The intentional discipleship is centralized, including our training, curriculum, and accountability that pertains to it. Everyone is on the same page.
- ✓ They protect against cult personality – The leadership is diverse. Alongside the senior pastor, there is a dynamic team consisting of pastors and lay preachers who take turns

delivering sermons. Immanuel does not use video messages. The leadership is composed of a church board and committees.

- ✓ They foster an evangelistic strategy<sup>53</sup> – This is also true for Immanuel. In fact, there are even two church plantings in the pipeline

**B. Mega Church Pastor Respondents** - The key themes derived from the coded responses of the participants include unified discipleship process, resource management, rapid growth, empowering and equipping and synchronized sermon. The identified codes are as follows:

Unified Discipleship Process	Resource Management	Rapid Growth	Empowering and Equipping	Synchronized Sermon
DNA Unity Consistency Unified themes	Shared resources Finances Support system Volunteers Tech Communication	Growth and multiplication Gospel propagation Faster growth Big reach	Empowerment Delegations Accountability Authority Submission Feedback Discipleship Leadership modelling Involvement Volunteers Opportunity Ministry	Package sermon Sermon series Common themes

1. Unified Discipleship Process – The key is the same DNA with unified discipleship program. Mega1 mentions that propagating consistent values, vision, and mission statement is one of the advantages. One church is a beautiful picture of unity. The central office is the one taking care of the staff. Mega4 says, “Common theme for all churches” is also one of the advantages. Im3 mentions that oneness of values especially submission to authority exists. The common essential is intentional discipleship.

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<sup>53</sup> Dotts, "7 Little-Known Advantages of Multisite Churches."

2. Resource management – Effective utilization, allocation, and oversight of various resources within an organization to achieve its objectives is the key. Since this churches are massive, they have a strategic support in all of their programs whether in discipleship, communication, tech, church plantings and rolling out of programs. Mega3 highlighted their superb technology, the communications department who are even from the corporate world and excellent in what they do. This strategic resource management fosters growth. In the literature review, Catchings said, "The primary factors that advanced multisite churches are economics, advanced mobility of the population and technological breakthroughs." The researcher can really attest to the growth of this church due to this aspect.

Furthermore, Mega1 commented that there are more resources in terms of finances, available volunteers and gifts of people. This is a strategic approach. This was confirmed in the literature review. According to Morgan, the motivation for multisite churches is reaching more people, increasing outreach, maximizing resources, and increasing volunteer engagement. What Morgan highlighted were the core reasons behind Immanuel's adoption of a multisite model. Despite not being a mega church and its smaller size, Immanuel opted for a multisite approach due to several compelling factors.

3. Rapid growth – The spread of the gospel and discipleship growth are experienced. In the literature review, Surratt, Ligon, and Bird boldly claimed that,

The primary motive behind the multi-site approach is to obey the church's God-given directives. The Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37 —39) is to love God and one another, the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18—20) is to make disciples of all nations, and the Great Charge (1 Peter 5:1—4) reminds us to involve all believers in ministry.<sup>54</sup>

The same findings echo from the expert perspective. Mega church pastors perceive discipleship and growth as the driving force behind this model. Mega3 asserts, "The spread of the

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<sup>54</sup> Surratt, Ligon, and Bird's, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations*.



gospel is faster because of multisite.” Mega4 emphasizes that, “More people in different geographical locations in the metropolis and provinces” are being ministered to. In fact, their numbers have more than doubled, especially after the pandemic. Mega3 added that “Discipleship systems are the prime mover, which is why the multiplication of satellites has a faster growth rate. Satellite churches become organic. It starts with a small group of people until it becomes big and eventually becomes a satellite church.”

This successful approach has its own criticism. In the literature review, Riddle argues that the multisite church is more pragmatic than biblical. It is just like a Starbucks coffee that has many franchises across the area. This can be viewed that way as multisite church is a paradigm shift from a traditional church. On the other hand Gear argues its Biblical precedence of a single church meeting in multiple locations, citing Acts 8:1; 11:22; 15:4. In addition, Allison and Brad quoted the Nicene Creed as one and apostolic church.

4. Empowering and Equipping – Having more people means having more volunteers. Equipping and empowerment are inseparable. Such is the case in the context of this multisite mega churches. Mega3 states that there are more volunteers. Mega4 says that “more involvement opportunities for the members. As Morgan said, that the motivation for multisite is” increasing volunteer engagement.” This rings true, as the researcher has personally attended these churches and was impressed by the extensive involvement of people in ministry activities.

5. Synchronized sermon – The compelling discovery of the researcher is that there is a 100 percent commonality among all these churches: a systematic and synchronized sermon across all the satellites. “Mega1 says, “Our church has a centralized sermon that is preached by the senior pastor or center pastors in all centers.” Mega2 says, “Sermon series are the same.” Mega3 says, “The message of the senior pastor is live streamed on all the satellite churches.” Mega4 even says that they have sermon package which includes scriptures, outline, the theme of the sermon and video promotion. Synchronized preaching is deemed crucial and is consistently practiced across

all their satellite locations, whether through livestreaming by the senior pastor or an empowered worker delivering the same sermon. The concept revolves around ensuring continuity, where regardless of one's location or travel plans, attending the nearest satellite church guarantees access to the same sermon series. As articulated by Mega4, this setup allows for those who travel a lot while maintaining a cohesive church experience with consistent sermons.

**C. Comparisons** – The Immanuel respondents rely heavily on the sensible benefits such as convenience and accessibility as the top advantage. Remarkably, preaching was not mentioned. Whereas the megachurch pastors has five solid themes in which systematic-synchronized preaching as the equalizer for all the respondents.

### Challenges

There is no perfect model. It has always its own challenges. The researcher found enormous challenges that the Immanuel respondents gave.

**A. Immanuel Respondents** – The key themes derived from the coded responses of the participants include sensible benefits, support engagement and social and spiritual benefits. The identified codes are as follows:

Pastoral Care	Preaching	Structure and Supervision	Place of Worship
Looking for a pastor Rotating pastor/ preacher Limited presence of the pastor Desire for resident pastor Connection	Different speakers Repeated sermons Inconsistencies Preaching series	Confusion Roles Direction Decision-making Managing time Neglecting other congregation Resource allocation	Meeting place No fixed place Changing venues Place of practice Conducting training No permanent place Visitors' hesitancy to come back

1. Pastoral Care – The problem with pastoral care is undeniably visible. This is what the researcher discovered. The codes above are clear indication of this concern. All respondents except for Im4 mentioned about this concern. See the excerpt below:

- ✓ Im1: People are looking for a pastor (a resident pastor), not just a site/congregation leader.
- ✓ Im2: Pastoral care lacks depth of experience since there is no resident pastor. As humans, we are relational beings, and we want a tangible person that we can run to and confide in.
- ✓ Im3: Some people who came from traditional church are adjusting. They used to see their pastors every Sunday before but not in multisite.
- ✓ Im4: It is hard to settle your heart. Connection with people especially that I am a relational guy.
- ✓ Im5: We cannot identify with the preacher.
- ✓ Im6: Deeper fellowship of people with pastors. They would like to talk to the pastors longer, but the pastor's time is limited since they need to go to another preaching area. There are also sentiments that the pastor is only close to the leaders and not to the members.
- ✓ Im7: The presence of the pastor is not much felt due to the rotation.
- ✓ Im8: Enough time is not being given by the pastors to address the needs of the members, especially on Sunday

This is alarming and should be addressed, given that all of them are experiencing this sad reality. Im6 confirms the opinion of Gear in related literature review about the disconnection and unequal attention of the pastor towards everyone. Gear contends that, "Caring for the flock may not be equally experienced, which may lead to disconnection and feeling overlooked."<sup>55</sup>

2. Preaching – The current multisite setup at Immanuel raises alarm, particularly with regard to preaching. The codes were validated based on the interview. See the excerpt below:

- ✓ Im2: Different preachers.
- ✓ Im2: Sermons are repeated.
- ✓ Im3: Inconsistency of preaching content and style. Sermon series of preacher is a challenge. Preaching is not commendable.
- ✓ Im4: The preaching rotation and connection with people.
- ✓ Im5: Preachers go on rotation. Difficulty in identifying with the preacher.
- ✓ Im7: There is no preaching series. Preachers are jumping from one topic to another due to rotation.

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<sup>55</sup> Greear's, "Is Multi-Site A Biblically Sound Model?."

This aspect was not mentioned in the “advantage” section, which did not even mention preaching as an advantage. This is far from the multisite experience of the megachurch pastor that the researcher interviewed. One of their strengths as a multisite church is their cohesive and consistent preaching across the satellite churches.

3. Structure and Supervision – The basic strength of the multisite church according based on the interview from the mega pastors is in the area of structure and supervision. This is another concern for Immanuel. See the excerpt below:

- ✓ Im1: Lack of submission to the leader of the site/congregation. Confusion about where to go for direction, advice, or decision-making. It is a new concept for them of having a site or congregation leader apart from the pastor. Delegations of responsibility. Multitasking of the volunteers.
- ✓ Im2: There is a problem with communication since the area is far away.
- ✓ Im3: For three or more pastors or preachers in the multisite, the roles should be defined to avoid problems of overlapping responsibilities or underperformance because of unclear expectations. The role of preachers and laymen too. It should be differentiated too in order to avoid miscommunication.
- ✓ Im7: More congregations, more needs, and more resources need to be distributed.

Roles and responsibilities should be defined. A clear organizational chart and function should be addressed.

4. Place of worship – The impact of the respondents' answers concerning the challenges is connected to having a permanent place of worship. See the excerpt below:

- ✓ Im1: Having different locations
- ✓ Im3: You need a meeting place. When you rent, it requires expenses
- ✓ Im5: There is no fixed place. Changing venues is hard. When you invite visitors, the tendency for them to come back is less
- ✓ Im8: There is no permanent place of worship.

Four respondents without a permanent place of worship emphasized the importance of having such a place in their responses.

**B. Mega Church Pastor Respondents** – The actual challenges that the mega churches are facing despite of their success are identified. It is true that mega church, mega challenge as well. The

key themes derived from the coded responses of the participants include relationship and communications, organizational issues, volunteers and venue. The identified codes are as follows:

Relationship and Communication	Organizational Issues	Volunteers and Venue
Comparison Competition Misunderstanding Control Function Information Communication	Administrative Dependency Control Accountability Bigger organization Monitoring	Need of volunteers Need of facilities

1. Relationship and communication – Relationship is important to maintain cohesion and understanding. Mega1 highlighted the unhealthy comparisons, misunderstanding, competition and see things according to their perspective. Mega3 agrees that relaying and accuracy of information and rollout of the programs can be challenging. This is understandable for these two mega congregations are in full multisite model.

2. Organizational Issues - Mega2 highlighted the problem of control and monitoring since the organization is already big for the Main church to oversee it. Mega2 also sees that “Satellite pastors do not exercise full pastoral function since they are dependent to the Main church. People might also rely on the personality of the preacher. “This point is supported by Allison and Brad. They said, "Tensions develop as churches seek to balance centralized authority and governance with the desire to contextualize the gospel to local congregations and give greater freedom to local leadership.”

3. Volunteers and Venue – Remarkably, Mega4 was the sole respondent to point out this issue, stating, "There's a constant demand for volunteers, especially pastors, and there's a pressing need for facilities and buildings for worship services due to overflowing of attendees." While the researcher found only one respondent in this theme, it does not mean that this is not a challenge

for others. The researcher could have asked this issue to the other respondents but the direction of the interview focused on other things. Nevertheless, the researcher include this as one of the themes since much of the answer of Mega4 was about this issue.

**C. Comparisons** – Immanuel’s focus is more on the pastoral, preaching, permanent place of worship, and clear structure, which includes a defined role for pastors and leaders in the congregation. On the contrary, mega church pastors concern are more of the organizational issues, relationship and communication given the magnitude of the scope of their ministry. Monitoring, communication and accountability were the primary component of the challenge.

### Solutions

If there are challenges, there are also solutions. Respondents were provided with the opportunity to think of potential solutions based on the challenges they had articulated or any ideas that came to mind during the questioning process.

**A. Immanuel Respondents** – The researcher empowers and encourage Immanuel respondents to take ownership of the problem, think of solutions and engage in critical analysis. The key themes derived from the coded responses of the participants include leadership clarity and transparency, tailored discipleship, community relationship, consistent preaching and place of worship. The identified codes are as follows:

Leadership Clarity and Transparency	Tailored Discipleship Lessons	Enhanced Relationship	Synchronized Solid Sermon	Place of Worship
Defined leadership role Leadership empowerment	Special lesson Spiritual level classes	Increased fellowship Intentional fellowship Combined services with Filipinos	Unified preaching themes Improved preaching planning	Permanent place Venue

1. Leadership clarity and transparency – Im1 says, “Educate people about the roles of the leader and the pastor. Understanding the chain of command.” For Im7, he talks about the financial aspect by saying, “Let the congregation know about the financial situation, not just the leaders or board.” He adds, “Look for efficient ways of distributing resources.” These two comments boil down to clarity and transparency. A job description should be given to the leaders. Also, the information about finances should not end only with the leaders but with the members as well. Since Immanuel is in one church, one budget model, a budget mechanism for appropriation should be well crafted. So far, the budget mechanism of Immanuel is according to the percentage for appropriation. The stewardship goal is not to spend more than the congregation is making. But at the same time, be a blessing and be generous to other congregations.

2. Tailored discipleship – Im2 suggests a stewardship lessons for their particular congregation to teach those who are permanent in their area. Im3 says that, “We need to group the people into classes in order to deal with them according to their spiritual level.” The blue print of effective multisite model is well thought discipleship program. This has been evident to the Respondent B which will be articulated in the Respondent B section under “Solutions.”

3. Enhanced Relationship – Many respondents expressed their desire for fellowship. Below are the excerpt:

- ✓ Im3: Make connection to the people. Spent longer time for pastors in their monthly rotation rather than be assigned for the next church. If we can join two congregations together which is near each other to lessen the rotation.
- ✓ Im4: More fellowship. Like food fellowship, creating events like birthday, farewell party. By doing this people will stay.
- ✓ Im5: Enhance the fellowship by having more fellowship after the worship service. Eating together, like we did before.
- ✓ Im6: Have an intentional time of fellowship for the members. It should not be done on Sunday. Like BBQ fellowship, the pastor can have a quality time. She went further and said, the pastor can lead all the CARE groups in the church at least once a month. I think they miss the pastor in the CARE group.
- ✓ Im8: Once a month combined service with the Filipino church would be ideal so that we can also listen to the message from the Filipino pastor. Interpreter is necessary.

The data indicates the strong need for enhanced fellowship with each other: between the pastor and the members, between the Japanese congregation and the Filipino congregation, and an inter-congregation fellowship.

4. Synchronized Solid Sermon – This is the most important discovery of the researcher. It is obvious but there is a failure to address it. The respondents were the one who made it at the top lists for the challenges and the solution. Due to the gravity of this theme, the researcher will include the opinion of the respondents. Below are the excerpts:

- ✓ Im2: The pastoral team should have the same topic of preaching for all Immanuel congregations.
- ✓ Im3: The pastoral team should have the same topic of preaching for all Immanuel congregations.
- ✓ Im4: Preaching and schedule should be considered. It should be planned well.
- ✓ Im5: One preaching theme and series. Preaching should be given a thorough plan. Preachers can be different, provided that there is series and continuity.
- ✓ Im6: In the future, it is important that we can have a preaching series for all congregations
- ✓ Im7: This is not a suggestion, but my prayer is to have a resident pastor per congregation.
- ✓ Im8: A resident pastor is ideal. Preaching in series will be good since pastors and preachers are in rotation.

Almost all of the respondents except for Im1 have articulated the need for a better preaching plan for the whole congregation. It also conveys the idea of a possible less rotation if not a resident pastor or permanent preacher for connection and relationship.

5. Place of Worship – Venue or permanent place for worship is a struggle. Data underscores the urgency of this issue as half of Immanuel congregations do not have a permanent venue.

Consequently, this solution has been mentioned by the respondents. Im1 says, “Having a permanent place and (need of) transportation of members who are quite far from the church.” Im3 says, “Do not open another congregation yet until we have enough volunteers and place of worship.” Im8 says, “Have a permanent place.”



While all of them did not mention this as one of their solutions, it becomes evident from the challenges faced that one effective approach to support Immanuel in adopting a multisite model is to ensure that each congregation has its own place of worship.

**B. Mega Church Pastor Respondents** – The respondent’s answer is analyzed as the expert opinion for a possible solution that will help Immanuel. The key themes derived from the coded responses of the participants include maintaining organizational DNA, leadership alignment, constant communication and unity and solutions. The identified codes are as follows:

Maintaining Organizational DNA	Leadership Alignment	Constant Communication	Unity and Autonomy
Organizational DNA Membership classes Discipleship curriculum Home grown staff Same values	Resonance Senior pastor Regular meetings Strong leadership Intentional leadership	Communication Accuracy Information	Unity Oneness Autonomy Independence

1. Maintaining DNA – Volbeda argues that maintaining DNA and the autonomy of a particular congregation is important. He gave a warning that, “Failure to manage this tension can be catastrophic.” Such is the opinion Mega1. He articulates that, “DNA should be maintained. Membership classes and discipleship curriculum are important to preserve the DNA.” He even advises to “look for staff should be at least home grown or interviewed well with the same values.” Mega2 on the other hand said, “Strong discipleship is important in the multisite church,” while Mega3 says, “Strong discipleship system is important.”

2. Leadership alignment – This is crucial to ensure everyone is aligned and unified to prevent any splintering within the multisite. The role of the senior pastor or the senior leadership is vital. Surratt, Ligon and Bird said, that "the role of campus pastor is a paramount factor in whether a new campus grows or dies" What it means is that by catching the vision of the senior pastor and

the organization, the congregation pastor/leader implements it. This is indeed supported with the opinions of Respondent B, who is treated as expert practitioners.

Mega1 echoes, “Alignment and resonance.” He further says, “The senior pastor should mentor the senior team so that they can mentor their assigned congregation.” In addition, “The Campus/center pastor should represent the senior pastor. They should be aligned. The key word is trust. Mutual respect is important. For Mega2, he cited the need for a “strong leader who founded the church and disciplined the leaders of the church.”

3. Constant Communication – Since this model is about multiple locations, constant communication is important to disperse information and adopt the overall church program.

Mega1 says, “Meeting of key leaders or the center team” is vital. In fact, “The senior pastor should mentor the senior team (pastoral team) so that they can mentor their assigned congregation.” Mega3 says that, “a strong communication team (is vital). They are in charge to emails and social media.”

4. Unity and Autonomy – There is a delicate balance between the two to make it work. There is unity in many aspect but each congregation is still unique. The researcher mentioned in the review of related literature that “The board, or central leadership who is the overall authority that takes care of the whole organization should know its role and recognize also the input and innovations of local leadership. Micromanagement and macromanagement synergy are necessary to at least achieve balance.” Mega2 advises that, “Look forward for multisite but encourage them to be independent after five years. Lead the word of God so that they will grow in God’s word and do not depend on others.”

**C. Comparison** – Both groups share common themes such as leadership clarity and discipleship. They differ in their emphasis. Respondent A’s answers were geared towards addressing pressing operational concerns while Respondent B addresses strategic insights for long-term sustainability and growth.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter will conclude the study by summarizing the key findings in relation to the research aims and questions as well as the contribution. It will review the limitations of the study and suggest direction for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

After a thorough analysis of the interview data, the following significant findings emerge from the results obtained.

#### **1. Perception of a multisite model**

##### **1.1 Respondent A: Immanuel**

1.1a. Organizational Structure – The common answer is that there is one church in multiple locations with the same DNA.

1.1b. Identity and Accountability – It has the same branding and accountable to Main church or senior pastor.

##### **1.2. Respondent B: Mega Church Pastor**

1.2a. Organizational Structure – It is one church in multiple locations with the same DNA but not necessarily one senior pastor for all the satellite churches.

1.2b. Geographical Adaptation – Program and discipleship approach is tailored on the geographical context.

1.2c. Strategic Support - Each group benefits from strategic support in areas such as technology, communication, and program delivery.

1.3. Comparison – The difference between Respondent A and Respondent B is that for B, the importance of strategic support in terms of sermon preparation, discipleship methods or materials, and geographical adaptation makes the multisite church work effectively.

## **2. The Advantages of the Multisite Church Model**

### **1.1. Respondent A: Immanuel**

1.1a. Sensible Benefits - The practical benefits are convenience, flexibility, accessibility and shared financial resources.

1.1b. Support and Engagement - The multisite model enables efficient resource deployment across different congregations.

### **1.2. Respondent B: Mega Church Pastors**

1.1a. Unified Discipleship Process - The key is the same DNA with unified discipleship program.

1.1b. Resource Management - Effective utilization, allocation, and oversight of various resources within an organization to achieve its objectives is the key.

1.1c. Rapid Growth - The spread of the gospel and discipleship growth are experienced.

1.1d. Empowering and Equipping - More people means more volunteer.

Equipping and empowerment are inseparable.

1.1e. Synchronized Sermon - A systematic and synchronized sermon across all the satellites.

1.3. Comparison – Preaching was not mentioned at all by Respondent A, while the systematic-synchronized sermon served as the equalizer for Respondent B.

### **3. The challenges experienced in the present set-up**

#### **1.1. Responded A: Immanuel**

1.1a. Pastoral Care - The problem with pastoral care is undeniably visible.

1.1b. Preaching - The current multisite setup at Immanuel raises alarm, particularly with regard to preaching.

1.1c. Structure and Supervision - The multisite setup at Immanuel lacks alignment with the successful multisite church model characterized by solid structure and supervision.

1.1d. Place of Worship – No permanent place of worship.

#### **1.2. Respondent B: Mega Church Pastor**

1.2a. Relationship and Communication - The extensive network of satellite churches and the size of the organization have posed challenges in nurturing effective communication and maintaining relationships.

1.2b. Organizational Issues - Multisite, multi problem. As the organization has

expanded in size, it has encountered significant organizational challenges as a natural consequence of its growth.

1.2c. Volunteers and Venue - This is a good problem. As the organization grows, there is a corresponding need for more volunteers and larger or additional venues.

C. Comparison – Immanuel faces numerous challenges as it continues to find its footing, whereas mega church pastors contend more with organizational and relational challenges stemming from their phenomenal growth.

#### **4. The Solutions to the challenges encountered by the multisite church**

##### **1.1. Respondent A: Immanuel**

1.1a. Leadership Clarity - Pastors and leaders should have clearly defined roles, and financial reports should consistently be provided not only to the leaders but also to the members.

1.1b. Tailored Discipleship - Discipleship classes should be categorized according to the needs and proficiency levels of the members.

1.1c. Enhanced Relationship - The data indicates the strong need for enhanced fellowship with each other.

1.1d. Synchronized-Solid Sermon - The data strongly supports the necessity for a synchronized and cohesive sermon for Immanuel.

1.1e. Place of worship - Venue or permanent place for worship is a struggle.

##### **1.2. Respondent B: Mega Church Pastors**

- 1.1a. Maintaining Organizational DNA - The core values, vision, and practices that define the identity and mission of the church should be maintained and passed along.
- 1.1b. Leadership alignment - This is crucial to ensure everyone is aligned and unified to prevent any splintering within the multisite.
- 1.1c. Constant Communication - Since this model is about multiple locations, constant communication is important to disperse information and adopt the overall church program.
- 1.1d. Unity and Autonomy - A delicate balance between the two is essential for the successful operation of the multisite church.
- 1.3. Comparison - Respondent A focused on immediate operational issues, whereas Respondent B provided strategic insights aimed at long-term sustainability and growth.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis revealed several significant insights regarding the perception of multisite models, the advantages they offer, the challenges they face and the solution they provide. Based in the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

Firstly, the perception of multisite models varied between respondents, with differences observed in organizational structure, identity, and strategic support. Notably, while preaching was emphasized by Respondent B, it was notably absent in the discussion of Respondent A, highlighting contrasting perspectives on this aspect.

Secondly, the multisite church model were explored, revealing practical benefits such as convenience and shared resources, as well as strategic strengths like unified discipleship and resource management. However, challenges were also identified, particularly in areas such as pastoral care, preaching, and organizational alignment.

Thirdly, the potential solutions to these challenges were proposed, including clarifying leadership roles, tailoring discipleship programs, synchronized-solid sermons, enhancing communication, and establishing permanent places of worship. Additionally, maintaining organizational values, ensuring leadership alignment, nurturing constant communication, and balancing unity with autonomy were highlighted as crucial strategies for success

Fourthly, based on the data and the primary aim of this capstone project to determine if the multisite model is worth pursuing to have an effective and thriving ministry in reaching and serving its eight congregations and the potential future church plants. The answer is yes, with due consideration of the recommended solutions proposed by both respondents. As asserted by Suratt, Ligon, and Bird, the question of whether the multisite model can apply to small churches receives a resounding "yes." They argued that this is possible provided that you can answer these three questions which are: How healthy is your church? Is there a driving impetus behind your desire to go multi-site? Are the key leaders behind the decision? It will fall under church health and leadership alignment.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Suratt, Ligon, and Bird's, *The Multi-Site Church Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations*.



### **Recommendations**

Based on the results and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are offered: (1) It is hoped that Immanuel leaders will listen to the challenges mentioned such as enhancing pastoral care and the possible solutions referenced such as synchronized-solid preaching, having a permanent place of worship, and leadership alignment. (2) Immanuel leaders are encouraged to draw insights from experts like mega church pastors, who have proposed four key solutions to enhance the thriving of the multisite church model. These solutions encompass maintaining organizational DNA, ensuring leadership alignment, nurturing constant communication, and promoting unity and autonomy. (3) Future research is recommended to conduct parallel studies to investigate the importance of synchronized and solid sermons across all locations for the success of multisite churches as confirmed by this research and prior research endeavors. Moreover, researchers could explore the variations in pastoral care experiences between mega multisite churches and smaller multisite churches such as Immanuel.

## APPENDIX A

### LETTER FOR IMMANUEL LEADERS

March 9, 2024

Complete Name:

Address:

Dear Respondent,

Konnichiwa, a pleasant day to you.

I am in the final stage of my Master of Divinity degree at Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (<https://apnts.edu.ph/>). One of the final requirements is the capstone project. The area of my research is about our church. My thesis is “A Multisite Church Model for Immanuel to Thrive in the Growing Ministry.” The statement of the problem is: “Why is it necessary to have a multisite church model for Immanuel Christian Fellowship to thrive in reaching and serving its eight congregations and the future church plants in ministering to Japan?”

You have been chosen as one of my respondents since you are a leader/pastor or represent a particular Immanuel congregation. I am approaching this interview not as the pastor of our church but as a researcher and a student.

To this effect, I would like to request a 40-minute Zoom video interview or in person at your convenience this second or third week of March. The questions will revolve around the following:

1. How does a multisite church model look to you?
2. What do you think are the advantages of the multisite church model for your church?
3. What are the challenges that you have experienced in your present set-up?
4. What do you think are the possible solutions to the challenges that you are facing?

To ensure accuracy, you will be asked for permission to video/audio record the interview. Should you consent to being video or audio recorded, you will be given the opportunity to verify the authenticity of the transcript of the interview once the recordings have been transcribed. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you via email for review at your request. Every piece of information gathered will be kept private. Alpha-numeric codes will be used in place of your name in all notes and transcripts (Seneca Research, 2021).

Study findings will be based on the entire group of participants and not on individual participants. The findings of the study will be presented to my program director, academic dean, capstone project instructor, and adviser during the defense. It may also be published. However, the report of the findings will not include any identifiable information about you.

If you have questions about the validity of this letter, you can contact Dr. Mitchel Modine at [mmodine@apnts.edu.ph](mailto:mmodine@apnts.edu.ph). He is the M.Div. program director of APNTS.

I am looking forward to the interview, and I thank you for the generosity of your time.

In Christ,

Pastor Niño Solito

## APPENDIX B

### LETTER FOR PASTORS OF MULTISITE CHURCH

March 9, 2024

Complete Name:

Address:

Dear Respondent,

Greetings from Nagoya.

I am in the final stage of my Master of Divinity degree at Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (<https://apnts.edu.ph/>). One of the final requirements is the capstone project. The area of my research is according to the expertise of your church, which is a multisite church. My thesis is “A Multisite Church Model for Immanuel to Thrive in the Growing Ministry.” The statement of the problem is: “Why is it necessary to have a multisite church model for Immanuel Christian Fellowship to thrive in reaching and serving its eight congregations and the future church plants in ministering to Japan?”

To this effect, I would like to request a 40-minute Zoom video interview at your convenience this second or third week of March. The questions will revolve around the following:

1. How does a multisite church model look to you?
2. What do you think are the advantages of the multisite church model for your church?
3. What are the challenges that you have experienced in your present set-up?
4. What do you think are the possible solutions to the challenges that you are facing?

To ensure accuracy, you will be asked for permission to video/audio record the interview. Should you consent to being video or audio recorded, you will be given the opportunity to verify the authenticity of the transcript of the interview once the recordings have been transcribed. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you via email for review at your request. Every piece of information gathered will be kept private. Alpha-numeric codes will be used in place of your name in all notes and transcripts (Seneca Research, 2021).

Study findings will be based on the entire group of participants and not on individual participants. The findings of the study will be presented to my program director, academic dean, capstone project instructor, and adviser during the defense. It may also be published. However, the report of the findings will not include any identifiable information about you.

If you have questions about the validity of this letter, you can contact Dr. Mitchel Modine at [mmodine@apnts.edu.ph](mailto:mmodine@apnts.edu.ph). He is the M.Div. program director of APNTS.

I am looking forward to the interview, and I thank you for the generosity of your time.

In Christ,

Pastor Niño Solito

## APPENDIX C

### Codes, Themes and Analytical Themes

RESPONDENT A		
Codes	Themes	Analytical Themes
Unified Structure Singular Governance Centralized Oversight Decision Making Unified Operation Facilitated Leadership Consistent Branding Unified identity Local Accountability Operational consistencies	<b>Organizational Structure</b> Unified Structure Singular Governance Centralized Oversight Decision Making Unified Operation Facilitated Leadership <b>Identity and Accountability</b> Consistent Branding Unified identity Local Accountability Operational consistencies	Multisite
Convenience Flexibility Accessibility Financial Ministry Empowerment Active participation Intimacy Community	<b>Sensible Benefits</b> Convenience Flexibility Accessibility Financial <b>Support and Engagement</b> Ministry Empowerment Active Participation <b>Social Benefits</b> Intimacy Community	Advantages
Looking for a pastor Rotating pastor/preacher Limited presence of the pastor Desire for resident pastor Connection Different speakers Repeated sermons Inconsistencies Preaching series Confusion Roles Direction	<b>Pastoral Care</b> Looking for a pastor Rotating pastor/preacher Limited presence of the pastor Desire for resident pastor Connection <b>Preaching</b> Different speakers Repeated sermons Inconsistencies Preaching series	Challenges

Decision-making Managing time Neglecting other congregation Resource allocation Meeting place No fixed place Changing venues Place of practice Conducting training No permanent place Visitors' hesitancy to come back	<b>Structure and Supervision</b> Confusion Roles Direction Decision-making Managing time Neglecting other congregation Resource allocation <b>Place of Worship</b> Meeting place No fixed place Changing venues Place of practice Conducting training No permanent place Visitors' hesitancy to come back	
Defined leadership role Leadership empowerment Special lesson Spiritual level classes Increased fellowship Intentional fellowship Combined services with Filipinos Unified preaching themes Improved preaching planning Resident pastor per congregation Permanent place Venue	<b>Leadership Clarity and Transparency</b> Defined leadership role Leadership empowerment <b>Tailored Discipleship</b> Special lesson Spiritual level classes <b>Enhanced Relationship</b> Increased fellowship Intentional fellowship Combined services with Filipinos <b>Synchronized Solid Sermon</b> Unified preaching themes Improved preaching planning <b>Place of Worship</b> Permanent place Venue	Solutions

RESPONDENT B		
Code	Themes	Analytical Themes
Disciple-making Congregation Unified Structure and Identity Standardized Discipleship Contextualization Local Leadership Synchronized Sermon Shared Financial Resources Main Church Leadership	<b>Organizational Structure</b> Disciple-making Congregation Unified Structure and Identity Standardized Discipleship <b>Identity and Accountability</b> Contextualization Local Leadership <b>Strategic Support</b> Synchronized Sermon Shared Financial Resources Main Church Leadership	Multisite
DNA Unity Consistency Unified themes Shared Resources Finances Support System Volunteers Tech Communication Growth and multiplication Gospel propagation Faster growth Big reach Empowerment Delegations Accountability Authority Submission Feedback Discipleship Leadership modelling Involvement Volunteers Opportunity Ministry Package sermon Sermon series Common themes	<b>Unified Discipleship Process</b> DNA Unity Consistency Unified themes <b>Support and Engagement</b> Ministry Empowerment Active Participation <b>Resource Management</b> Unified themes Unified discipleship process Shared Resources Finances Support System Volunteers Tech Communication <b>Rapid Growth</b> Growth and multiplication Gospel propagation Faster growth Big reach <b>Empowering and Equipping</b> Empowerment Delegations Accountability Authority Submission Feedback Discipleship Leadership modelling	Advantages

	Involvement Volunteers Opportunity Ministry <b>Synchronized Sermon</b> Package sermon Sermon series Common themes	
Comparison Competition Misunderstanding Function Information Communication Administrative Dependency Control Accountability Bigger organization Monitoring Need of volunteers Need of facilities	<b>Relationship and Communication</b> Comparison Competition Misunderstanding Function Information Communication <b>Organizational Issues</b> Administrative Dependency Control Accountability Bigger organization Monitoring <b>Volunteers and Venue</b> Need of volunteers Need of facilities	Challenges

Organizational DNA Membership classes Discipleship curriculum Home grown staff Same values Resonance Senior pastor Regular meetings Strong leadership Intentional leadership Communication Accuracy Information Unity Oneness Autonomy Independence	<b>Maintaining Organizational DNA</b> Organizational DNA Membership classes Discipleship curriculum Home grown staff Same values <b>Leadership Alignment</b> Resonance Senior pastor Regular meetings Strong leadership Intentional leadership <b>Constant communication</b> Communication Accuracy Information <b>Unity and Autonomy</b> Unity Oneness Autonomy Independence	Solutions
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## APPENDIX D

### Excerpt and Codes

<b>Respondent A: Answers</b>	
Questions #1: How does a multisite church model look to you?	
Excerpt from transcript	Initial Code
<p>Im1: It is one church in multiple locations. It has many locations. It has different many branches with one mission, one vision and one budget. It has also one board.</p> <p>Im2: One church meeting in multiple locations. It has a common leadership, vision, and board.</p> <p>Im3: In a multisite, there is only one church in different locations. One system, one DNA, and supposedly one pastor.</p> <p>Im5: It is one church in different location. Since it a multisite church model, they have the same branding, practices just like CCF and Victory.</p>	<p>Unified Structure</p> <p>Unified Leadership</p> <p>Unified identity</p> <p>Singular governance</p> <p>Consistent branding</p>
<p>Im1: Decision making comes to local church with the approval from the mother church. The local pastor is accountable to the senior pastor. There is a sense of accountability</p> <p>Im3: They may be in a different location but they belong to one church.</p> <p>Im4: They have churches without a local pastor. Only key persons that function as facilitators. They have also church with pastors in charge to make a follow up with the livestreamed message.</p> <p>Im7: We have a senior pastor or overseer who takes care of the overall ministry. We have associate pastors who are pastoring the local congregation. The budget is centralized as well and shared with all congregations.</p> <p>Im8: It's a Filipino church scattered around the area with unified leadership.</p>	<p>Local Accountability</p> <p>Facilitated Leadership</p> <p>Centralized Oversight</p> <p>Unified Leadership</p> <p>Same Church, Different Location</p>
<p>Im5: They follow certain themes and series. When you go to satellite churches, you know that it is similar.</p>	<p>Operational Consistencies</p>

Questions #2: What do you think are the advantages of the multisite church model for your church?	
Excerpt from transcript	Initial Code
<p>Im1: The focus is easy since the place is near the place of the leader. The place of worship is also accessible to the place of members.</p> <p>Im3: We can easily start a new congregation in different places. A pastor can manage several congregations and other trained volunteers.</p> <p>Im6: Those who are faraway, it is really to reach. For example if we meet someone, we just ask her address, and we refer the nearest church.</p> <p>Im7: Accommodating people in different places. I experienced it firsthand when I was new. I called the church, and I was referred to the nearest Immanuel church. We bring the church to the people. Accessibility and location have a big advantage.</p> <p>Im8: You can bring people to where they are.</p>	<p>Convenience</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <p>Accessibility</p>
<p>Im3: Regarding finances, they are centralized, and they can be a part of that budget. Regardless of numbers and income, they are carried.</p> <p>Im4: Pastoral team takes care of the churches with volunteer preachers. With the help of the preachers we can still do other functions such as trainings and teachings.</p> <p>Im5: Using the resources wisely.</p> <p>Im6: We support, and share our resources. The same with financial. We can help each other</p> <p>Im8: Supporting each other, especially in financing and helping small churches. The help of leadership and volunteers is extended to all churches.</p>	<p>Ministry</p> <p>Financial</p> <p>Support</p>
<p>Im2: Leaders are empowered to do the great commission. Members are helping out to do the great commission.</p> <p>Im4: Pastoral team takes care of the churches with volunteer preachers. With the help of the preachers we can still do other functions such as trainings and teachings.</p> <p>Im3: A pastor can manage several congregations and other trained volunteers.</p> <p>Im6: We are empowered.</p>	<p>Empowerment</p> <p>Active</p> <p>Participation</p>

Im8: The help of leadership and volunteers is extended to all churches.	
Im1: The leaders know the people since it is small. Intimate relationship since it is small. Im7: Easy to manage since the congregation or cluster is still small. The division of ministry is also manageable. Im8: It is also to meet different church members from different churches for fellowship and friendship.	Intimacy Community
Im1: People are well-discipled. Im5: Unified leadership will help to avoid breakaway group. Having one church board lessens the time for meeting. In terms of budget, it is easy to check and monitor the budget of the congregation in the central leadership. The same discipleship material in which when we meet we can talk about it and relate to one another, although the phasing is different. It has unified mission and vision. Im7: Unity in doctrine and faith yet diversity of people with different backgrounds and upbringings.	Unity Vision Alignment

Questions #3: What are the challenges that you have experienced in your present set-up?	
Excerpt from transcript	Initial Code
Im1: People are looking for a pastor, not just the site/congregation leader. Im2: Desire for a resident pastor for deeper care. Im2: Pastoral care is not very experienced since there is no resident pastor. Im3: Some people who came from traditional church are adjusting. Im6: Desire for deeper pastoral care and access to pastors. Im6: Longing for the pastoral voice and connection. Im7: Limited pastor presence due to rotation. Im8: Rotating pastors impacting member connection and needs addressing.	Pastoral Care
Im2: Different preachers. Im2: Sermons are repeated. Im3: Inconsistency of preaching content and style.	Preaching Direction and Consistency

<p>Im5: Preachers go in rotation without a permanent preacher.</p> <p>Im5: Difficulty in identifying with the preacher.</p> <p>Im7: There is no preaching series. Preachers are jumping from one topic to another due to rotation.</p>	
<p>Im1: Confusion about where to go for direction, advice, or decision-making.</p> <p>Im3: Financial challenges in establishing meeting places.</p> <p>Im3: Role definition needed for multiple pastors/preachers.</p> <p>Im3: Difficulty adjusting from traditional church practices.</p> <p>Im4: Difficulty in managing time and personal connections between congregations.</p> <p>Im7: Resource allocation among multiple congregations.</p> <p>Im7: Risk of neglecting specific congregations and potential competition.</p>	Structure and Supervision
<p>Im3: When you start many congregations, you need a meeting place especially here in Japan. When you rent, it requires expenses.</p> <p>Im5: There is no fixed place. Changing venues is hard. When you invite visitors, the tendency for them to come back is less.</p> <p>Practice for music is hard.</p> <p>3. Conducting training is hard as well to keep people motivated.</p> <p>Im8: There is no permanent place of worship.</p>	Permanent Place of Worship

Questions #4: What do you think are the possible solutions to the challenges that you are facing?	
Excerpt from transcript	Initial Code
<p>Im1: Role Education</p> <p>Im1: Leader Empowerment</p> <p>Im3: Group Spiritual Levels</p>	Leadership and Role Clarity
<p>Im5: Increased Fellowship</p> <p>Im6: Intentional Member Fellowship</p> <p>Im8: Combined Services with Filipino Church</p>	Community Relationship
<p>Im2: Unified Preaching Topics</p> <p>Im5: Unified Preaching Theme</p> <p>Im4: Improved Preaching Planning</p>	Preaching Consistency

Im3: Extended Pastor Rotation Im6: Pastor-led CARE Groups Im7: Resident Pastor per congregation Im8: Resident Pastor Proposal	Pastoral Care
Im8: Permanent Venue Acquisition Im1: Venue Preparation	Permanent Place of Worship

## APPENDIX IV

### Interview Transcriptions

#### A. Respondents 1: Immanuel Leaders

Respondents A	Question 1: How does a multisite church model look to you?	Question 2: What do you think are the advantages of the multisite church model for your church?
Im1	<p>It is one church in multiple locations. It has many locations. It has different many branches with one mission, one vision and one budget. It has also one board.</p> <p>It can have also one mother church with many extensions in different places. The mother church is in the city with churches in the provinces. It has leaders who are pastors and reporting to the mother church. Decision making comes to local church with the approval from the mother church. The local pastor is accountable to the senior pastor.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People are well disciple</li> <li>2. Growth of the church is not stagnant</li> <li>3. The focus is easy since the place is near the place of the leader.</li> <li>4. The place of worship is also accessible to the place members.</li> <li>5. The leaders know the people since it is small.</li> <li>6. Intimate relationship since it is small.</li> </ol>
Im2	<p>One church meeting in multiple locations in which worship services is held in different locations. Like our place in Sagara is the farthest. Tough it is from different places, we share a common vision, budget, leadership, and board. That's how I see, multisite church.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leaders are empowered to do the great commission. It is not a traditional church in which members are just sitting down and letting the pastor do his job alone. Rather, members are helping out to do the great commission.</li> <li>2. In the finance aspect, there is no need for pledges, as it was the habit of the church when it was not yet part of Immanuel. In the setup of Immanuel, there is budgeting, and pledges are discouraged, though there is no problem with pledges. Thus, the ministry becomes decent and in order since God is the God of order. and it becomes decent.</li> </ol>
Im3	<p>Multisite church is a good system, but it has challenges along the way. In a multisite, there is only one church in</p>	<p>We can easily start a new congregation in different places, which does not require a full-time pastor. Unlike in a traditional system,</p>

	different locations. One system, one DNA, and supposedly one pastor.	<p>when you start, you have a pastor, a certain number of people, and financial support.</p> <p>Few in numbers but feel bigger since they belong in one church. They may be in a different location, but they belong to one church.</p> <p>Regarding finances, they are centralized, and they can be a part of that budget. Regardless of numbers and income, they are carried.4. A pastor can manage several congregations and other trained volunteers.</p> <p>5. We can easily start a new work.</p>
Im4	It is the same with CCF church. They have churches without a local pastor. Only key persons that function as facilitators. They watch the sermon livestreamed . They have center which is the main church. They have also church with pastors in charge to make a follow up with the livestreamed message	<p>1. The advantage of it in our experience is that although there are only three pastors we can go around to all congregations. This is hard to handle but we can divide our time. We can adjust with their time and location.</p> <p>2. Pastoral team takes care of the churches with the help of the volunteer preachers. By doing that, we can still do other functions such as trainings and teachings</p>
Im5	It is one church in different location. In my experience like in the Philippines, although they have many pastors they follow certain themes and series. Of course, since it a multisite church model, they have the same branding, practices just like CCF and Victory. When you go to satellite churches, you know that it is similar.	<p>1. The same discipleship material in which when we meet we can talk about it and relate to one another, although the phasing is different. It's good because we study the same lesson.</p> <p>2. It has unified mission and vision</p> <p>3. Using the resources wisely.</p> <p>4. In terms of leadership, the multisite model can help in the leadership and decision making. It is easy to resolve things.</p> <p>5. Unified leadership will help to avoid breakaway group. For example, if other church will be led by another pastor or leader of their own, it may affect the vision and mission of Immanuel because it will be led according to their discretion.</p> <p>6. Having one church board lessens the time for meeting. Because with</p>

		<p>many leadership, it is hard and what if the decisions are not the same. Who has the authority?</p> <p>7. In terms of budget, it is easy to check and monitor the budget of the congregation in the central leadership.</p>
Im6	Many locations. Like in a company or department store, it has branches. It is like networking. Like it is a top-down leadership with the people below him.	<p>1. Those who are faraway, it is really to reach. For example if we meet someone, we just ask her address, and we refer the nearest church.</p> <p>2. Since, we are a multisite, we have many workers and volunteers and they can share it to other congregation. At the same time we support, and share our resources.</p> <p>3. The same with financial. We can help each other.</p> <p>4. We are empowered. For example, if the pastors are not around, people are asking me and I can feel and praise God the trust of our brethren. We can decide and exercise leadership.</p>
Im7	This is not new to me. It is the same with my church in the Philippines. We have a senior pastor or overseer who takes care of the overall ministry. We have associate pastors who are pastoring the local congregation. The budget is centralized as well and shared with all congregations.	<p>1. Accommodating people in different places. I experienced it firsthand when I was new. I called the church, and I was referred to the nearest Immanuel church. 2. We bring the church to the people. Accessibility and location have a big advantage.</p> <p>3. Unity in doctrine and faith yet diversity of people with different backgrounds and upbringings. Easy to manage since the congregation or cluster is still small.</p> <p>4. The division of ministry is also manageable.</p>
Im8	It's a Filipino church scattered around the area with unified leadership	<p>1. You can bring people to where they are since the church is all over the place. 2. It is also to meet different church members from different churches for fellowship and friendship.</p> <p>3. Supporting each other, especially in financing and helping small churches. The help of leadership and volunteers is extended to all churches.</p>



Respondents A	Question 3: What are the challenges that you have experienced in your present set-up?	Question 4: What do you think are the possible solutions to the challenges that you are facing?
Im1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People are looking for a pastor, not just the site/congregation leader.</li> <li>2. People are looking for a resident pastor.</li> <li>3. Lack of pastoral care</li> <li>4. Lack of submission to the leader of the site/congregation</li> <li>5. Confusion about where to go for direction, advice, or decision-making.</li> <li>6. It is a new concept for them of having a site or congregation leader apart from the pastor.</li> <li>7. Delegations of responsibility.</li> <li>8. Multitasking of the volunteers.</li> <li>7. Different locations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educate people about the roles of the leader and the pastor. Understanding the chain of command.</li> <li>2. The visibility and empowerment of the appointed leader are necessary.</li> <li>3. Having a permanent place</li> <li>4. Transportation of members who are quite far from the church.</li> </ol>
Im2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Different preachers</li> <li>2. Sermons are repeated.</li> <li>3. Pastoral care lack depth of experience since there is no resident pastor.</li> <li>4. People are transient, which affects giving and ministry workers.</li> <li>5. There is a problem with communication since the area is far away.</li> <li>6. All the core leaders are women in our congregation.</li> <li>7. We, as humans and as ladies, are sentimental and emotional, and we also need men's leadership.</li> <li>8. Growing up in a traditional church, there is always a longing. As humans, we are relational beings, and we want a tangible person that we can run to and confide in.</li> <li>9. If we feel it as leaders, the more common members feel it. We are really looking forward to having a resident pastor.</li> <li>8. I also asked other pastors for advice since Immanuel pastors are busy.</li> <li>9. People from our congregation are asking for comfort or biblical</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Since 80% are transient and overseas contract workers, it is important to encourage and teach the permanent residence members so that their giving is not affected.</li> <li>2. The pastoral team should have the same topic of preaching for all Immanuel congregations.</li> </ol>

	<p>questions, and since I am working, it is really hard to keep up with all the demands.</p> <p>10. When you have personal issues and you need to look tough to the members, it seems that it is hard to share your vulnerability. You want to, but they may stumble, so you just keep it to yourself. Compounded by the fact that I do not have theological or bible school, it becomes harder. Sometimes I thought that if the pastors have Sabbatical leave, why can't we?</p>	
Im3	<p>All of the benefits have a challenge:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When you start many congregations, you need a meeting place especially here in Japan. When you rent, it requires expenses.</li> <li>2. Three or more pastors or preachers in the multisite, the roles should be defined to avoid problems of overlapping of responsibilities or underperforming because of unclear expectations. The role of preachers and layman too. It should be differentiated too in order to avoid miscommunication.</li> <li>3. One thing that I observed is that some of these multisite could have a possible feeling of not having enough attention and not caring properly, considering that pastors are not enough. Of course, that's the role of the lay leaders. We train the people.</li> <li>4. Some people who came from traditional church are adjusting. They used to see their pastors every Sunday before but not in multisite. There is inconsistency of preaching content and style. Sermon series of preacher is a challenge. Preaching series is not commendable.</li> <li>5. Lack of contact to people. Connection with the people is a challenge to have a deeper connection with them. It is important to relate to them most especially in preparing the sermon. We are not aware that when</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We need to group the people into classes in order to deal with them according to their spiritual level.</li> <li>2. Make a connection to people.</li> <li>3. Asked the key leaders about the new people in the congregation.</li> <li>4. Spent longer time for pastors in their monthly rotation rather than be assigned for the next church. If we can (pastors) stay in one church for 2 months.</li> <li>5. If we can join two congregations together which is near each other to lessen the rotation.</li> <li>6. We need to care more of the people because like in one church, they have already many problems. So, it is important to monitor them and appoint more people.</li> <li>7. Do not open another congregation yet until we have enough volunteers and place of worship.</li> </ol>

	<p>we move for the next preaching, we do not know any longer the new people in attendance.</p> <p>6. Different spiritual level of people in the teaching material is a challenge.</p>	
Im4	<p>1. It is hard to settle your heart. Your time is divided and yourself. The personal challenge for me is my schedule. The preaching rotation and connection with people especially that I am a relational guy. Another thing is time. One congregation's worship service is too close to the near site in which you cannot spend more time with people after the service. You need to go immediately to the other church.</p>	<p>1. Fix the preaching schedule. If I can stay in one church for three consecutive Sundays. One of the challenges for the people is that they cannot relate to the rotational schedule of preachers.</p> <p>2. More fellowship. Like food fellowship, creating events like birthday, farewell party. By doing this people will stay.</p> <p>3. Preaching and schedule should be considered. It should be planned well.</p>
Im5	<p>1. Preachers go in rotation without a permanent preacher. We cannot identify with the preacher. People tend to compare. It's important to have a person who is easy to relate to.</p> <p>2. There is no fixed place. Changing venues is hard. When you invite visitors, the tendency for them to come back is less. Practice for music is hard.</p> <p>3. Conducting training is hard as well to keep people motivated.</p> <p>4. Volunteers in the kids department can be burned out because of a lack of time for worship services and care groups.</p>	<p>1. One preaching theme and series. 2. Preaching should be given a thorough plan. Preachers can be different, provided that there is series and continuity.</p> <p>2. Enhance the fellowship by having more fellowship after the worship service. Eating together, like we did before</p>
Im6	<p>1. Pastoral care. Deeper fellowship of people with pastors. They would like to talk to the pastors longer, but the pastor's time is limited since they need to go to another preaching area. They are longing for equal treatment. They feel that other congregations are special to the pastors.</p> <p>New members would like to have access to pastors. They may not understand the present setup, and it is hard for them.</p> <p>For us leaders, we are happy that we are empowered and that people respect the leaders that you have appointed. They come to us since we know what</p>	<p>1. Have an intentional time of fellowship for the members. It should not be done on Sunday. Like BBQ fellowship, the pastor can have a quality time.</p> <p>2. If we can do it once a month, the pastor can join the CARE group and lead it. The pastor can lead all the CARE groups in the church at least once a month. I think they miss the pastor in the CARE group.</p> <p>3. In the future, it is important that we can have a preaching series for all congregations.</p>

	is going on in their lives, week after week. But they are still longing for the voice of the pastor. They know that one of the functions of the pastor is to take care of the flock. Tap, which means, oh, the pastor still knows me. They have an idea that the pastor is just close to the leaders. We are just members, and the pastor will not mind us	
Im7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The presence of the pastor is not much felt due to the rotation. If the pastor is around, he also needs to catch the next worship service at another congregation. Local concerns and issues are not given much attention.</li> <li>2. There is no preaching series. Preachers are jumping from one topic to another due to rotation.</li> <li>3. More congregations, more needs, and more resources need to be distributed.</li> <li>4. The potential neglect of a particular congregation</li> <li>5. Competition may arise.</li> </ol>	<p>This is not a suggestion, but my prayer is to have a resident pastor per congregation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Look for efficient way of distributing resources.</li> <li>3. Let the congregation know about the financial situation, not just the leaders or board in particular.</li> <li>4. Equal representation of the congregation in leadership.</li> </ol>
Im8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is no permanent place of worship.</li> <li>2. Pastors are in rotation.</li> <li>3. Enough time is not being given by the pastors to address the needs of the members, especially on Sunday. There is not much connection from the pastors.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A resident pastor is ideal</li> <li>2. Preaching in series will be good since pastors and preachers are in rotation.</li> <li>3. Once a month combined service with the Filipino church would be ideal so that we can also listen to the message from the Filipino pastor. Interpreter is necessary.</li> <li>4. Have a permanent place.</li> </ol>

#### B. Respondents 2: Mega Church Pastors

Respondents B	Question 1: How does a multisite church model look to you?	Question 2: What do you think are the advantages of the multisite church model for your church?
Mega1	We have the same, name, same vision of a disciple-making congregation that will reach different places to mature in Christ. It is one church with the same DNA, one leadership, and one budget.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Good at propagating consistent values, vision, and mission statement.</li> <li>2. More resources in terms of finances, available volunteers, and gifts of people.</li> </ol>

	<p>Different congregations may differ in expressing themselves according to the needs of their geographical area. It has one unified budget. The idea of giving is not giving on a particular site. But when you give, you give to the whole multisite church regardless of the location for it is being used for the whole church. Our church has a centralized sermon that is preached by the senior pastors or center pastor in all the centers.</p>	<p>3. It's a beautiful picture of unity and diversity in the body of Christ.  4. Central office to take care of the ministry including the staffing and building.  5. The same discipleship materials and sermon series in all the centers.</p>
Mega2	<p>Same name but with different leaders in each satellite churches. The senior pastor has the right to appoint the resident pastor in the satellite churches. However, it has their own local leaders that take care of the welfare of the church and responsible to finance the ministry most especially because of the yearly cutback system until the church can be self-supporting. It has the same sermon for all the satellites. It just evolve and unintentional.</p> <p>It has the same sermon in all the satellite churches. It is not a centralized giving but the Main church is financing it in the first year. The resident pastor is paid by the main church.</p>	<p>1. Ministry support. The pastor leading the satellite is not alone.  2. Sermon series is the same.  3. Consolidation  4. Multisite is good for the small churches.</p>
Mega3	<p>The multisite is synonymous with satellites. It is one church with more than 100 satellite churches. It looks like a normal church, but with the strength of a disciple-making church. Synchronized sermon in all satellites both local and international. The sermon of the senior pastor is livestreamed on all the satellites.” It is followed by the same discipleship questions and materials. It has a centralized budget as well. It has the same discipleship step by step material in all the satellite churches. We have support communication group from the corporate world as a support in advertisement and communication.</p>	<p>1. The spread of the gospel is faster because of the multisite and especially in the community.  2. The program that you will rollout will be used and shared widely.  3. Empowerment and delegations  4. Discipleship system is the prime mover, which is why the multiplication of satellites has a faster growth rate. Satellite churches become organic. It starts with a small group of people until it becomes big and eventually becomes a satellite church.  5. Even without funds, the ministry is already going.</p>

		<p>6. There are more volunteers. In fact, there are two sets of pastors. Self-supporting and supported by the church.</p> <p>7. Strict discipleship and solid accountability.</p> <p>8. Oneness of values, especially in submission to authority, exists.</p> <p>9. Modelling and mirroring of leaders</p> <p>10. 360-degree feedback on life and ministry. The total walk with God.</p> <p>11. Your disciple should have a discipler.</p>
Mega4	<p>It is one church in different locations with live praise and worship and preachers. It has the same sermon with the same text, and the direction of the sermon. Annual sermon planning retreat is done to make sure that all churches are in synched in preaching and make sure that all churches have the same sermon in all the satellite churches. It has also shared discipleship journey and leadership development pathway. Each church has its own pastors and leaders that lead to care for the members and craft a budget which is approved by the Main office.</p> <p>The multisite church has consultants and human resource to make the organization run well and with excellent corporate culture.</p>	<p>1. More people in different geographical locations in the metropolis and provinces.</p> <p>2. More involvement opportunities for the members.</p> <p>3. Shared resources with the discipleship curriculum and preaching materials and church planting effort.</p> <p>4. Common theme for all the churches</p> <p>5. Tech and communications support. The sermon series package which includes scriptures, outline, direction of the sermon and video promotion are included.</p>

Respondents B	Question 3: What are the challenges that you have experienced in your present set-up?	Question 4: What do you think are the possible solutions to the challenges that you are facing?
Mega1	<p>1. Unhealthy comparison</p> <p>2. Competition with one another</p> <p>3. Misunderstanding</p> <p>4. Seeing things in their own point of view which may not be applied to other congregation.</p>	<p>1. Alignment and resonance</p> <p>2. The senior pastor should be seen in these congregations. He should have a consistent voice. He should be seen, especially in terms of preaching. Use videos occasionally so that senior pastor will be seen.</p> <p>3. Meeting of key leaders or the center team.</p>

		<p>4. Communication is important.</p> <p>5. DNA should be maintained. Membership classes and discipleship curriculum are important to preserve the DNA.</p> <p>6. Looking for staff should be at least home grown or interviewed well with the same values.</p> <p>7. Senior pastor should mentor the senior team so that they can mentor their assigned congregation.</p> <p>8. The Campus/center pastor should represent the senior pastor. They should be aligned. The key word is trust. Mutual respect is important</p>
Mega2	<p>1. The compliance with the admin requirements. Like the government papers.</p> <p>2. Satellite pastor does not exercise full pastoral function since he is dependent to the Main church.</p> <p>3. The Main church cannot monitor what happens in the satellite. You cannot control what is going on in the satellites.</p> <p>4. The bigger the organization, the harder it is to establish accountability.</p> <p>5. People might rely on the personality of the preacher.</p>	<p>1. Each satellite church should get a government papers.</p> <p>2. It should be intentional</p> <p>3. Look forward for multisite but encourage them to be independent after five years.</p> <p>4. Strong discipleship is important in the multisite church.</p> <p>5. Strong leader who founded the church and disciplined the leaders of the church.</p> <p>6. Lead the word of God so that they will grow in God's word and do not depend on others.</p>
Mega3	<p>1. Relaying and accuracy of information. It is already happening in Main but not yet in other places.</p> <p>2. Rollout of programs</p>	<p>1. Strong communication's team. They are the in charge to emails and social medias.</p> <p>2. Strong discipleship system is important.</p>
Mega4	<p>1. Constant need for volunteers most especially pastors.</p> <p>2. Facility and building need for worship services since many churches are over flowing.</p>	<p>1. Constant training for volunteers. Preaching on the month of January and February about servanthood is done. This is followed for a sign-up for volunteers and then orientation and training. The School of Ministry which is an in-house Bible School was created.</p> <p>2. Sharing of building and facilities for other churches is encouraged. Multiple worship services is also conducted to address the overflowing number of attendance.</p>

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