



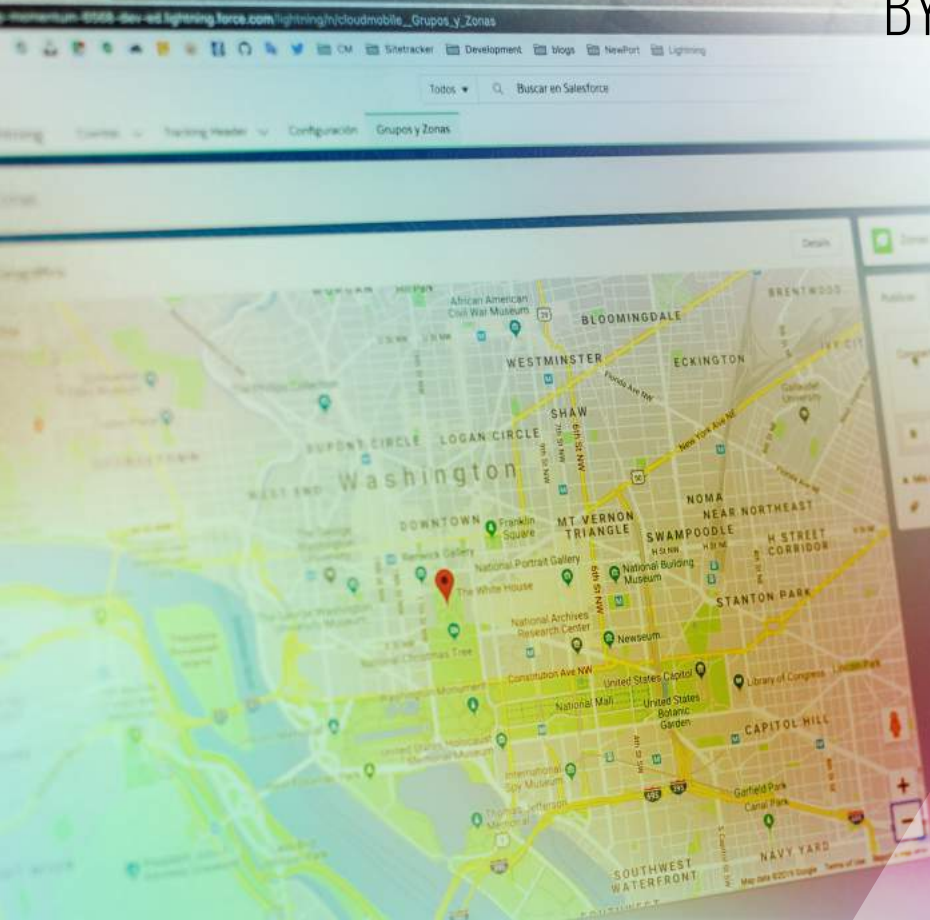
**YES, NOW IS  
THE PERFECT TIME TO**

**LAUNCH A NEW**

**CAMPUS FOR**

**YOUR CHURCH**

BY RICH BIRCH





Campus expansion is the most effective way to both reach new people and release new leaders.

For over two decades, the [multisite church movement](#) has helped churches expand their mission, extend their reach, and care for more people than they'd have been able to if they stayed in one location.

To say that I'm bullish on the multisite movement would be somewhat of an understatement. I've been around this movement from its early days, have directly helped launch 13 campuses, and have coached dozens of other churches through launching campuses.

Like everything else church-wise, there's no doubt that the multisite movement has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. **It would be reasonable for you to doubt if this the right time for your church to launch new campuses. However, I believe that this is a perfect season to fire up the campus expansion engines and look to the horizon, dreaming new dreams and thinking about the next steps in your multisite church journey.** Whether you're a mono-site church looking to add your first location, or you already have six campuses and are wondering if you should re-ignite plans to establish a few more, this is a perfect season to do so.



Something shifted in the body of Christ after Easter this year. In the last few weeks, **I've had a significant uptick in conversations with church leaders across the country who are thinking about their multisite strategy and wrestling through various dynamics in their current locations.** I've talked to multiple churches that are at varying stages of merger conversations. Some of these churches are looking at launching a new campus in the coming months, resulting from a rebirth of a church that was established a while ago. I've talked to churches who have understandably delayed their campus expansion since March 2020 when the pandemic hit and are now looking to get those efforts rolling again. I've even talked to a couple of churches who launched locations just before the pandemic hit and have had those campuses closed for the better part of a year and are now trying to relaunch them.

**Now is the season to get back into campus expansion, the message of Jesus needs to go forward.**

The multiplication mandate that we all believe is an important part of leading the Jesus-centered church must continue pushing forward.

Here are a few reasons that your church should use this season to launch new campuses. You may find that this is the perfect season for your church to follow this path.

## 5 REASONS YOUR CHURCH SHOULD LAUNCH A NEW CAMPUS SOON

It's understandable that some churches slowed down their campus expansion efforts over the last year or so. But this is the perfect season for you to reconsider what it might look like to launch a multisite location.

- **The need is still great.** // Pre-pandemic, 94% of all churches were losing ground against the growth of their communities [ref]. You may have heard this statistic in the more encouraging version, which is that 85% of churches are plateaued or in decline [ref]. If we look at them from another point of view, we realize how worrying the situation is: A minority percentage of churches are growing faster than the communities they're in. Thus, we still need to build churches that are prevailing and helping people take steps closer to Jesus. This fact is still true despite the pandemic. The need to reach unchurched people is as great now as it has ever been.

There is some evidence showing that this year, 8,000 churches are going to close across the country [ref]. This dynamic has been accelerated because of the pandemic. Many churches have struggled through this season. **The fact that your church has survived and is considering adding campuses is a positive sign. But the severity of the overall situation means that you should look carefully at your next steps** and consider the need that is so present in the communities around you.

- **Quicker, lighter footprint.** // One of the lessons we learned through the pandemic is that organizations with an agile approach to leadership have not only survived but thrived! Finding ways to pivot over the last year has been an important factor in succeeding. Launching campuses that can move into a location quickly, reach new people in a shorter time frame, and work on lower capital costs and volunteer staff may be the best way forward when considering campus expansion.

We know that for the foreseeable future many of our churches will be looking at smaller venues rather than larger ones. It's going to be a long time before people feel comfortable packing into a room of 1,500. So, look for spaces that hold 200–300 people and you'll probably find that this idea is more readily received. **This could be a perfect season to launch smaller, faster campuses in the communities you've identified.**

- **God gave you those cash reserves.** // In the past few months, I've talked to so many churches that have seen an increase in their operational reserves. This is fantastic news. Pre-pandemic, I'd often hear executive pastors talk about having a week or two of operational reserves on hand. Now, many churches have seen a dramatic increase in their reserves. In fact, some churches have accrued multiple months of operational reserves. This is great news because it will give your church confidence to step forward in various ways.

However, there can be a downside. **You're not in the business of stockpiling cash.** God didn't call you to start an investment fund. Those resources were given to you to push your mission forward. I think it's reasonable for you to increase your operational reserves. I don't think it's reasonable for you to hoard cash. God gave you those resources, and I think you need to ask the question: How are we going to deploy these resources to extend our ministry long-term? **What is it that God may be calling you to do to reach more people with the resources He's given you?** Now is the season for you to deploy that income and make a difference that could impact the next decade or more for your church.

- **Service providers are ready to help.** // This may seem like a strange point to put on this list, but there is a whole constellation of support organizations and businesses who have grown up around the multisite church movement over the last two decades. Many of these organizations have paused, understandably, over the last year. **However, they're now ready to lean in and serve you. They're eager to take a call from your leadership team.** You're going to get the best service ever from these organizations as they return to normal operations. They've got time to jump on the phone now and talk through whatever questions you have. Tap into their expertise. These people have seen many churches launch over the years and can help you think through the issues that typically arise.

**Portable Church Industries.** PCI helps churches like yours design and build systems to help you get in and out of a rented facility. They help plan everything from audio/video/lighting down to baby diapers and storage cabinets. Give them a call today. These guys are incredible experts.

**CDF Capital.** This organization helps churches work through financial lending issues that can arise when launching new campuses. They are also a great place to deposit operational reserves. They've helped hundreds of churches like yours and are waiting by the phone for your call. Plus, they're simply great people, in general.

**Injoy Stewardship Solutions.** For decades, Joe Sangl and his team have helped churches like yours to raise more resources. We all know that this can be a complex environment to raise additional resources and I strongly recommend that you talk with them about what raising resources for opening a new campus would look like in this environment. They can assist in working through current issues and help you communicate the message that God's given you to your community. With their help, you will be able to convey your plan clearly and compellingly. Reach out to them today.

- **We are still in the “risk-more window.”** // There was, in those early months of the pandemic, a real flurry of innovation and risk-taking in the local church. It was so exciting to see churches try brand-new things, particularly in digital ministry. The onset of COVID-19 made us ask ourselves what the church should look like today? With many of us trying to figure out how to live the hybrid or omnichannel approach to church, it is understandable that we are still trying to cope with keeping up with the robust weekend online and in-person experiences we offer.

This is still a season for you to be engaged with your people and consider your dreams for the future together. You have a huge window of opportunity to take some risks and try new things. **Your community will not only welcome but encourage new and innovative ideas.** Now is the time to lean in and try to launch a campus or two, thus helping push your mission forward.

## LOOKING FOR MORE MULTISITE HELP? DOWNLOAD THESE RESOURCES.

Is your church thinking about launching new multisite campuses? Have you already launched a campus or two but are currently stuck getting the next locations launched? Are you ready to take the next steps in your multisite expansion but aren't sure where to start? I'm releasing a FREE three-part video series designed to help your church reach more people through multisite church expansion. The lessons in this series come from my practical experience after being in the driver's seat for 13 launches and from helping a multitude of churches like yours! Here is what we'll be covering in the free video series:

- **Video #1: The Biggest Mistake Churches Make When Launching Campuses.** Build an approach to launching locations that avoids this mistake, and your church will scale up to reach more people!

- **Video #2: Keys to Picking a Great Location for Your Next Campus.** Apply the lessons in this video and you'll find effective locations that will aid your church's growth for years to come!
- **Video #3: 5 Dirty Secrets of the Multisite Church Movement.** Finally, get an insider's look at the underbelly of this movement to better inform your leadership as you move forward!

[Click here to sign up for the free three-part video series today.](#)