

THE MULTI CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Our world has changed. Our community's demographic (including racial, generational, religious and denominational) composition has become much more diverse than in the past. As a church, we have a responsibility to embrace those who God brings to us—those from different races, denominations, religions and generations—to show them the love of God and the life that comes with a relationship with Jesus Christ so that they can take that renewed life back to their own races, denominations, religions, and generations and make impacts that we never could. We need to understand our times in order to know what to do, just like the children of “Issachar who understood their times and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chronicles 12:32 NIV). It is in understanding our times and embracing the diversity that we would stay relevant to our world, and God will continue to bless us, multiply us and extend our territories. This understanding has been informing and shaping the direction of Church of the Rock.

As part of the process of equipping everyone for the next step of our journey and engaging everyone in the direction that Church of the Rock is embarking upon, this special study will examine four crucial aspects of being a relevant and current church:

1. **Multi-racial,**
2. **Multi-generational,**
3. **Multi-denominational,** and
4. **Multi-locational.**

The main text of this study is Hebrews 6:9–14 (NKJV):

But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

WARMUP QUESTION

1. **How do you respond to change?**

MULTI-RACIAL

“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, **of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands...” (Revelation 7:9 NKJV, **emphasis added**).

We need to be the kind of church that reflects the diversity referred to in Revelation 7:9—a church composed of every nation, tongue and tribe worshiping as one people.

2. What does a multi-racial church look like to you?

3. How can you better understand, embrace and relate to people of other ethnicities and religions?

MULTI-GENERATIONAL

For the church to remain relevant and have a vital future, we need to reach and embrace the next generation. The statistics of the number of young people who drop out of church is staggering, with 70% of them dropping out of church after high school, because of the lure of the world. In order for us to counter that lure we need to engage these young people, equip them with the tools of the Word of God to stand in the face of those lures and include them in the direction and purpose of where we are going as a church.

4. What are some steps that you think the church could be taking in order to include, engage and equip young people?

MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL

1 Corinthians 1:23 NKJV "...but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness..."

Churches, denominational as well as non-denominational, tend to serve a certain audience because of their distinctives. Hanging on to those distinctives so tightly can become the very stumbling blocks that prevent people from coming to Christ. It is vital to ensure that we are a welcoming, non-threatening place that people of all denominations (and those with no denominations) would want to come to and engage in.

- 5. Have you ever experienced something at church that you think might be a barrier to a visitor? If so, what would that be?**

MULTI-LOCATIONAL

The biggest church in the world is in China and doesn't own one building but meets in 100,000 different locations under the direction of one leadership team. The Church of Jerusalem in the book of Acts was 100,000 people and they didn't own one building but met all over the city in many locations.

The North American view of church is that we need to have a large building that we fill, then build a bigger one and fill it, and so on. For several reasons, one of the biggest trends is the multi-location model.

In addition to Church of the Rock Fort Gary campus, there is Church of the Rock Calgary. Now, there is an exciting development: we are launching Church of the Rock Bronx Park Campus on October 6, 2013.

- 6. Over the next few weeks, take time to:**
 - a. Pray about the Bronx Park Campus,**
 - b. Reflect on what, if any, involvement that you feel God may be leading you to in this new and exciting direction.**

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