

# Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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## Add a New Worship Service

*“Half of all the churches in North America need to expand their weekend worship services,”* says Lyle Schaller. And, if you're reading this article, chance are that you're in that 50% category.

If you would like to see an increase in your total worship attendance . . . total giving . . . and total visitors, an additional worship service may be for you. Whether you have one service and add a second; two services and go to three; or three contemplating four, the principle holds: *new services = new growth.*

*“Half of all the churches in North America need to expand their weekend worship services.”*

**-Lyle Schaller**

Here are seven reasons why most churches should add a new style worship service in the next 12 - 24 months.

**Reason #1:** *A new service will reach the unchurched.* When you begin talking up the idea of a new service, many people will ask, “Why can't they come to the service we already have?” The simple answer is: “Because they haven't been, and won't.” The motivation for starting a new style service is to connect with people who are *not* presently attending your church.

**Reason #2:** *A new service will minister to more Christians.* Approximately 80% of the congregations that move from one worship experience to two find their overall attendance jumps by at least 10%. Whether the new service is on Saturday for the people who work on Sunday . . . or Thursday evening for young families taking weekend “mini-vacations” . . . whether the new service is for those who prefer contemporary music . . . or parents who want to worship with their children in a family

service, the more options you have . . . the more people you will reach.

**Reason #3:** *A new service will reach new kinds of people.* Your present service style is attractive to some people, while not attractive to others. “The simple truth is that worship cannot be culturally neutral,” says James White. If you desire to reach *new* kinds of people in your community, you will need a new service with a style focused on the new group.

**Reason #4:** *A new service will help you break out of your normal lifecycle.* The lifecycle of a church is predictable. Like gravity, it is a law that simply exists. The lifecycle describes a church's infancy, maturity, and death. The sobering fact is that at least 80% of the churches today

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# Overall worship attendance jumps 10%.

## A new worship service reaches new people.

are on the flat or backside of their lifecycles.

Beginning a new worship service frequently begins a new lifecycle in a local congregation. It regenerates the high sense of mission and outward-focused priorities that was found in the church's early years, and breathes new life into an old and tired congregation.

Reason #5: *A new service allows for change while retaining the familiar.* If you wish to attract new kinds of people to your worship service you have three options: 1) *Completely redesign your present service,* 2) *Incorporate more variety into your existing service,* 3) *Add an additional service that offers a clear choice of styles.*

We know from experience that the first two options will cause considerable disruption in your church. The third option is based on the important principle of innovation: *Change through addition is more successful than change through substitution.*

Reason #6: *A new service will activate inactive members.* In many congregations only 40% of those who could be in church on any given Sunday actually are. Churches that have added a new style service often experience a serendipitous benefit — the percentage of inactive members decreases. It is not uncommon to see a new style service boost the member attendance percentages from the 40% range to 60+%.

Reason #7: *A new service will help your denomination survive.* Denominational church families that desire to be effective and vital in the 21st century must see a large percentage of their churches practicing one of two growth strategies: 1) actively starting new churches, or 2) intentionally starting new services.

We won't be so presumptuous to suggest that a new service in your church is the simple solution to all your problems. But we can tell you, with utmost certainty, as long as there are unreached people groups in your community, there is an opportunity for God's love to be shared with them. For many of these people, it may well be experienced through a new service.

You may resonate with one reason more than another. In reality, it doesn't matter that a congregation share one *motive* for beginning a new service. What is important is a shared *goal*, namely, to begin a new style service within the next two years.

So, what do you think? Is it time to start a new worship service in your church?

Which of the seven reasons fit your church's current situation?

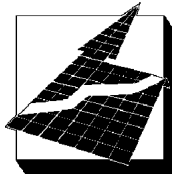
What do you think are some obstacles to overcome when starting a new worship service?

What might be some benefits if you do?



Adapted from the forthcoming book *What Every Pastor Should Know: 101 Indispensable Rules of Thumb for Leading Your Church* (Baker Books April 2013), by Gary L. McIntosh and Charles

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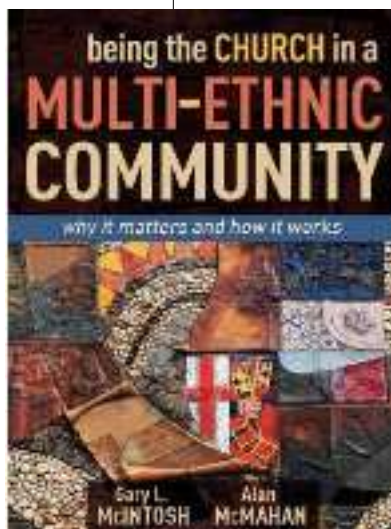
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### ***Being the Church in a Multi-ethnic Community***

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Churches in a multi-ethnic community must be multi-ethnic in their ministry. However, not all churches are multi-ethnic, especially those churches that are in a community that represent one socioeconomic class or ethnic group. However, no church should ever be intentionally segregated and remain a New

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