

An Elder-led, Deacon-served, Congregational Multi-site Church Structure

Elders/Pastors

Under the sovereign direction of Jesus Christ, as its head, the church is led by a plurality of elders. This council is composed of the elders from the various sites. As a team, they are responsible for vision-making, teaching, leading, praying, and shepherding the church, which exists in multiple locations. Some of these elders may be paid while others are not. Some may preach and teach at the various campuses while others have a specific campus assignment. But all shoulder together the leadership for the entire church in the areas designated as their responsibilities. Coming together regularly, the elders support one another in prayer, share ministerial resources, encourage personal accountability, prepare sermons together, address intra-church problems, and the like.

Deacons

The church is served by deacons. Whereas the office of eldership is dedicated to the work of teaching, leading, praying, and shepherding, the diaconate is devoted to serving the church to assist the elders in caring for the needs of the church. These areas may include serving the Lord's Supper, baptism preparation, visiting the sick and widows, peacekeeping, and many more. Deacons are campus-specific; that is, they engage in their ministries at individual sites and not system-wide.

The Role of the Congregation

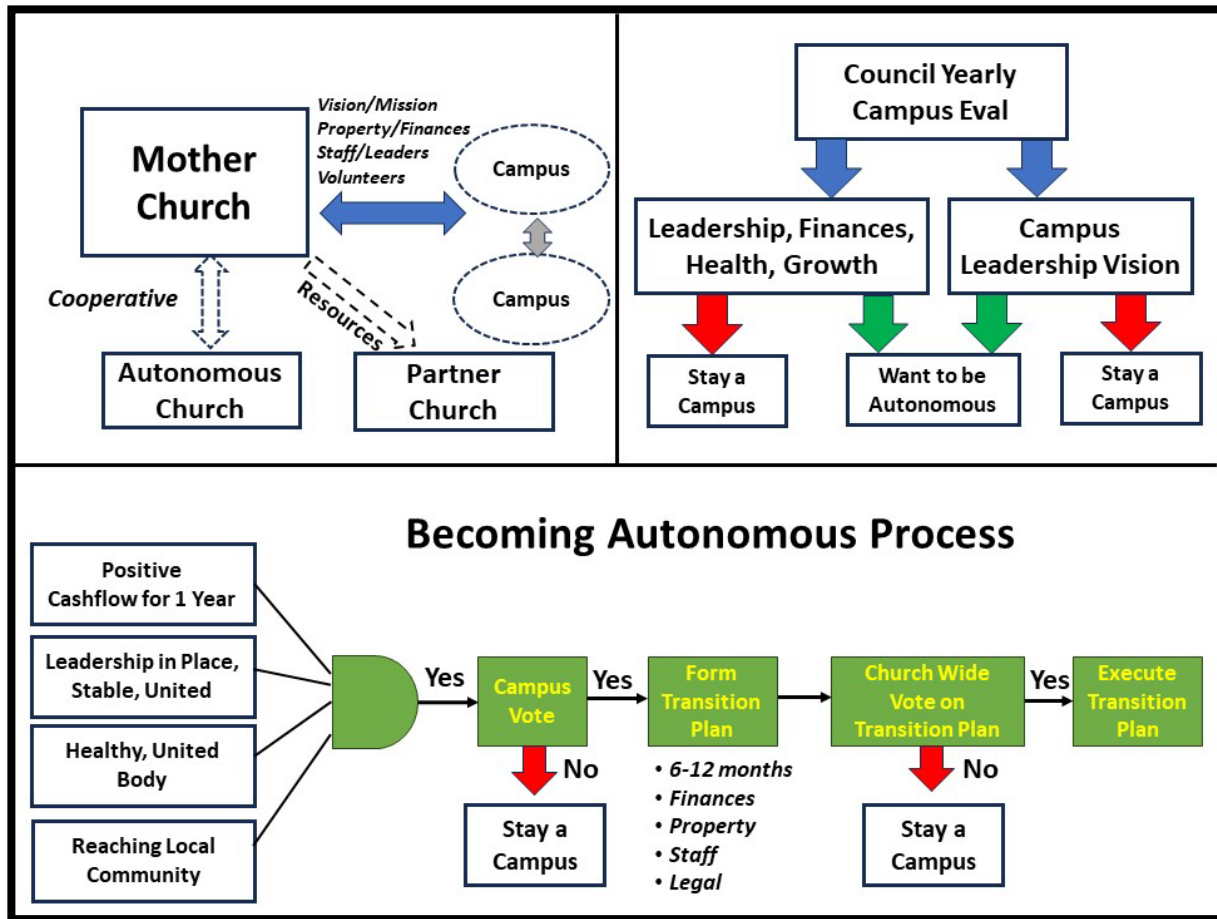
As a congregational church, it is elder-led, not elder-ruled: the elders work with authority in their sphere of responsibilities (noted above), and the congregation—which exists at multiple sites—works with authority in its sphere of responsibilities, which includes confirming the elders, affirming the budget, approving any major changes to the constitution and the philosophy of ministry, and doing whatever else is designated as their responsibilities. Regular congregational meetings, which bring together all the members from the various campuses, exhibit and foster unity among members, display and promote strong connections between the various sites, provide opportunities for members to discharge their congregational responsibilities, model the pattern of the early churches, and so forth.

Common Mission

The church exists in multiple locations for the purpose of reaching the lost in an area. Accordingly, there is a geographical limitation placed on the multi-site church, which is the area the church is attempting to reach with the gospel and its ministries. Its strong sense of missional identity translates into the church reaching out to the area's residents, including adding other sites to expand the church's reach into heretofore outlying areas.

On the next pages, the general structure and relationships between the Mother Church (CBC) and other churches and campuses are outlined. The process to launch a campus into an autonomous church (should the need arise) is also described.

An Elder-led, Deacon-served, Congregational Multi-site Church Structure



Multi-site Model (*Bastrop as the “mother church” with a network of campuses*):

- One church council with representation from all campuses.
- One staff with regular communication between the central leadership and satellite ministries.
- One budget/unified finances.
- One church, many places.
- Procedures are put in place to transition a campus to an autonomous church if certain criteria are met.

Autonomous Church Definition

- Local council for each church.
- Local staff for each church.
- Local budget/independent finances, property, tax ID, etc.
- The same mission for the Kingdom.

Church Partnership (*assist smaller churches*):

- Partner church is still autonomous.
- Provide expertise to organize leaders/ministry.
- Provide materials for sermon prep/ministries.
- Help as needed, open-ended support.

One Church, Many Places

An Elder-led, Deacon-served, Congregational Multi-site Church Structure

Multi-site Campus Lifecycle *(optional launch on conditional timeline):*

- Hire a part/full-time pastor.
- Identify families from the launching campus that will attend the new campus up front.
- Matrix ministry leaders to set up/run ministries.
- Track income/expenses for the campus after the first year.
- Each year reevaluate each campus on what is best for reaching the local community.
 - Are all ministries healthy and led by competent, trained individuals?
 - Are there experienced representatives within the campus for the different administrative and lay leadership roles (ie. Management team, deacons, church council, trustees)?
 - Does giving indicate increasing spiritual growth of individuals?
 - Is the campus still viable?
- If the campus desires autonomy, follow the process listed below.

The process of becoming autonomous.

- How should autonomy for a satellite campus be pursued?
 - During the annual review or other times, campus leadership presents their vision to the Church Council.
 - Present financial records showing a year of positive cash flow.
 - Review leadership, body health, and testimony of the work God is doing at the campus.
 - Campus votes on the desire to be autonomous.
 - A successful vote will establish a transition team to determine and then implement a transition plan.
- The transition team determines the required time, costs, and process to set up the following *(6-12 mos.)*:
 - Leadership
 - Vision – Campus pastor and church council/elders.
 - Administration – Management team and trustees.
 - Operation – Ministry leaders and deacons.
 - Finances
 - Campus budgets (payroll, utilities, obligations, etc.)
 - Possible seed money from the mother church?
 - Financial institutions and accounting services.
 - Legal
 - Church name, tax entity/status.
 - Denominational membership applications.
 - Church constitution and by-laws.
 - Trustees established.
 - Operations
 - Church website, email, online giving system.
 - Worship software and other software subscriptions.
- Church-wide vote to approve proposed transition plan.
 - Budget for the new church and modified budget for mother church without satellite.
 - Approval of costs to implement the transition plan and of any seed money donation to the new autonomous church.
- Implement transition plan *(6-12 mos.)*
 - Transfer of buildings, land, and any approved seed money last to occur.
- Mother church may offer support (financial, leadership, etc.) based on need during the transition.