

BOOK

Decentralized

AUTHOR

Bo Chancey

PUBLISHER

41Press

PUBLICATION DATE

January 2019

SYNOPSIS [FROM THE COVER]

Church leaders have preached for generations that the church is not a building - the Church is people. But then every activity and ministry effort is building-reliant. Even outreach efforts are basically nothing more than gimmicks designed to get new people into the building. How can people actually be the Church when they are so busy going to the church? Stop thinking about church as a box.

“The Church is a river. It cuts a wide berth through history, and the current is gaining strength. The Church is fluid. It is living water; it is not stagnant. It is a wild river that cannot be contained.”

“The sermons repeat: ‘The church is not a building. The church is not a building. The church is not a building.’ But then every activity and ministry effort is building-reliant. Even outreach efforts are basically nothing more than gimmicks designed to get new people into the building.”

“Knowledge is power. The more educated people become, the less likely they will be oppressed. Things like literacy, access to information and freedom of expression are primary factors in toppling oppressive power structures. The Dark Ages represent a period in history where the Church held significant power and control over people. The message of Jesus became increasingly perverted and diluted until it was essentially unrecognizable. The construct for church (the box) was used to enslave people instead of to empower people.”

“The centralized, come-to-our-building model was the only way to deliver the information. It was an appealing model to people with a modern mindset. The modern mindset desired information, required evidence and loved proofs. The thinking was “prove it to me, so I can believe it” and “feed me information, so I can believe it more.” Modern thinkers often valued information over experience.”

“When a church sees its primary purpose as delivering information, the information shared will become increasingly more obscure and trivial in order to keep the consumers coming back. The person delivering the information must retain his/her position as the expert by feeding people things they do not already know. People find themselves eight levels removed from the deep truth of who God is and who we are in relation to Him and believing that some irrelevant tidbit of Bible trivia is deep.”

“Access changes everything. People can sing worship songs and watch sermons from anywhere at any time. They can do it in cars in the parking lot at their kid’s soccer game. They can do it in tents on a mountainside while on a family camping trip. They can do it in a coffee shop, a living room, an airplane, around the dinner table, at work, in a hospital and so on.”

"2,000 years ago, physically meeting together was the only way to share information. Gathering together at a specific time in a specific place was the most efficient way to connect with people. You could not make a phone call to ask a question or share some news. You could not send an email, and even if you could, very few people were literate. One of the great errors of the Church over the centuries has been the creation of an artificial community that pulls people out of their organic communities."

"I am not proposing that we abandon worship gatherings in set locations at set times, but I am suggesting that we think differently about how often people will be physically present. I believe that communal worship experiences are more crucial now than ever before, and I think that we ought to offer more services in more places at more times. We just should not expect everyone to be there every week. I also think that in many cases it is better that they are not physically present every week in a church building."

"Church is a business. It is much, much more than a business, but it is still a business. People get bent out of shape when churches make business decisions, but that is the basic reality of how they function in our world. Churches have mortgages, light bills, payroll and many other financial obligations. We can pretend all we want that churches are not businesses, but at the end of the day every church has business concerns that must be addressed."

"People who worship online still give to their church. Another thought to consider when thinking about the financial implications of online worship is that the cost per person being reached drops dramatically. Churches that embrace online worship can reach more people for far less money. From a business standpoint, online worship is a smart tool to invest in and encourage. With less giving dollars going to support church infrastructure, there are more dollars available for outreach, community support and global missions."

"Allowing people to be and experience church anywhere anytime increases accountability. Our boxed church methodologies often treat church like activities that you participate in from time to time as opposed to a 24/7 reality. The best accountability you can have is to remember that you are the Church. We are Christ's Body...His physical presence on earth. What we do is what He does, and what we do not do is what He does not do."

"Getting worship out of the box and into the air releases the church to be the Church. It is an answer to the fervent prayers of generations of people who longed for a day when people could understand that the Church is not a building...The Church is people. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, and the true worshipers of God worship in Spirit and in truth."

"Providing the information is a secondary function of the local church. People have access to the information and can get it anywhere at any time. Local churches offer an experience. The experience inside a church building is different from an online experience. Arguing about which experience is better is foolish and unproductive. Better or worse is irrelevant...what matters is that both are available, both are useful, and they are not in competition with one another."

"In order to reach real people in the real world with the real Jesus, we must genuinely change our methodology. We must constantly evaluate the felt needs of people and use our resources to address those needs. Much of old church methodology is attempting to scratch itches that no longer exist. That approach is abrasive and eventually becomes irritating. Churches are insanely ineffective when they irritate their world."

"Waging war against culture does not make much sense. We are called to fight for people not against them. We need to learn to ask better questions. What do people need? What is effective at engaging people? What are people looking for? What does not work any longer? How can we help?"

Ask better questions and listen.”

“The internet is the real world. Real people make real connections and do real things all day every day online. If we are serious about the mission of Jesus and truly do want to go into ALL the world, then we will go online. We will decentralize. We will send people instead of holding people. We will change, and the real world will be reached.”

“Fear will come through the realization that power, control and resources will move from institutional hierarchies into the hands of ordinary people. The threat of loss typically leads to fear. Fear is a dominant emotion. When fear sets in, it takes control. Fear makes a terrible god. Fearful leaders will attack what they do not understand. They will resort to the worst tactics religion affords . . . guilt and manipulation. When fear sets into the hearts of church leaders, they begin to behave in nasty ways. They seek to hold onto every scrap of power at their disposal. They belittle those they feel threatened by. They teach fear. They spread fear. They lead with fear. They live by fear. And fear will kill them.”

“Breaking away from a church expression can be painful. Churches that attempt to hold people instead of sending them will add to the messiness. In-fighting will put some black eyes on the Body of Christ. Some will be repulsed by the messiness and will run away from Jesus. The more prepared we are, the less this will happen.”

“Communication opens us up to a whole new world of possibilities. We can pray for one another and share resources instantly. We can see what is happening anywhere in the world through cellphone technology. We are not dependent upon news crews to capture and broadcast stories. Real relationships with real people will allow us to see what is really going on. Out of sight, out of mind will no longer be the prevailing reality.”

“The fluid nature of the Decentralized Church paves the way for people to move gracefully. When churches attempt to hold onto their congregations and are internally focused on retention, they make it difficult for people to leave. The harder it is for people to leave a church, the more fighting over stupid stuff. Caged animals generally become nasty or docile...neither is useful for growing God’s kingdom.”

“Decentralized Church is not fighting against previous expressions. It is not a concerted effort to bring reform to the Church. It is not a movement derived from leaders with agendas to fix what is broken. The Decentralized Church is simply the Holy Spirit moving in ordinary people in ordinary places to experience extraordinary life.”

“The fight against the Decentralized Church is a complete waste of energy. If you are not willing to get on board, the least you could do is get out of the way. The movement will not be stopped. It will not even be slowed down. The momentum is too great. Those who try to stand in the way are going to be blown over. I do not want that to happen. God does not want that to happen. I assume that you do not want that to happen.”

“The role of church leaders in the Decentralized Church will not be to control but to continually empower and release. Do not attempt to corral what God is doing. Do not try to create systems and procedures to direct the movement of the Spirit. Simply empower and release. Help people see that they are the priesthood of believers.”

“Who is the Decentralized Church? Everyone. Young and old. Rich and poor. Urban, suburban and rural. Conservative and liberal. Male and female. All races and nationalities. The Decentralized Church is a brilliant kaleidoscope of God’s creation.”