

# The Church Is Dying.

There comes a moment when you realise there's no point continuing. The body is biologically dead and the spirit has departed, the ship has sunk, the war is lost, the game is over and the whistle has been blown. Many people are saying something similar about the church in the West today. It's done and dusted, past its sell-by date and, in many ways, they are right.


The church seems to be in terminal decline, its heyday well and truly gone. Attendance is at an all time low, church buildings are being sold off to become pubs or clubs, the authority of its leaders is being questioned, secularism is rampant, Islam is on the rise, visions and dreams are dying and church morality is as low as that in society - understand the picture, **THINGS ARE NOT GOOD.**




So is this another book simply lamenting the state of the church in the West, and in particular, Britain?

**NO.**

This book is about two things:

 To have a no holds barred look at the current reality of the Church today, to raise our awareness of how bad the situation really is so that we shift the debate from 'should we or shouldn't we change' to 'if we don't change NOW we are sunk!'

 To offer some practical steps to get us from the current reality to a future fulfilling the vision of what the church can and should be like according to its founding members. One of the most vital steps will be to lay out the reason for the need to re-introduce an **abundance mindset** back into the church.

However, BEWARE - these steps are not easy, they will cost and they will mean losing friends, gaining enemies and moving on, and that's just *within* the church!

My message is far from one of love and peace at the cost of all else - my message is more like Jesus' message when He said:

*Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law - a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.*

*(Matthew 10 v34-6, NIV)*

My hope is that this book will inspire and start a revolution - for the time is well and truly gone for an evolution. We need the Church of England, Baptists, Methodists, the Free Church, Pentecostals, the lot - to **WAKE UP** and let the **REVOLUTION** begin, let the adrenaline surge as the gloves come off and the fight for the local church begins.



# First, Get Mad!

*Imagine with me for a moment...*

The devil sitting on his mock throne, surveying the situation he's so • **scared** as he looks across the world at the local churches • **scared** of the political correctness • **scared** of the wackiness • **scared** of the bureaucracy • **scared** of the slowness • **scared** of the same sixty people turning out for church, faithfully growing old together and enjoying it being a private club just for them • **scared** of the people falling over in the spirit while at yet another revival meeting • **scared** of the yearly united evangelistic week in the city which ticks all the boxes but sees very few saved • **scared** of the all the introspection and the 'what about me' brigade • **scared** of the people asleep during worship • **scared** of the faithless people who believe in poverty and that miracles were for biblical times only • **scared** of the just-for-Sunday crew • **scared** of the 'talk the talk' but never 'walk the walk' crew • **scared** of strawberries and Pimms at the pastor's house • **scared** of the vicar preaching about whether the government is right or wrong • **scared** of the coffee mornings • **scared** of the weekly small group that people religiously turn up to • **scared** of the disregarded buildings • **scared** of the faithful few who turn to out to pray each week with no expectation of change • **scared** of the leaders who won't even stand up to their own congregation.

Can you imagine letting the sheep lead the shepherd? You don't have to, it's rife in the church.

• **scared** of the fear • **scared** of the 'let's take a year out and travel the world' gang • **scared** of the 'I need a break' group who believe church is too demanding - read the Bible, Jesus promised blood, sweat and toil and for it - reward in this life and the next! • **scared** of the summer camps (what have they achieved, apart from reminding thousands of young people how they don't have a church that will keep up their passion! Now, if we renamed them 'how to become a change insurgent for God' or 'let's change the world NOW' camps which didn't just last the summer, maybe we'd be onto something.)

Oh yes, he's • **scared** of the Christian Unions on campuses all over the country - now this one I could talk about forever, CUs have become the single biggest barrier to their own vision of affecting Universities for God. Just ask any non-Christian and they'll tell you that the CU are a bunch of saddos, or they've never heard of it, or that it's full of freaks and you know what, sometimes they're not wrong! Why? So much politics, so many people thinking they can make a difference but without the guidance and long term plan it needs: it's delusion at its most grand, and its most destructive.

But let me tell you what I see for Universities, I see an army of young people who are leaderless and I am desperate for them to be led into war.

They are armed to the teeth with weaponry, but don't use it. Instead, they meet together in little groups and 'hang out', debating whether there should be hand raising in CU or whether they should pray in tongues. It's a waste and it's criminal.

Hopefully, you've picked up my sarcasm. Trouble is, the devil's not scared. He's loving it.

Let's take a second here.

# Get it.

Let what I have said sink in, I want you to feel my total and utter anger and pain, feel the passion and love, and let it get you angry. Let it get you good and mad because then you just might act.

We won't change until the pain becomes too much, change only happens when we are no longer willing to live with the situation - usually because it's too painful: think about losing weight, leaving a partner, changing jobs...

We often make the change when the pain in our world drives us to taking the action required. Right now as you survey the situation there is not enough pain and anger, frustration and rage at the state of the church. You hear comments like "it's not that bad" or "there's no need to get so worked up." Yet every single indicator possible tells us that for the last however long the church has been in terminal decline. In any other business, in any other sector, all the red flags would have gone up a long time ago - but not the church!

Get the point.

We need to

**GET  
MAD!**



# Now, Imagine This...

I can see a church rising up that is full of righteous anger, excitement, determination, passion and resilience, a church that is beginning to take action, that is fearless, and I can imagine the devil looking out on a totally different scene...

There is • **fear** as he sees leaders who are strong with great vision and a flexible 'let's give it a go' attitude - think Paul Scanlon, think Archbishop Sentamu, think Colin Dye, think Terry Virgo - these are some, but we need more. And if you don't know those names, it's definitely time that you did.

He's • **in fear** of a relevant, credible church that is aware of and thinks about non-Christians • **in fear** of a fast-thinking, lean church that can adapt in a heartbeat • **in fear** of a growing church that's attracting new people to come and hear the awesome message we have been given.

His • **fear** of a church where over half of the congregation are under thirty years old • **fear** of a church full of kids and young people who passionately worship and sing the songs at school and on the street because they're as cool as what's in the charts.

There's • **fear** of a church that is so naturally supernatural, just like the early church in Acts 2 where the supernatural benefits secular society, oh yes, he's • **in fear** of a church that IS evangelism rather than tries to DO evangelism - it's a way of life, not an activity or an afterthought!

He's quaking with • **fear** of a church that exists for those who don't belong to it - now how old is that one! • **Fearful** of a church where the very presence of God can be felt

during worship, where people are healed, strengthened and led to Christ.

Imagine his • **fear** as he sees a church full of people who understand and who love doing church 24/7, forgetting balance and instead give all to Christ every day, whether at work or at night on the streets doing youth work, or any number of activities that will benefit the communities they live in.

There's • **fear** as he looks out and sees a church where the people love to be with those who don't know God, reaching them with the good news of Jesus. Now this may be through going for a beer with them and listening to them, or babysitting, or meeting other needs.

• **fear** as he sees a church where the pastor is unpredictable and challenging and is more likely to have a curry night where the local chavs turn up than host a Pimms and strawberries snooze-fest.

Can you imagine his • **fear** as he hears reports that preaching on Sundays makes an impact and is thought-provoking and challenging? Where everyone is getting the principles of God and being able to apply them to their lives? His • **fear** as he sees state of the art venues being built all over the country in towns, cities and villages, venues that rival anything that the world is doing and becoming a magnet for people who are devoted to doing and being church as a lifestyle?

You can almost smell the • **fear** as he sees a church that is taught to pray continually and while on the move, rather than once a week at the 'pity party' prayer meeting, oh yes, taste his • **fear** as young people have an option other than University or minimum wage slave labour - the option to stay at their local church and play a major role in taking the kingdom into their city.

His • **fear** when all those who hold 'pity parties' and who so often claimed that they 'need a break' begin to rise up, believing the promises of God, being healed to become the walking wounded who won't stop but fight on, using their experiences to make them stronger, more determined and more desperate for breakthrough for God and His Kingdom!

Imagine his • **fear** seeing young people going to University and getting plugged into their local church so that they then reach into the University in relevant and credible ways - where the debates they have are how to reach more people faster, further and more effectively, where they put on the best bar crawls in town and there isn't anyone vomiting into a urine-stained nightclub toilet at the end!

And let's not forget the summer camps, as I'm sure he'll try to, as they move into the cities not occasionally but every year as churches (working together or alone - who really cares, as long as they're *working*) putting on weekly kids clubs and youth groups and evangelistic events and street cleaning and and and...not one summer but every summer, every year, everywhere!

We don't have to imagine this, we can make it a reality!



So let the **REVOLUTION**  
begin!

Yes, it will be **MESSY** but just look at the  
book of Acts or in fact any of the Apostle Paul's letters -  
pioneering work is, always has been, and always will be

**MESSY!**