



CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

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PART 4: HOW TO BUILD A CHURCH



According to US News, many churches in America were hit hard by the recent COVID-19 pandemic with only about 85% having returned since then. Churches are closing at rapid numbers in the US, researchers say, as congregations dwindle across the country and a younger generation of Americans abandon Christianity altogether – even as faith continues to dominate American politics.

As the US adjusts to an increasingly non-religious population, thousands of churches are closing each year in the country.¹

A. CENTRAL QUESTION



With church attendance declining, should churches be “rebuilt” (reorganized) primarily around the needs and values of a society’s culture in order to bring them back? Why or why not?

B. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH (EPHESIANS 2:1-10 NIV)

The Raw Materials of the Church (2:1-3)

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.”

The Architect of the Church (2:4)

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy...”

¹ “Losing Their Religion: Why US Churches Are on the Decline <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jan/22/us-churches-closing-religion-covid-christianity>>. January 22, 2023.

The Foundation of the Church (2:5-6)

“...made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...

The Purpose of the Church (2:7)

“...in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

The Price of Construction (2:8-9)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.”

The Product of the Church (2:10)

“For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. (2:1-3) Describe the “raw materials” of the church and in what condition they were before being used.
2. (2:4) Who is the architect of the church and why is he building it?
3. (2:5-6) What/who is the foundation of the church? (Hint: see Ephesians 2:20). What steps can believers take to ensure that the church is built on this foundation?
4. (2:7) What is the ultimate purpose of the church in this verse?
5. (2:8-9) Who pays the cost for the church?
6. (2:10) What is the product of the church in this verse?

D. THE FIVE KEY “BUILDING BLOCKS” OF THE CHURCH

