



## AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church

*Hugh Halter, Matt Smay*

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## **AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church** Hugh Halter , Matt Smay

AND, by Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, asks and provides an answer for one of the most important questions for church leaders today: What is happening to the church in America? By all appearances, it looks like we are “doing” church better than we ever have. In the past thirty years the number of mega-churches has increased from under 100 to over 7,500. In the past ten years the number of multi-site churches has increased from under 100 to over 2,000. By the numbers, these church movements enjoy the national platform, the national voice, and the resources to profoundly impact the Kingdom. In spite of the rapid growth of these prevailing church movements, why is the Western church still in massive decline? Numerous books have been written documenting the flight of members from the institutional church. This is not another book about how to do church better or how to just get people back into the pews. AND helps you—whether you are a mega-church, traditional, contemporary, or organic church leader—focus on the vast majority of unchurched Christians and non-believers who are not moving toward any form of church. You will learn how to value existing church forms—attracting people to a physical church and releasing people into hands-on ministry ... bringing together the very best of the attractional and missional models for church ministry. AND will equip you and all church leaders to value existing church forms while catalyzing a missional movement of incarnational people into the world for Jesus Christ. AND is the second book in the Exponential Series—a partnership between Exponential Network, Leadership Network, and Zondervan featuring several signature books each year to tell the reproducing church story, celebrate the diversity of models and approaches God is using to reproduce healthy congregations, and highlight the innovative practices of healthy reproducing churches.

## **AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church Details**

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## **From Reader Review AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church for online ebook**

### **Amy Jacobsen says**

I deeply appreciated this balanced and (what I believe is) Biblical approach to church. Church is not simply a gathering of His people into a building...though there is good that happens when this occurs...it is too a scattering of disciples and witness to communally incarnate the Gospel and proclaim the good news in word and deed. May it be so!!

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### **Rachel says**

“Church is God’s people intentionally committing to die together so that others can find his kingdom.”

Halter and Smay raise important questions for the modern church to consider, especially as more and more become disillusioned with the church as a historical institution and as many more leave. I found their candor to be challenging and unapologetic, but they were also respectful in their criticisms of some of the more consumeristic and attractional church models. There isn't an easy solution, but there is a need to get back to the basics of what our call is as a church - and that is to build disciples and then GO. I appreciated their insight about church not being the end product/goal, but rather a place where the saints are taught and equipped to go out. While their perspective is how Christians can be more missional, I think that what they're really pointing towards is not just having another chore that we have to add to an already busy life, but rather to become more intentional about how we live out our lives.

Inspiring, encouraging and challenging.

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### **Brian Reinholtz says**

Well balanced look at the missional church and what is needed in western culture without neglecting the role of the organized gathering.

In my opinion the most eye opening piece is how the authors break down consumerism in the faith and show even many noble pursuits, can be carnal and consumeristic and contrary to Christ's vision of the church.

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### **Mar says**

Explains an outline for church/homechurch/community growth. Gave me a deeper appreciation of what is fueling my pastor.

Written by two "pastors" who are using this approach to mission and ministry in Denver CO. Area, this book is geared more to leaders/pastors within a church. Lay members get a better understanding of the direction in which they're encouraged to go and what that might look like.

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### **Victor Labrada says**

Where Tangible Kingdom prods and irks like an angst-ridden teenager, AND argues tactfully like a softened veteran. I would say this is light years beyond TK and would be the proper starting place if you are thinking about Missional Communities and not a fan of the "boo, church" approach that incarnational model guys tend to bark. I will not spoil the contents, suffice to say that if you don't read this book now, you will read it in 15 years when everyone points to these guys as the prophets of the demise of solely attractional church. Avoid it at your own risk.

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### **Gregory says**

I firmly believe that if every pastor in America read this book, two things would happen. First, we would have a major disruption and church-fight on our hands. Second, a stronger, healthier, and more effective church would emerge in America. While Hugh Halter and Matt Smay temper their criticism of the contemporary American church with exhortations to proceed slowly and patiently, their vision (and their practice) is truly counter-cultural and revolutionary.

It is counter-cultural in that it challenges the "church culture" that so many churches mistake for the essence of church life. Why do we go to church? To hear a sermon, to hear a great praise band, to have great fellowship, to have a potluck. Then, after all our felt needs are met, we go our separate ways and never see our church buds until next Sunday. AND shows that the church is called to more than this.

Halter and Smay note that there are two types of churches: "attractional" and "incarnational." Most churches are "attractional"—they try to attract people to their service, or to all their wonderful programs, through various means. They might go out into the culture (door-to-door), but the main point is to get more people into the building, and to keep them there once they've been lured into the church. The "attractional" model engages culture after establishing a church/ community. In contrast, the "incarnational" model engages the culture first, forms a community, which then attracts people to a life of following Christ. The "incarnational" folks would spend more time in coffee shops, in pubs, or in throwing block parties. They proceed in the assumption (a Biblical one, I think), that people will find true godliness and holiness beautiful and ultimately more attractive than programs or good preaching (how many Christians even care about good preaching!?). They may not be able to put their finger on it, but they will notice that Christians are living differently, living more deeply, and they will want to be a part of it. A good sermon might move them for 5 minutes (just like a politician's speech), but a community that loves them and is helping them to see what it means to live in God's Kingdom--that's something the world doesn't offer!

While joining a church is the part of this process, it is not the final goal. The final goal of being "missional" (the new catch-phrase, but I think it's a needed one), is to go on mission yourself. Not on a short-term mission to some South American country, as valuable as that might be, but on a life-long mission to everyone we come into contact with. This means that we actually have to come into contact with people, rather than just creating a really cool web-site with solid theological slogans :-) It's a sad fact that most church growth now seems to be "transfer growth," rather than conversion growth. People just leave one church and join another.

Halter and Smay balance both sides of being the church admirably. The church must "gather" as the church, but it must also "scatter" into the world. Most churches just focus on one side of the AND--thus the title of the book!

My only criticisms would be along the lines of "don't throw out the baby with the bath-water." Although "churchianity" has failed in many ways, I would meditate deeply on the words of G.K. Chesterton: "Christianity has not been found tried and wanting. It has never been tried." If the historic structures and liturgies of the Church seem to have failed recently, then perhaps it's because they weren't being done in the right ways. We don't have to re-invent all of the wheels on the Church-wagon--maybe just re-inflate a couple.

I'm just getting into the whole "missional" and "emergent" scene, and learning lots of valuable things from these folks. But, as I read what they're doing, I keep thinking, "That's the early church!" So, perhaps we can all agree on that. If we get our hearts right and focus on community and evangelism in the same way as the early church did, amazing things will happen in the American church. Amazing things are already happening, in America and throughout the rest of the world. The only question is whether existing churches will be a part of it, or whether God will work through up-starts like Halter and Smay and whether the established churches will some day be as empty as the grand cathedrals of Europe are now.

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### **Frank Peters says**

For years, many people in the church of the west seem to believe that to be relevant one needs to conform to society. As a result the church is dying and becoming increasingly irrelevant. This book is all about becoming truly relevant to society by actually listening to and following Jesus, not just pretending.

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### **Ben Adkison says**

Along with The Tangible Kingdom (Halter and Smay's first book), And: The Gathered and Scattered Church is a challenging and worthwhile book for church leaders and church planters. It's unique and insightful. In many ways Halter and Smay are extremely balanced (a rarity among writings on the subject of missional church). This balance comes through in the title of the this book, And: The Gathered AND Scattered Church. Halter and Smay are trying to do a good job of encouraging, and challenging, but at the same time not allowing the pendulum to swing too far in one direction. I really appreciate this intention. And I can honestly say I've been challenged and helped by this book. If I do have one caveat: occasionally their interpretations of biblical texts seem a little rushed or short-sided. It's not extreme, but it's enough to make me scratch my head from time to time. Still, this is a great book with a lot of time-tested advice. Halter and Smay's desire to reach the world and see new people become disciples is very genuine.

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### **George Love says**

Overall, good stuff. There are places where it becomes very theoretical and one could find oneself asking what on earth they are talking about. However, there is also a good bit of very useful, very practical talk that serves as critique of things as they are and offers alternatives as to how things can be. The basic tension highlighted in the title between the church gathered and the church scattered is covered throughout the book

in ways that are helpful. If you read this book, read through to the end - the last quarter of the book has some of the best and most thoughtful material.

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### **Matt Black says**

It was a good follow-up to the story found in "The Tangible Kingdom" AND it makes you want to "go out and make disciples." AND is more practical than The Tangible Kingdom in that it gives good examples of what to do next. I liked how Hugh and Matt displayed very well how an existing church AND a church plant can both incorporate the gathering of a church community AND the scattering of the church out into the world to be more missional. It was an enjoyable read.

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### **Ryan says**

In a very real sense, AND could serve as a practical handbook for the missional church. Not in a step-by-step, how to sort of a way. Rather in a grass roots, here's what's to consider, watch out for and explore more deeply sort of way. Easily accessible for a wide audience, this is a must read for those looking to invest deeply into the missional way of living.

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### **Brian says**

I didn't like the way he portraited the church sometimes as a completely unmissional entity. But the author communicates his passion for seeing lost people engaged with the truths of the gospel. In my opinion the most helpful idea in this book was chapter five on the modalic and sodalic arms of the church. Read pastoral and missional arms.

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### **B.J. Richardson says**

This is a very strong book on the practical aspects of implementing both attractional (gathered) and missional (scattered) aspects to doing church. From their own experience, Hugh and Matt were a couple of leaders who left the typical (attributional) church to start up a house group (missional). As they grew and God blessed their work, they found that they needed to implement some aspects of typical church and their home groups became Adullam church. They write an excellent book on how leaders from both ends can implement strategies that will help them incorporate both necessary aspects into their ministry.

Leaders and teachers they are, theologians they are not. There were a few points when they were using scripture in a way that had me head scratching a bit. I am not talking heresy or anything like that, just some poor hermeneutics. It wasn't enough to go nailing thesis' to church doors, but it did diminish the overall quality of the book a tad.

That said, I live and work in a "scattered" setting in a part of the world where "gathered" is not as viable and predominant in the West. This book provided great ideas for how I might have to apply their Western concepts in my Near Eastern world.

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### **Alan Rathbun says**

If you're tired of the missional vs. attractional debate, this is a great book. It's a hugely practical book in which Halter and Smay lay down the necessity of both the gathered and scattered church and include steps to balance both in your congregation. It also has great steps for leading change one way or the other.

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### **Doug says**

"The book read like a collection of papers or articles which were written separately but which touched on related topics... The thrust of the book... is that the church is to be sent/missional, but there will also be gatherings. Both of the authors of the book, Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, come from a strongly missional position. So in many ways the book reflects their push to be missional first. Secondly comes their realization and almost concession that there will be gatherings." [Click here to continue reading my review.](#)

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