

Everywhere You Look; Discovering the Church Right Where You Are

By Tim Soerens

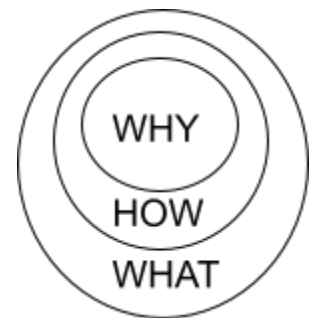
Study Guide

Chapter 1 - The Movement or the Meltdown

1. Do you believe the church is headed for meltdown or is it on the verge of a movement? (pgs. 7-9)
2. On page 16, Tim writes: “*Don’t believe the lie that the future of the church depends on more hype, more professionals, and more stagecraft*”. Give an example of performance and an example of presence. Where do you see these different ways of relating in your church?
3. Do you see church as a place we go or as who we are as a people? Explain why you feel this way.

Chapter 2 - The Big “Why”

1. Simon Sinek says the “*what’s* are important – they provide the tangible proof of the why - but **why** must come first. The ‘why’ provides the context for everything else”. (pg. 28)
 - a. So, what is the church for? (Hint: “When we ask what the church is **for**, we begin with answers about God, not ourselves.” pg. 29)
2. The **WHY** is what Tim calls “God’s Dreams”. How would you describe “God’s dream”?
 - a. Do we spend enough time discovering God’s dreams?
 - b. Does your church talk more about what God *has done* or what God *IS DOING*?
 - c. How do we discover God’s dreams?
 - d. What does this dream look like for your life? Your family? The life of your community?



3. What else stood out to you in this chapter?

Chapter 3 - The Magic of Paying Attention

1. On page 26, Tim says that the “magic of paying attention to the Spirit at work in our neighbourhoods is the only legitimate way forward”. Thoughts? Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
2. “Don’t be helpful, be curious.” (Peter Block, pg. 44)
 - a. What does Block mean by this?
 - b. Does your church and its programs focus more on helping or on being curious?
 - c. How could a shift towards *sacred curiosity* transform your relationship to God, to others, and to your neighbours/local community?
3. What would you say your church pays the most “attention” to: God’s activities or your own? How do you see this play out?
 - a. How could focussing on God’s activities (seeking first His kingdom) change the way your church ‘does ministry’?

Chapter 4 - The Megachurch Next Door

Now that we’ve established the WHY (chapter 2) and the HOW (chapter 3) we move to the WHAT.

1. “When we mistakenly turn the church itself into the big why, we get caught up in the competition to see who can get more people.” (pg. 55). In what ways has your church confused the Why and the What?
2. It can be easy to compare with other churches and only see what we lack. Where is there abundance in your congregation? In your community?
 - a. How could focussing on abundance change your church’s culture?
3. Where (or how) have you seen the universal church act as a body? Share an example.

“If the church is just another optional consumer choice, it’s too small of a story to give our lives to. There has to be something more.”
(pg. 56-57)

Chapter 5 - The Parish is the Unit of Change

Tim ends chapter 4 talking about getting particular; getting small. *“Getting clear about the particularity of our parish is important if we hope to avoid the seesaw effect of prioritizing only individuals to the neglect of systems and vice versa.”* (pg. 68, bottom)

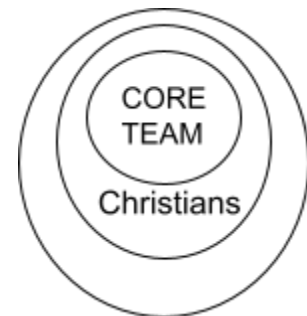
1. On pgs. 68-71, Tim walks us through how churches normally view and participate in change. He introduces to us a third way; the concept of a parish.
 - a. Do you agree with this “model” of ministry? What are the pros? What could be some cons? What questions does this arise for you/your church?
 - b. What side would you (or your church) fall on: focussing on individuals or systems? (pg. 69)
2. Tim talks about churches being either ‘tower-builders’ (focussing on strategies/techniques) or ‘Pentecostals’ (focussing on listening/waiting). Which one resonates more with you/your church? Share an example to back up your thoughts.
 - a. What would it look like if you/your church spent more time waiting and listening?
 - b. What could be the barriers holding you back from doing this?
3. In this chapter, we’re introduced to another set of circles. At the centre is the Core Team: “a team that can create a local culture and invite others along.” (pg. 76) AKA, a small team of COMMITMENT.
 - a. Have you ever been part of a Core team? Who invited you?
 - b. What would it look like if this was a Deacon’s primary task? Does this fit within their current mandate? How could they facilitate this way of ‘doing ministry’?
 - c. How could this model of ministry change the way churches function?
4. What else stood out to you in Chapter 5?



Chapter 6 - The Same Team

This chapter moves us to the next circle - **CHRISTIANS** (a small team of relationships.)

1. How would you summarize this chapter in one sentence?
2. Do you agree that for the most part, Christians are invisible in their neighbourhoods and in the world? (pg. 82, bottom)



3. Tim uses the analogy of marriage and divorce when talking about the Reformation and churches working together. (pg. 83-85).
 - a. What would most people say church is for: to grow people or to make us happy?
 - b. Read Ephesians 4:1-16. What stands out to you? How do these verses relate to what Tim is saying here?
4. Tim talks about two Methodist churches working together in Seattle (pg. 90-91). Share an example of this in your local context (or share where you’ve seen this elsewhere amongst CRC’s in Canada).
 - a. How do Jesus’ words of John 17 apply here? Is this even possible?
 - b. What opportunities does your church have to pursue unity and collaboration? What is holding you back?
5. What else about this chapter challenged you?

“If the mission of God is reconciliation but the church is not reconciled at the local level, then prioritizing unity is not an add-on but the very core of the mission of God. Essentially culture has been calling our bluff for good reason.”
(pg. 93)

Chapter 7 - Learning From Local Heroes

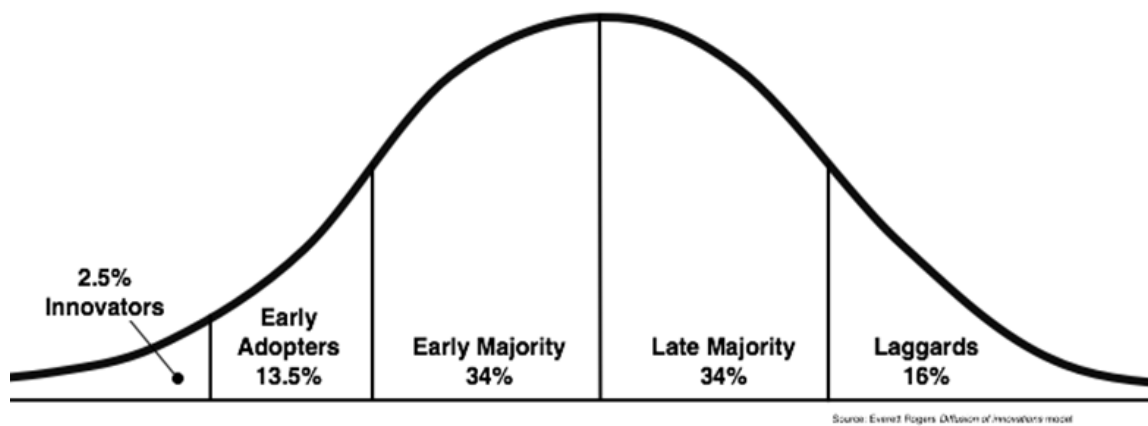
The chapter starts by reminding us that we can’t see what we aren’t looking for! Our desire to do good things in Jesus’ name means we sometimes miss the good things that are being done in our neighbourhood by ordinary citizens - as if God isn’t active in their lives too.

1. “We become what we behold” - do you agree with this statement?
 - a. What would it look like if churches stopped focusing on “what’s wrong” and saw “what’s strong”? How could this change the way we do ministry?
2. Tim touches on something called Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) (pgs. 104-105).
 - a. Would you say your church follows these principles or does it tend to still look at needs and gaps first?
 - b. What is one way your church could begin to adopt this ABCD model? Where would you start to discover the gifts and abilities and passions of people in your church? In your local community?
3. We are now in the 3rd circle, **CITIZENS**. Who are some ‘local heroes’ in your community or city? Why do you call them that?
 - a. What can we learn from these people?
 - b. What would it look like if your church worked alongside them?
 - c. What holds you back from collaborating with ‘secular’ institutions/agencies?

Chapter 8 - Already Here

This is the “Big Picture” chapter, and offers simple ways to get started in this new way of “doing church” and offers some helpful insights.

1. On page 112, Tim talks about the “innovation curve”. Think about the people in YOUR church and where they may fall on this curve...
 - a. Where do you personally fall on this chart?



- b. Who in your church are the 15%-ish who are willing to take a risk (Innovators + Early Adopters)? How are they a part of your church’s ministry?
 - c. Where would you place the people who make the decisions at your church (staff, council members, ministry leaders)?
 - d. Who are the gatekeepers at your church? Where do most of them fall?
 - e. Why does any of this matter?
2. At the end of the book (pg. 123), Tim proposes three (3) practices your church could start today to listen and learn from other communities.
 - a. Could your church commit to these? Who are the right people you could ask to join you on this journey? (aka Core Team)
 - b. What would you add to this list?
 3. What excited you about this book? What challenged you? What would you push back on?
 4. Who would you recommend this book to?

