

**BOOK**

*A Church of House Churches: An Articulated and Applied Ecclesiology*

**AUTHOR**

Jason Shepperd

**PUBLISHER**

Good City Publishing

**PUBLICATION DATE**

May 2022

**SYNOPSIS [From the publisher]**

*"A Church of House Churches* explores common characteristics throughout the early church, Scripture, second century continuation of first century principles, church history, and the global church. And, then discusses where the divergence happened, and how these alterations have remained unchanged for centuries.

*"A Church of House Churches* gives introductory ecclesiology/theology of the church, shares practices of how to create one church made up of many House Churches, and tells stories of how these early church characteristics are being exercised in a local church context today."

---

*"We're each doing church uniquely different. Each of us has our own approach, definitions, and in some cases, methods for how we believe a church should accomplish the mission of Jesus. However, in the end, we each agree that the church is Jesus' church. He started it, He leads it, He builds it. It exists for His purposes, and for His glory. It's for Him, and is empowered by Him."*

*"When it comes to ecclesiology, I believe there is an "ecclesiological genius" present in patterns, structures, and principles that should be part of every church, every where, for all time. These absolutes are biblical. They are historical. And they are global."*

*"I wanted to plant a church that was decentralized, with distributed leadership, that practiced living in diverse discipleship community. To me, it didn't matter if 40 people came (which is where we started), 400, or 4,000—I was going to follow with all I had this conviction and desire to create this kind of church."*

*"We intentionally didn't read the books everyone was reading, or go to the church growth conferences everyone was attending. They didn't seem to work anyway, since the overwhelming majority of church starts were struggling or ceasing to exist after three to four years. We simply took all of the ecclesiological DNA we found in the Bible over the years, study of church history, global church engagement, and decades of church leadership experience, and synthesized these with practical applications we believed should and could work in any context."*

*"We share a brief ecclesiology weekly in our gatherings. We say weekly that we are a church (and we define that), and that we are a project, "a constant pursuit of becoming what Christ originally intended."*

*"Doctrine is the revealed truth of God. And a pastor's and Bible teacher's job is to help people understand truths about God- who God is, how God works, and how we live in relationship to God and His purposes and plans."*

“Most people do not have ecclesiological conversations. Ecclesiology is a hidden topic in theological books, writings, journals, and seminaries. It’s rare to find a group of people having public conversations about ecclesiology. You’ll be hard pressed to find an ecclesiology conference this year. The church is the carrier of doctrine to God’s people. But we are often carrying a tonnage of well developed doctrine in a vessel of underdeveloped ecclesiology.”

“Many pastors today are leading their church context based off of past experience, preference or, philosophical ideology of culture and context.”

“In the birth of the first church, God created strands of DNA that should be present in every subsequent body of believers. This DNA was produced and passed down from the first God-created church body, and should be pursued and possessed by every church since the inception of the first.”

“I asked him to describe his approach and methodology using the Bible as a foundation, and then I would do the same. After being unusually silent for a moment, he said, “I can’t argue my position, or why yours is wrong, from the Bible. But I still don’t feel good about it.” I said humbly but confidently, “Okay, I can. Let’s open our Bibles. I’ll show you from these passages why I believe we should do things this way.”

“Titus gives us a glimpse of a “Church of House Churches” - one church comprised of many House Churches. Titus was creating many decentralized House Church communities by enlisting, equipping, identifying, and empowering House Church pastors to oversee House Churches all across Crete. Paul wanted Titus to have DISTRIBUTED pastoral leadership, DECENTRALIZED from priest and place, into pastoring DIVERSE DISCIPLESHIP communities, connected by common elder oversight.”

“Unfortunately there does not exist enough insight into first century continuation of practices. But, Michael Kruger, in his book, “Christianity at the Crossroads: How the Second Century Shaped the Future of the Church,” gives a clear picture of how the church continued to function beyond the first century.”

“There is a beauty in connectivity. The overreach of centralization can be avoided, so there is no need for the overreaction of isolation and disconnectedness other House Churches. We can have a true decentralized House Church community, and still have some centralization for support, development, and synergy.”

“A church can be distributed and decentralized, and still have some centralization for accountability, encouragement, direction, and mission. Titus had some centralized leadership over the decentralized House Churches.”

“Paul would also often continue to lead by pen. Hence, our inspired Scriptures available to us today to give us insight into the workings of God within His church. Paul would send letters of encouragement, instruction, admonition, warnings, and rebuke. Paul wrote specifically for his audience in that community, while knowing his writings would be shared with many other churches, for many years to come.”

“Churches that share the exact same structure, approach, and theology, but differ in sizes, often seem to have a sense of more effectiveness or correctness over another.”

“Pastoring is cultivating a community that comprehensively reflects the full biblical descriptions of community, not just aspects of a church, but a complete and healthy church. Pastoring is taking oversight and responsibility of the comprehensive condition of people in a spiritual community.”