

# THE CHURCH AWAKENING: AN URGENT CALL FOR RENEWAL

## THE CHURCH: LET'S START HERE

MATTHEW 16:13–18; ACTS 2:41–47



### The Heart of the Matter

We are surrounded by churches. They are not only numerous; they are varied. Added to the many denominational and nondenominational distinctions is the fact that each local church has its own unique culture. “Media churches” can be seen on televisions and computers, where some of the characteristics of a “church” are present: music is sung, sermons are preached, offerings are taken, and people’s lives are influenced. But with no actual street address, people can’t assemble with others and participate together. Also, cults mimic churches and have loyal followers. Is it any wonder, in the midst of all this, that so much confusion exists regarding the church? Our idea of church needs renewal, so let’s start at the beginning.



### Discovering the Way

#### 1. Milestones: Looking at a Church . . . and Remembering

In 1998, Chuck started Stonebriar Community Church, which grew in membership to thousands in a short amount of time, offering many unique challenges.

#### 2. Looking into Scripture . . . and Discovering Church (Matthew 16:13–18; Acts 2:41–47)

The idea of the church originated in Jesus’s prediction at Caesarea Philippi but was born in Jerusalem with Peter’s sermon and the people’s response.

#### 3. Looking in on the Early Church . . . and Learning

What was present in the early church? What was absent? Who was leading the church then? And was it working?

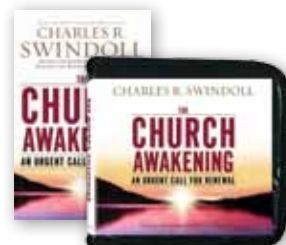


### Starting Your Journey

Look around your own church and evaluate, according to the following three priorities. First, clear, biblical thinking must override secular planning and corporate mentality. *Think spiritually.* Second, studied, accurate decisions must originate from God’s Word, not human opinion. *Stay biblical.* Third, wise, essential changes must occur to counteract any and all signs of erosion. *Be flexible.*

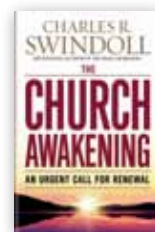


### Tools for Digging Deeper



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