

francis chan we are church

francis chan we are church speaks volumes about the renowned author and speaker's perspective on the fundamental nature of the Christian community. This article delves into Francis Chan's powerful message about the church, exploring his core beliefs, the practical implications of his teachings, and why his vision of "we are church" resonates so deeply with believers today. We will examine his emphasis on authentic community, the dangers of consumerism in faith, and the call to radical discipleship that defines his approach. By understanding Chan's philosophy, readers can gain a clearer picture of what it truly means to be part of God's family and how to live out that reality in tangible ways.

- Understanding Francis Chan's Core Message: "We Are Church"
- The Biblical Foundation of Chan's ecclesiology
- Beyond the Building: Deconstructing the Modern Church
- The Dangers of Church Consumerism
- Living Out "We Are Church": Practical Applications
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Understanding Francis Chan's Core Message: "We Are Church"

Francis Chan's impactful phrase, "we are church," is more than just a catchy slogan; it encapsulates a profound theological and practical reorientation for believers. It shifts the focus from the institutional building or the organized program to the living, breathing body of Christ – the people themselves. Chan consistently emphasizes that the essence of the church lies not in its size, its location, or its entertainment value, but in its relationality and its purpose as a unified expression of God's love in the world. This perspective challenges many conventional understandings of church attendance and participation, calling for a deeper, more committed engagement with fellow believers and with the mission of God.

The Biblical Foundation of Chan's Ecclesiology

At the heart of Francis Chan's understanding of "we are church" lies a deep commitment to the biblical narrative. He consistently draws from the New Testament epistles, particularly Paul's writings, which describe the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:4-5), and a bride (Ephesians 5:22-33). These metaphors are not merely academic; for Chan, they represent the tangible reality of believers being interconnected, interdependent, and divinely indwelt. He stresses that the early church was characterized by radical fellowship, shared resources, and a mutual bearing of burdens, which he believes is the intended expression of the church throughout history. His teachings often highlight Jesus' own prayers for unity among His followers (John 17), underscoring that this unity is central to God's plan for His people and a powerful testament to the world.

Beyond the Building: Deconstructing the Modern Church

A significant aspect of Francis Chan's critique revolves around the tendency in contemporary Western Christianity to equate "church" with a physical building or a weekly service. He argues that this narrow

definition often leads to a superficial understanding of faith, where participation is transactional and individualistic. Chan encourages believers to see themselves as the church, active and vital members of a spiritual organism that extends far beyond Sunday mornings. This means living out faith in everyday life, building genuine relationships with other Christians, and actively participating in the mission Christ has given to His people. He often uses the analogy of a family to describe the ideal church, highlighting the deep bonds, shared responsibilities, and unconditional love that should characterize Christian communities.

The Dangers of Church Consumerism

Francis Chan is a vocal critic of what he terms "church consumerism"—the idea that individuals attend church to meet their own needs, seeking programs and speakers that cater to their preferences. This approach, he contends, can lead to a passive faith where individuals are spectators rather than active participants in the life of the body. When "we are church" becomes about selecting the best "product" or the most appealing experience, the core biblical principles of sacrifice, service, and interdependence are undermined. Chan advocates for a return to a model where believers are committed to a specific community, willing to serve, sacrifice, and love others, even when it's difficult or inconvenient. This commitment is seen as essential for spiritual growth and for the church to fulfill its purpose in the world.

Living Out "We Are Church": Practical Applications

The call to embrace the identity of "we are church" is not an abstract theological concept for Francis Chan; it demands concrete action and a transformation of daily life. He consistently challenges believers to move beyond passive attendance and to actively embody the principles of genuine community and radical discipleship. This involves a conscious effort to cultivate deeper relationships, prioritize the needs of others, and engage in the mission of God with intentionality and courage. His teachings are often characterized by a call to simplicity, authenticity, and a willingness to step out of

comfort zones for the sake of the gospel.

Authentic Community and Genuine Connection

One of the most significant practical implications of Chan's "we are church" philosophy is the emphasis on authentic community. He advocates for smaller, more intimate gatherings where deep relationships can flourish. This can involve small groups, shared meals, and intentional times of vulnerability and support. The goal is to create environments where believers can truly know and be known, where they can bear one another's burdens and celebrate each other's victories. This kind of genuine connection is seen as foundational to a healthy spiritual life and essential for the church to be a true reflection of God's love. It requires vulnerability, honesty, and a willingness to invest time and emotional energy into relationships with fellow believers.

Radical Discipleship and Sacrificial Love

Furthermore, Francis Chan's vision of "we are church" inherently calls for radical discipleship and sacrificial love. He believes that being part of God's family means actively participating in His mission to redeem the world. This can translate into various forms of service, both within the church and in the broader community. It means being willing to serve the poor, care for the marginalized, and share the gospel with courage and conviction. Sacrificial love, as exemplified by Christ, is central to this understanding. It means putting the needs of others before our own, forgiving readily, and extending grace even when it is undeserved. This commitment to discipleship and sacrifice is not just for a select few; it is the call for every member of the church, as they collectively embody Christ in the world.

Francis Chan's Vision for the Future of the Church

Looking forward, Francis Chan's message of "we are church" offers a compelling vision for how the Christian faith can be lived out in increasingly challenging and rapidly changing times. He envisions a church that is less concerned with worldly accolades and more focused on the simple, profound truths of the gospel. This future church, in his view, will be characterized by unwavering faith, deep community, and a relentless pursuit of God's will. It will be a church that is willing to be counter-cultural, to embrace suffering for the sake of the gospel, and to see itself as a vital part of God's unfolding plan for humanity. His hope is that believers will embrace this deeper, more authentic expression of church, thereby powerfully impacting the world around them for the glory of God.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Francis Chan's core message about 'We Are Church'?

Francis Chan's central theme for 'We Are Church' emphasizes that the church is not a building or an organization, but the people of God, united by Christ. He stresses the importance of authentic community, radical obedience to scripture, and a deep, lived faith that actively impacts the world.

How does Francis Chan challenge traditional church structures in 'We Are Church'?

Chan often critiques what he perceives as superficial or consumerist approaches to church. He encourages a return to the New Testament model of genuine fellowship, discipleship, and missional living, often advocating for smaller, more intimate gatherings over large, programmatic institutional churches.

What are some practical ways followers can embody the 'We Are Church' philosophy according to Francis Chan?

Practical applications include prioritizing intentional community with other believers, engaging in sacrificial service, practicing radical generosity, actively seeking to understand and obey God's Word,

and participating in mission and evangelism in everyday life, not just through organized church activities.

What are the primary criticisms or debates surrounding Francis Chan's 'We Are Church' ideas?

Some criticisms include concerns about the potential for fragmentation or a lack of structure in smaller, non-traditional church models. Others question the feasibility of such radical approaches in a modern, complex society, and whether it adequately addresses the needs of all types of believers.

Where can I find more resources to understand Francis Chan's 'We Are Church' perspective?

Francis Chan's books like 'Letters to the Church' and 'Forgotten God' are primary sources for his teachings on this topic. His sermons, talks, and interviews available online, as well as resources from organizations he's been involved with, also offer further insights into his vision for the church.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to the concept of "We Are Church" as articulated by Francis Chan, along with short descriptions:

1. In Christ Alone: The Mystery of the Church

This book would explore the foundational theological understanding of the church as the body of Christ. It would delve into the biblical basis for our unity in Him, emphasizing that our identity and purpose as the church are rooted solely in Christ's finished work. The author would likely unpack the implications of this truth for how we relate to one another and function as a collective.

2. Living Stones: Building the Household of God

This title suggests a focus on the individual believer's role in the life of the church. It would highlight how each person, like a living stone, contributes to the overall structure and health of God's spiritual

house. The book might offer practical guidance on spiritual growth and discipleship, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all members.

3. The Great Commission: A Church Mobilized for Mission

This book would likely center on the imperative for the church to be actively engaged in fulfilling the Great Commission. It would explore biblical models of evangelism and discipleship, challenging believers to move beyond passive observation. The author could provide strategies for equipping the church to impact its local community and the world with the Gospel.

4. Authentic Fellowship: Experiencing True Community in the Church

Here, the focus would be on the depth and authenticity of relationships within the church. It would likely address the challenges of superficiality and encourage genuine love, vulnerability, and mutual accountability among believers. The book might offer practical ways to foster deeper connection and support within the church family.

5. The Gospel in Our Hands: Practicing Love and Service

This title suggests a practical, hands-on approach to living out the Gospel as the church. It would emphasize that our faith is not just intellectual but is demonstrated through tangible acts of love and service to others. The book could explore how the church can be a powerful force for good in society by embodying Christ's compassion.

6. Kingdom Come: The Church's Role in God's Redemptive Plan

This book would likely frame the church within God's overarching redemptive plan for creation. It would explore the church's present and future role in advancing God's kingdom on earth. The author might discuss how the church's life and mission participate in God's ultimate restoration of all things.

7. The Simplicity of Worship: Uncomplicated Devotion to God

This title points to a return to the essential elements of worship, perhaps as a counterpoint to overly elaborate or performance-driven models. It would likely emphasize sincere and unadulterated devotion to God in all aspects of church life. The book could offer insights into creating worship environments that are both reverent and accessible.

8. Generosity Unleashed: The Church's Stewardship of God's Blessings

This book would focus on the biblical mandate for generosity within the church, both in terms of resources and spirit. It would likely challenge believers to be faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to them. The author could explore how a spirit of radical generosity can transform the church and its impact on the world.

9. Discipleship in Action: Growing Together in Christlikeness

This title highlights the intentional and ongoing process of making disciples within the church. It would likely emphasize the importance of spiritual formation and mutual encouragement as believers grow into the likeness of Christ. The book might offer practical pathways and principles for effective discipleship that leads to transformation.

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