

# How to Shrink Your Church

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by Tim Suttle

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Pastors and churches spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year attending conferences, buying books, hiring consultants, advertisers and marketers, all to try and accomplish one thing: to increase attendance -- to be a bigger church.

I'm absolutely convinced this is the wrong tack.

Success is a slippery subject when it comes to the Church. That our ultimate picture of success is a crucified Messiah means any conversation about success will be incompatible with a "bigger is better" mentality. Yet, bigger and better is exactly what most churches seem to be pursuing these days: a pursuit which typically comes in the form of sentimentality and pragmatism.

Sentimentality and pragmatism are the one-two punch which has the American Church on the ropes, while a generation of church leaders acquiesces to the demands of our consumer culture. The demands are simple: tell me something that will make me feel better (sentimentality for the churchgoer), and tell me something that will work (pragmatism for the church leader). Yet it is not clear how either one of those are part of what it means to be the church...

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