

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

MESSAGE 2: DIVIDING & BANKRUPT

*"A brilliant book. A must read for any Christian
hoping to see their faith regain traction in a changing world."
—GABE LYONS, Author, The Next Christians*

THE GREAT EVANGELICAL RECESSION

**6 Factors That Will
Crash the American Church
... and How to Prepare**

JOHN S. DICKERSON



HOPE OF NATIONS

*Standing Strong in a Post-Truth,
Post-Christian World*

JOHN S. DICKERSON

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

Are we **winning**?

MELTDOWN
The Decline of the American Church

Are we more committed
to **Jesus**,
or to **American Christianity**
as we know it?

MELTDOWN
The Decline of the American Church

SIX FACTORS OF DECLINE

1. Inflated: The Church is smaller than we think.
2. Hated: Accelerating anti-Christian culture.
 - **Dividing**: Splitting on politics & social justice.
 - **Bankrupt**: Dependent on decreasing dollars.
5. Bleeding: Young people & others are leaving.
6. Sputtering: Not reaching new people.

*So, I'm not **defeated** by my weakness,
but **delighted!***

*For when I **feel** my weakness
and **endure** mistreatment -*

*when I am **surrounded** with **troubles** on every side
and face **persecution** because of my **love** for Christ*

*- I am made yet **stronger** (more powerful).*

*For my **weakness** becomes
a **portal** to God's power.*

2 Corinthians 12:10 TPT

MELTDOWN
The Decline of the American Church

FACTOR #3: DIVIDING

*“Evangelicals are dividing over **politics** and **social justice** issues influenced by both the acceleration of technology and a post-**Modern** relativistic worldview that has become both post-**Christian** and post-**Truth**.”*

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

*Younger, coastal, highly educated and metropolitan evangelicals feel more and more strongly that we should **abandon** political rhetoric and **elevate** the gospel by **focusing** on Jesus' (gospel) message to a post-**Christian** (& post-Truth) **culture** ... They see the **marriage** of Jesus and the American **flag** as a **pollution** of Christ, as nationalistic static and extra **noise** that **distracts** from **Jesus** and His **Kingdom**.*

*At the same time, **frightened** by changes in U.S. **culture**, middle-American, Bible-belt, suburban, and older evangelicals **feel** more and more **strongly** that we need to “**defend**” our rights in “**our Christian nation**.”*

*They believe that we and our elected officials are called to **hold back** the tide of spiritual **darkness** through **political** influence. They **see** the increasingly hostile **host culture** as a **reason** for further **political activism**, not less.*

John S. Dickerson

The Great Evangelical Recession (2013)

MELTDOWN
The Decline of the American Church

FACTOR #4: **BANKRUPT**

*“Unless generational **patterns change** radically, many ministries will see **revenue decreases** by **50-70%** in the next **10-30** years.”*

John S. Dickerson

The Great Evangelical Recission (2013)

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

FOUR **BANKRUPTCY** FACTORS

1. Dependence on Dollars: “**Goers**” & “**Senders**”
2. Decreased Giving Trends: **70%** Giving Reduction
3. Death of the Giving Generations: **85%** of Gifts
4. Younger Evangelicals Give Less: **15%** of Gifts

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

*So long as we rely on a **dollar-centric** ministry model,
the **health** of our church is reduced to a
by-product of the **economy**, the creativity of **fundraisers**,
and the **stewardship** of incoming generations
that have proven to be **stingy**, **indebted** and **unreliable**.
Giving may seem to be the most **non-spiritual**
and **concrete** of the church's present **crises**.
In fact, it is the spiritual **consequence**
of our failure at **discipleship**.*

John S. Dickerson

The Great Evangelical Recession (2013)

MELTDOWN
The Decline of the American Church

“HOW TO” PREPARE SOLUTIONS

1. Focus on the **missional mandate** of Jesus and the non-dollar centric **model** of the **early church** (DMM).

*Also give my greetings to the **church** that **meets** in their **homes**.*

Romans 16:5 NLT

*The **churches** here in the province of **Asia** send greetings in the Lord, as do Aquila and Priscilla and all the others who **gather** in their **homes** for church meetings.*

1 Corinthians 16:19 NLT

*Please give my greetings to our **brothers** and **sisters** at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the **church** that **meets** in her **house**.*

Colossians 4:15 NLT

*I am writing to Philemon, our beloved **co-worker**, and to ... the **church** that meets in your **house**.*

Philemon 1:1-2 NLT

“HOW TO” PREPARE SOLUTIONS

1. Focus on the missional mandate of Jesus and the non-dollar centric model of the early church (DMM).
2. Mobilize everyone to be “tent makers” who “go” to make disciples who make disciples (plant churches).

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

*Then Paul left Athens and went to Corinth ...
Paul **lived** and **worked** with them,
for they were **tentmakers** just as he was.*

Acts 18:1 & 3 NLT

*In fact, I would **rather die** than
lose my **right** to boast about
preaching without **charge**.*

1 Corinthians 9:15 NLT

“HOW TO” PREPARE SOLUTIONS

1. Focus on the missional mandate of Jesus and the non-dollar centric model of the early church (DMM).
2. Mobilize everyone to be “tent makers” who “go” to make disciples who make disciples (plant churches).
3. Lean into generosity and away from the currently emerging “greedy” trends of younger generations.

MELTDOWN

The Decline of the American Church

“HOW TO” PREPARE SOLUTIONS

1. Focus on the missional mandate of Jesus and the non-dollar centric model of the early church (DMM).
2. Mobilize everyone to be “tent makers” who “go” to make disciples who make disciples (plant churches).
3. Lean into generosity and away from the currently emerging “greedy” trends of younger generations.
4. **Be filled** with and **empowered** by the **Holy Spirit** to allow our “**weaknesses**” to be **portals of power**.

3 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Is the "good news" of the Kingdom of God, that Jesus came to proclaim, being compromised by the movement to tie evangelical Christianity to the Republican Party or American nationalism?
2. Can a country be truly "Christian"? If so, how?
3. Read Acts 2:42-47. What was the first century church model that added to their number daily?