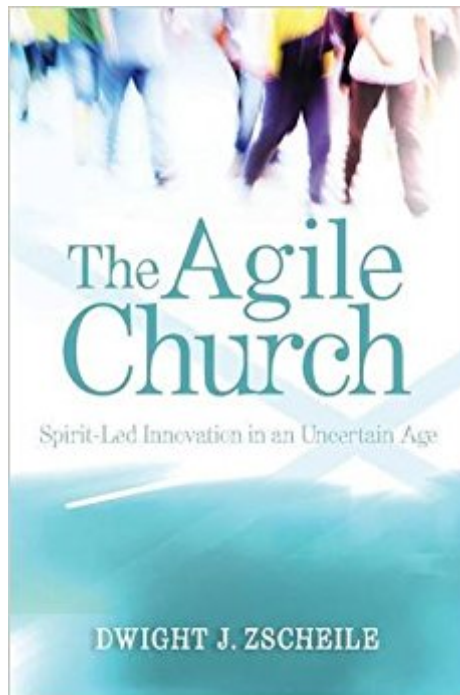




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# The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation In An Uncertain Age



## Synopsis

In today's dynamic cultural environment, churches have to be more than faithful—they have to be agile. That means embracing processes of trial, failure, and adaptation as they form Christian community with new neighbors. And that means a whole new way of being church. Taking one page from the Bible and another from Silicon Valley, priest and scholar Dwight Zscheile brings theological insights together with cutting-edge thinking on organizational innovation to help churches flourish in a time of profound uncertainty and spiritual opportunity. Picking up where his recent bestseller, *People of the Way* left off, Zscheile answers urgent and practical questions around how churches become agile and adaptive to meet cultural change. A Cutting-edge leadership theory, approaches, and techniques for churches Skillfully addresses both academic and church audiences Study guide included

## Book Information

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: MOREHOUSE PUBLISHING; large type edition edition (November 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0819229776

ISBN-13: 978-0819229779

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #174,967 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #95 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Ecclesiology #274 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Leadership #3571 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology

## Customer Reviews

Zscheile shares ancient (helpful insight on biblical narratives) and modern (e.g., Silicon Valley and Lean Startups) wisdom in a practical, accessible, and honest diagnosis and regimen for today's church. He cautions against "that's the way it's always been done" and advocates for a deep attending to the "customer", embracing vulnerability (e.g., failing forward), all while functioning out of a biblical core that is dynamic, agile, and full of integrity. This book is for established communities experiencing decline as well as those hoping to prevent it. It is also a book for church-planters, entrepreneurs, and future church leaders.

This is a book for churches who are seeking to reimagine their place and their purpose in a world of disruptive change. It's a book about making good mistakes, writes the author, rather than replicating the fatal mistake of doing what we always have done even though it fails to resonate with the broader culture, the church's neighborhood, and even our own members. It's a book that aims to help churches become learning communities rather than program factories running on unexamined assumptions about both the gospel and the real needs of their broader context. Zscheile writes as a practical theologian who bears witness to the organic, fruitful work of innovative discipleship and purposeful clarity within his local parish in St. Paul, MN. What is refreshing and vital about his approach to innovation within the church is that he is able to draw out lessons on innovation from Silicon Valley and see possibility within the tradition of mainline Christianity. This traditioned innovation will resonate deeply with faithful leaders within the mainline church who may feel as though they have been left behind by fresh expressions of Christian community that have jettisoned ties with the church of the past 1500 years. As any good book on the church will do, Zscheile presents his readers with a critique of the established church with cutting clarity. This critique, combined with his insights into innovation, present a challenge and a risk that can feel overwhelming yet necessary if the church is going to regain its sense of place and purpose in a fast-changing, often bewildering culture of the post-Christian West. Zscheile also offers a thorough deconstruction of our contemporary culture's obsession with consumer-driven identity making, expressive individualism, and moralistic-therapeutic-dietetic spirituality. In short, he hits the nail on the head and it hurts. Even after his poignant critique, Zscheile holds out hope even for churches that may feel stuck or fruitless. He asks that the church reimagine the situation, especially in light of the OT narratives of barrenness, wilderness, and exile. "God is continuously calling people into a new way of interpreting and experiencing the world." Even the early church in Acts is one of disruptive change and bewilderment under the leadership of the Spirit. To quote Zscheile, "An agile church is, above all, a Spirit-led church." He asks that churches consider lessons from agile organizations in Silicon Valley who know how to stay atop innovation in an uncertain environment filled with disruptive change. He invites the church into disciplines of a learning community akin to a spiritual journey filled with failure and surprise, genuine curiosity and deep listening, as well as a playful openness to possibilities that already exist in the church and neighborhood. Zscheile begins and ends with a little parable of Jesus, "every scribe that has been trained for the Kingdom of Heaven will be like a household master who brings out what is new and old." This parable is

a good summary of Zscheile's work and welcome wisdom for faithful leaders in our day and age.

I read this as a church assignment. It was extremely "hard to read". In comparing with the others who were also reading, they also found it so. The author jumped around in his messages and would not finish his point, before going on to the next message. I also found myself going to the dictionary to look up words. I read a lot, 2 to 3 books a month. It took me weeks to finish this small book. I feel I should try to read it again to see if I can get anything more, but I don't think I can put myself through it again.

A great book about where Christianity is moving. A must read for those who have become burned out from mundane megachurch culture. Great read for those who wish to live out a Christian life instead of just going to church every Sunday.

Challenging and insightful.

Good read.

I've been an IT agile scrum master for several years and this author's understanding of agile is very impressive. What he had done here has started an important conversation. I believe agile will take root in the church and this book will be pointed to it as the genesis of that conversation in years to come  
Brian Ralph  
CA Technologies

An eminently readable and engaging look at how the established church needs to find ways to be relevant in a changing society without ignoring its roots. In the current climate of non involvement with any church, it is vital that ways are found to make connections and to spread the love if God

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