

Rebuilding the Church: A Blueprint for Healing and Renewal

In the aftermath of numerous scandals and moral failures in the modern church, author and speaker Natalie Runion believes it's time for Christians to rebuild from the rubble. Speaking with Charisma Media, Runion dives into the heart of her latest book, "The House That Jesus Built," which serves as a guide for restoring the foundations of a fractured church.

Runion, who previously authored "Raised to Stay," addresses the deconstruction movement—a growing trend where believers dismantle aspects of their faith due to spiritual abuse, disillusionment and disappointment with church leadership. For Runion, deconstruction is not inherently negative. "We have this huge task as a generation to rebuild," she says, "and thankfully we have a blueprint for that in the Word of God."

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Drawing on the story of "The Three Little Pigs," Runion uses the nursery rhyme as a metaphor for the church's current state. She likens the pigs who built hastily with weak materials to modern church leaders who, in some cases, have rushed to build on shaky foundations. "Now we're seeing the enemy come in and huff and puff and blow our churches down through moral failures, sheep that are being abused—all the things that led us to this deconstruction," she explains.

Runion is quick to clarify that while many have turned away from the church due to spiritual abuse or celebrity culture, there is hope for renewal. Reflecting on feedback from her online community, Runion highlights the need to confront these foundational issues. "A lot of it came down to being severely

disappointed and hurt by people who should know better and are behaving badly,” she says, adding that financial misconduct and the rise of a consumer mindset in the church have also contributed to its decline.

Despite the grim reality, Runion emphasizes that not all is lost. She draws inspiration from the early church as depicted in the book of Acts, particularly Acts 2, where Peter’s message to the first church provides a clear foundation: “Repentance, reconciliation, forgiveness, communion, worship, the word of God.” According to Runion, returning to these basics can restore the church. “It’s actually not having to recreate the wheel. If we as the church just went back to that second chapter of Acts...what if we were to go back to those foundational basics?”

Runion also addresses the struggles church leaders face when they feel guilty by association due to scandals in other congregations. “I know a lot of good shepherds. There’s more good shepherds than bad shepherds,” she says, acknowledging that healthy pastors often bear the weight of distrust from a wounded generation.

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However, she stresses that deconstruction does not have to lead to deconversion. “Deconstruction isn’t necessarily deconversion; it can just be a detangling of things that people have placed on us that aren’t even scriptural or aren’t the Lord,” she explains.

Offering encouragement to those disillusioned with the church, Runion reminds them that there are still more healthy churches than unhealthy ones. “If you can’t go back to church, don’t give up on Jesus,” she says, “but know that His family is pretty cool, too.”

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James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.