



A Good Boy (The Dying Church Series Book 1)

Tony Bradshaw

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"Social media and celebrity culture invade a sleepy church in North Carolina. Can an inexperienced pastor bring a dying church, kicking and screaming, into the twenty-first century while battling the demons of his own past?"

New Covenant Methodist Church considered itself a “friendly church.” The phrase was prominently displayed on the weekly bulletins and on a marquee sign in front of church – even though the little “r” was missing from the word “church” rendering the message “Friendly Chu ch.” In actuality, some decidedly unfriendly teenagers stole the “r” from “Friendly Church” rendering the message “F iendly Church.” The missing “r” was quickly noticed and since there was no replacement “r” available, an executive decision was made to transfer the “r” from church in order to transform “F iendly Church into “Friendly Chu ch.”

The phrase “friendly church” implies that there are churches that are demonstrably unfriendly and that New Covenant Methodist Church clearly does not belong in this category. In all fairness, members of New Covenant Methodist Church would never denigrate other churches by the deeming them “unfriendly;” rather, members wanted to emphasize their own high level of friendliness.

While New Covenant Methodist Church considers itself a “friendly church” the most accurate adjective that could be used to describe it would be “dying.”

New Covenant was experiencing the same fate of many mainline churches across the United States and Europe. Populations of church attendees were aging and as members died they not being replaced by younger members. Overall, church attendance in the United States was aging and declining. The long-term future of organized religion looked bleak.

Situated in downtown Asheville, North Carolina, New Covenant’s location had been ideal to meet the religious needs for a growing town. However, as people moved away from downtown into the suburbs, New Covenant proximity to downtown only placed it a further distance from potential parishioners. Flanked by a vegan sandwich shop on the right and an antique shop on the left, New Covenant Methodist Church often faded from sight and, essentially, became invisible. Not possessing the history or the grandeur of the Lutheran Basilica with his glittering gold dome and not even being located on Church Street like the Baptist and Presbyterian churches, there was no good reason for anyone to visit New Covenant Methodist Church. And no one did.

New Covenant Methodist Church needed new blood. An experienced, seasoned pastor who could come into New Covenant and inject enthusiasm and passion back into the church. He could draw in new families with small children and babies that would swell the congregation and fill the sanctuary with sounds of laughter and singing. A new pastor would ignite a spirit of revival that may spread from New Covenant into the surrounding community.

However, New Covenant United Methodist Church was broke.

Enter Wesley Aames. A former HR manager-turned-pastor is dropped unaware into a divided, broke, and broken church without warning. Then, a teen parishioner commits suicide.

That was when all Hell broke loose in this little church.

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