

“Rick Bundschuh has done it again with *Don’t Rock the Boat, Capsize It*. One minute, I find myself giggling with his musings, then in a matter of seconds, I’m pulling the dagger out of my heart! Kudos to Bundschuh for loving the church but not being afraid to speak out for changing her course.”

—DR. DAVID OLSHINE
director of student ministries,
Columbia International University, Columbia, SC

“What a fun and exciting book this is! If you only read chapter 12, you get your money’s worth. Actually every chapter is a gem—each one full of wonderful and dangerous ideas that make me wish I had a key to Rick’s church. (Read chapter 10 and you’ll wish you had one, too.)

—WAYNE RICE
director, Understanding Your Teenager; co-founder, Youth Specialties

“In a day when many people are hopelessly dissatisfied with “organized religion” and are fleeing the church, we need help. As an outside-the-box pastor, speaker, and author, Rick Bundschuh has reminded us that the problem isn’t with the church, but rather with us! We need to be changed—in our thinking, in our delivery of God’s life-giving message of hope and healing, and in the way we “do” church. This is a real, practical, and helpful tool.”

—CHAP CLARK
Ph.D., associate professor of youth, family, and
culture, Fuller Theological Seminary

“I mean it: anyone who loves the church should read this book. Rick Bundschuh not only loves the church, but he loves it enough to not let it get comfortable. He lives what he teaches and has the scars to prove it. This book is prophetic, compelling, practical, disturbing and a must read.”

—JIM BURNS, PH.D.
Ph.D., president, HomeWord

“Rejuvenating, refreshing, revitalizing for anyone who thinks ministry is boring.”

—DAN CHUN
senior pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu;
president, Hawaiian Islands Ministries

DON'T ROCK THE BOAT, CAPSIZE IT

*Loving the Church Too Much
to Leave It the Way It Is*

By Rick Bundschuh



NAV PRESS®

BRINGING TRUTH TO LIFE



OUR GUARANTEE TO YOU

We believe so strongly in the message of our books that we are making this quality guarantee to you. If for any reason you are disappointed with the content of this book, return the title page to us with your name and address and we will refund to you the list price of the book. To help us serve you better, please briefly describe why you were disappointed. Mail your refund request to: NavPress, P.O. Box 35002, Colorado Springs, CO 80935.

The Navigators is an international Christian organization. Our mission is to reach, disciple, and equip people to know Christ and to make Him known through successive generations. We envision multitudes of diverse people in the United States and every other nation who have a passionate love for Christ, live a lifestyle of sharing Christ's love, and multiply spiritual laborers among those without Christ.

NavPress is the publishing ministry of The Navigators. NavPress publications help believers learn biblical truth and apply what they learn to their lives and ministries. Our mission is to stimulate spiritual formation among our readers.

© 2005 by Ricki Robert Bundschuh

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission from NavPress, P.O. Box 35001, Colorado Springs, CO 80935.
www.navpress.com

NAVPRESS, BRINGING TRUTH TO LIFE, and the NAVPRESS logo are registered trademarks of NavPress. Absence of ® in connection with marks of NavPress or other parties does not indicate an absence of registration of those marks.

ISBN 1-57683-646-0

Cover design by The DesignWorks Group, Charles Brock
Cover water image by Getty; preserver image by Photos.com
Creative Team: Nicci Jordan, Traci Mullins, Darla Hightower, Arvid Wallen, Laura Spray

Some of the anecdotal illustrations in this book are true to life and are included with the permission of the persons involved. All other illustrations are composites of real situations, and any resemblance to people living or dead is coincidental.

Unless otherwise identified, all Scripture quotations in this publication are taken from the HOLY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® (NIV®). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved. Other versions used include: *THE MESSAGE* (MSG). Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Bundschuh, Rick, 1951-

Don't rock the boat, capsize it : loving the church too much to leave it the way it is / by Rick Bundschuh.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 1-57683-646-0

1. Church. 2. Church renewal. I. Title.

BV600.3.B86 2005

262'.0017--dc22

2004021305

Printed in United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 / 10 09 08 07 06 05

FOR A FREE CATALOG OF
NAVPRESS BOOKS & BIBLE STUDIES,
CALL 1-800-366-7788 (USA)
OR 1-800-839-4769 (CANADA)

For Tom, Mike, Dain, Doug, Gary, and Creature.

*Toad Hall would have been lost long ago without the love, honesty,
scolding, and support from you and your families.*



CONTENTS

FOREWORD 11

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 13

INTRODUCTION ~ **God-Induced Wildness** 15

CHAPTER 1 ~ **Where Good Things Run Wild** 21
Making Room for an Invigorating Faith

CHAPTER 2 ~ **“You Guys Are CRAZY!!! (But I Love It!)”** 27
Status Quo Busters

CHAPTER 3 ~ **Rats, Moles, Badgers, and a Toad** 35
A “Classic” Leadership Model

CHAPTER 4 ~ **Creature** 43
Missionary to the Trolls

CHAPTER 5 ~ **Teaching Them to Talk Dirty** 47
Embracing the Energy of Change

CHAPTER 6 ~ **Herding Cats** 53
The Art of Shepherding in the Twenty-first Century

CHAPTER 7 ~ **Full-Size Candy Bars** 59
Being Spooky for the Kingdom

CHAPTER 8 ~ **And Then Jesus Danced** 63
Caring for the “Least of These”

CHAPTER 9 ~ **A Whuppin’** 69
Opening Wide the Doors to God’s House

CHAPTER 10 ~ **The Inner Sanctum** 75
Pride of Ownership

CHAPTER 11 ~ **What Disneyland Can Teach Us** 81

Improving First Impressions

CHAPTER 12 ~ **A Church Full of Children** 87

Taking Ourselves Less Seriously

CHAPTER 13 ~ **The Helmet** 91

Choosing Our Battles

CHAPTER 14 ~ **Crashing Elbows** 99

Blessed Are the Clumsy in Spirit

CHAPTER 15 ~ **A New Language** 105

Talking with Pictures

CHAPTER 16 ~ **Contemporary Fusion** 111

Resurrecting Tradition in the Modern Church

CHAPTER 17 ~ **A Blessing in Disguise** 117

Creativity Unleashed

CHAPTER 18 ~ **A Family Meal** 125

Serving the Tastiest Fare

CHAPTER 19 ~ **All Together Now** 131

Carol Power

CHAPTER 20 ~ **Light Bearers, Grace Mongers,
and Peddlers of Hope** 135

Our Divine Nuisance Crew

CHAPTER 21 ~ **Drawing on the Walls** 141

Becoming a Permission-Giving Church

CHAPTER 22 ~ **Never Scrapped** 147

What the Success Stories Don't Tell You

CHAPTER 23 ~ **The Treasures of the Church** 155

Human Resources

CHAPTER 24 ~ **“Follow Me, Boys!”** 161

Leading Dangerously

CHAPTER 25 ~ **Rites of Passage** 167

Celebrating Milestones

CHAPTER 26 ~ **The Dreams of God** 173

Celebrating Our Visionaries

CHAPTER 27 ~ **The Gum of God** 179

A Legacy That Sticks

ENDNOTE 183

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 185



FOREWORD

It is encouraging to see a light of creativity on the dark horizon of status quo. To have it brought into focus for all to see is better yet. Rick's "gospel" is simple: We don't have to be locked in to the common church trend and tradition of mediocrity; change is possible and often necessary. Indeed, we can be vital and refreshingly relevant as the body of Christ in the twenty-first century. In his book, Rick brings fresh, common-sense ideas from theory to fact, from potential to possibility.

I've known Rick since he was a long-haired teenage surfer in Pacific Beach, California. Even as a young teen he was a type A leader, and in a matter of time it became apparent that he wasn't a typical paint-by-the-numbers kind of person. In fact he wasn't typical at all. He was a rare and refreshing species of creative realist with the courage and skill to implement his ideas successfully. Building on a long and successful history in church youth work, Rick became the ringleader of an unusual church in Hawaii that emits a unique and attractive fragrance—another growing example of Rick's practical approach to living and spreading the message of Christ's gospel.

Admittedly this book and its ideas are not for the timid or insecure leader or layperson. Rick shares not only edgy ideas and practical examples of what can be done, but he motivates his readers to release their grip on status quo and careen wildly toward making the church relevant today.

E. G. Von Trutzschler
San Diego, California



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A book doesn't just magically appear on the shelf at the local bookstore. Many book concepts are aborted before they get to the runway or linger a slow death trying to find a publisher that believes in the ideas enough to help get them airborne.

I was fortunate to find some book lovers among the fine people of NavPress Publishing Group who were fascinated by my out-of-the-box ideas. A debt of gratitude is also owed to Marko at Youth Specialties, who championed the book based on a few completed chapters and made the important contacts for it to find a home at NavPress.

This book has its genesis in the kindness and goodwill of the people and leadership of Kauai Christian Fellowship who have been such willing subjects for wild experimentation and who allowed me to vacate my post during the time it took to commit the results to paper.

My family also deserves a serious tip of the hat for allowing me to ignore them as crunch time got closer. (And yes, I will be making good on all the "when I get done with this book" promises I made.)

Finally, a huge *mahalo* (no, it does not mean "trash" in Hawaiian even if it is on the lid of all the trash cans) goes to Nicci Jordan, editorial assistant at NavPress, and my editor, Traci Mullins of Eclipse Editorial Services. Thank you for hanging out on the edge with me on this unusual project! You ladies have been upbeat, positive, professional, and an absolute joy to work with. I owe you surfing lessons or something.



God-Induced Wildness

It's a scary world out there.

The secular society has infiltrated the church so effectively that one wonders who is influencing whom. Changes in culture that used to take decades or even centuries to happen now spring upon us in microseconds. New churches pop up in shopping centers and within a few years outstrip in numbers, energy, and vibrancy what some established churches have taken half a century or more to accomplish. Comfortable traditions are being challenged or abandoned. Problems that were once considered a scandal within a Christian community seem almost routine. Pastors fall from grace in a sad, regular rhythm.

With so much uncertainty, it is understandable if our response as Christians is to pull into our own safe, closed community complete with our own language, systems, and hierarchies. After all, most of us find comfort in the rules and particular order of our Christian ghetto. But it's easy, then, to become a fortress locked

tight against the world Jesus asked us to penetrate with His love.

Not every church succumbs to the natural urge to hide behind defenses. Some go on the offensive. Some congregations believe in taking risks. Big ones. Some don't fear God-induced wildness. Some have chosen adventure over comfort. Some don't want to be tamed.

Other than some fundamental principles found in the Bible, there are no time-proven templates for what it takes to be a church that penetrates its culture rather than retreats from it or becomes swept up in it. It takes a lot of experimenting and embracing the possibility of failure. It takes a group of believers who are honest enough to admit that the church has often been impotent due to miscalculations, fear of challenge and change, and a desire to stay in a warm and toasty environment. It takes people crazy enough to uncage their lunatic fringe thinkers. It takes people brave enough to suggest that we have built our little Christian boat upside down, and to really get somewhere it won't do just to rock the boat; we must capsize it, and then use creative efforts to get it right side up.

The man who wrote the foreword for this book is the kind of brave soul I'm talking about. "Von" has labored for years among those whom the rest of the church routinely ignores. His early ministry was with teens, and even though he couldn't swim he managed to impact the San Diego surfer community for the gospel in a significant way. Surfers are a tough bunch to get to church. I know; I was one of them. Because of Von I came to Christ at the age of sixteen.

A prophetic voice to the church, Von has been years ahead of

his time—so far ahead that people have often ignored his visionary direction. A couple of decades ago Von dedicated himself to helping the poor people across the border. His outfit, Spectrum Ministries, is one of the most beloved works among the destitute throng that live in the cracks and crannies of Tijuana. When children see his car bouncing down the dirt road they run to the street chanting his name, as if he is “El Presidente” himself. At seventy-five years old, the man runs circles around younger guys in ministry and has seen it all.

This book is about what it *feels* like to look at Christianity and church in an out-of-the-box, even upside-down way—the way Von has for decades and the way I have for a good stretch now. In this book I hope to give you a taste of what is experienced at both the leadership level and the grassroots level when a group of believers becomes aware that we Christians have a lot of things backward and tries to turn itself right side up and inside out. The stories and ideas in the pages ahead reflect the experiences of real people living out their sometimes difficult and complicated lives with each other as if they are on a wondrous escapade designed and orchestrated by God Himself. (What a concept.)

This book is not designed to be *instructive*, or even theoretical, although you may find God whispering something to you about His priorities and viewpoint. It is not designed to hoist a particular church or individuals into prominence. While I will attempt to illustrate how many of the ideas we’ve come up with at Kauai Christian Fellowship are put into practice, I have no interest in holding up our congregation as some kind of new or ideal church model to copy. I want people to think for them-

selves, not follow us. Therefore, I will not be offering a specific grid or template. You will not find in these pages the *10 Steps to an Effective Church*, *5 Principles for Becoming a Mega Ministry*, or any other kind of system. Instead, you will find a scrapbook of musings and mumblings, plus lots of examples of church rethink that will hopefully serve as a yank on the light cord of your own imagination.

It may be helpful to give you the context of these ramblings and rants. Just over a dozen years ago, I was dragged kicking and screaming out of my little comfort zone of youth work in a cozy established church and thrust into being part of the leadership team of a new congregation. Not that youth lock-ins were over for me; until recently I still ran most of the youth activities at Kauai Christian Fellowship, but in addition I was helping to oversee the church as a whole.

Our new congregation was youth heavy. There were more quarters and soda pull rings in the offering basket than dollar bills. In fact, in many ways we were a mutant and morphing youth group growing up into being a church. I knew from the start that we would have to rethink how we would “do church” to make it authentic, effective, and compelling to people who have the attention span of rabbits but who also embody savvy and sincerity in their desire to find and express an authentic faith.

So we did things different. Very different.

As a result we attracted, um, *interesting* kinds of people. Not just kids but people of all ages. We collected people who hated going to church; people with really bad habits; people with messy tangled lives; people who obviously had no clue; and

people who couldn't find anything in the Bible or even find a Bible.

We made some of them staff members.

Things haven't changed much over the years. About 85 percent of our folks do not come from a church background. We still get more than our fair share of those whom we affectionately call "trolls and varmints." I have no idea if the ideas we cooked up for our strange collection of people will work for any other church in any other geographical location or with any other mix of people. If you find something you like in our experience, please steal it; otherwise my only aspiration is that our journey will make you scratch your head and ponder "what if . . .?"

From experience, I do know that there is nothing more refreshing than abandoning the same old tired approach to many of our church models (that haven't worked very well for years anyhow) and thinking about things from a whole different angle. It's actually a lot of fun to break many of the unspoken rules on how to do church and discover that it's possible to go zipping along without those restraints.

So thank you for coming along for the ride. Make sure to keep your arms in the air, scream so as to annoy your neighbor, and please don't bother clinging to the gunwales. We aren't just rockin', we are rotating all the way over!

Rick Bundschuh
Kauai, Hawaii



Where Good Things Run Wild

Making Room for an Invigorating Faith

Chesterton. What a guy.

I have a photo of the corpulent British intellectual dressed as a Wild West gunslinger slouching next to famed atheist Bertrand Russell, who is also dressed as a gunslinger.

G. K. Chesterton was always a much better aim than Russell in a verbal shoot-out. Nearly a hundred years later, his barbs and observations can pack more of a wallop than those of most contemporary thinkers. So I stole the title of this chapter from a book of Chesterton's called *Orthodoxy*.

And the more I considered Christianity, the more I found that while it had established a rule and order, the chief aim of that order was to give room for good things to run wild.

It seems to me that most people who are leading and attending churches have gotten the “rule and order” part down but

are scared to death of the “run wild” part. And yet it’s the wild, dangerous, and challenging part of Christianity that is active and invigorating!

Now don’t get me wrong; I’m not an anarchist. I take solace in rules. I find comfort in order. Rules and order seem to be woven into the fabric of creation. Governments, families, and even churches need them so that things can get done without frustration, clashing agendas, waste, and lunacy.

But sometimes people, especially in churches, get confused about the *intent* of rules and, as a result, get a little rigid, inflexible, or just plain silly. Rules and order are designed to provide a safe context for divine craziness to happen, for good things to run amuck, for dreams to be dreamed and excitement to be born. The problem with rules divorced from their intent is simply that they tend to become an end in themselves rather than the helpmate for imagination and creativity.

While every institution tends to come up with its own conventions and systems, it seems to me that the church is quick to make rules, codes, and formulas—and even quicker to forget why it was that those rules, codes, and formulas were made. They simply become tradition or “the way we’ve always done it.” Sometimes the silliness becomes enshrined as doctrine or even group identity.

Much of the time, rules and policies are born out of fear or a bad experience and are championed by people who relish micro-management or those who privately love the false security that control offers and who fear the unpredictability of wildness. And often these rules, on the surface, seem sensible or simply a minor

intrusion. In reality, the result often heaps unnecessary burdens on those already burdened.

Take, for example, the suggestion to rush to create rules and polices due to an abuse of the copy machine in our church office. One day the office manager came in to find discarded in the trash several photocopies of someone's clothed butt. (Thankfully it was *clothed*.) Now, copying butts was not the purpose of our purchasing the copy machine, and of course paper and toner are expensive. (I estimated that there was at least a nickel's worth of waste in the trash can.)

Some well-meaning folks, outraged that the copy machine had been defiled, recommended that we put a book next to the machine so that those making copies could record the volume and official nature of their use. This, they told us, is what they did at their former church (when presumably renegades copied their butts as well).

On first examination, this seemed like a reasonable rule, a new safeguard policy that would be championed as good stewardship by those who love this kind of utopian micromanagement. But this idea was, like many other "helpful" policy ideas people hatch, a very dumb one that would do little to solve the issue of making copies of one's butt, but go a long way to making more work for everyone else.

Our leadership team gave the suggestion about two seconds of thought and then explained to the well-meaning folks that this approach probably works okay for the moral or compliant folks who are using the machine only for church business—but we had serious doubts that we would find someone recording in the book

that they made copies of their butt. So all the book would do is create work for those who are not using the machine for something as bizarre as taking pictures of their backsides . . . which was most everybody.

We also pointed out that someone would have to be appointed to be the book cop to look over the sign-in book to see if there were a violators dumb enough to write down that they copied their rear end, their term paper, an *Opus* newspaper comic, their tax forms, or something not on the approved list, and then bill them for the ten or twenty cents worth of toner and paper they had used.

In the end we made a choice based on what risk we would be willing to take. We decided to face the possibility that we might lose a few bucks to the unscrupulous so that access to the copy machine would be convenient for all who needed it to do ministry. We chose to do without record books, passwords, locks, or any other devices that are meant to protect but really only hinder people from doing their jobs—or worse, give the “we don’t trust you” message.

We framed the butt pictures and hung them next to the copy machine.

Allowing good things to run wild does not mean exploring the far reaches of the Pentecostal solar system for the goofiest manifestation of the Spirit. It does not mean throwing overboard good sense, propriety, manners, or biblical integrity. It does mean exploring waters uncharted by most church folks, digging around in the imagination attic, or dusting off neglected ideas in the basement of collective history. It means setting off on new voyages of

discovery that, while unusual and uncomfortable at the time, are endowed with purpose, potential, and meaning.

How a wildly good thing gets loose and what it is in particular is not the point; it is that it is allowed to come out in the first place.

A group of mechanically minded men who offer to do free minor repairs for single moms one Saturday a month is a wild and good thing.

A bunch of high school kids who commit to forgo buying soft drinks in order to use that money collectively to support a destitute child for Compassion International is a wild and good thing.

Encouraging people to miss church once in a while in order to play golf (and maybe say a word or two about Jesus) with an unsaved neighbor or friend is a wild and good thing.

Asking everyone to keep their tithes and offerings one Sunday morning and instructing them to use the funds this week to do an act of love, encouragement, or affirmation for another person in the spirit of Christ is a wild and good thing.

Deciding that all the pastoral staff will have the same salary regardless of age, education, or position of ministry is a wild and good thing—especially for the traditionally underpaid youth workers.

Collecting funds and paying for talented musicians in the church to make a recording of their music and then giving CDs for free to the whole congregation is a wild and good thing.

Showing up at a school bus stop (ahead of the bus) on a cold morning with hot chocolate and donuts for all the kids is a wild and good thing.

Turning the church into an art gallery where the efforts of the visually creative types in the congregation can display their works is a wild and good thing.

Telling a parable that is hard to figure out and sending everyone home scratching his head (kind of like Jesus did) is a wild and good thing.

But these are ideas from my little cooker in one small corner of the world. Perhaps in a few chapters you will feel frisky enough to think of a bunch on your own. You could be part of unleashing divine good in your own church and seeing how wildly it runs for the good of all.