

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

Volume 27 Issue 9

PO Box 892589, Temecula, CA 92589-2589

September 2015

Nine Reasons Pastors Quit

We've all seen the statistics: 20% of pastors are burned out; 50% of seminary graduates leave ministry within five years of graduation; 15% of pastors are thinking of resigning; and, 90% of pastors indicate they wouldn't attend the church they pastor if they weren't the pastor.

The above statistics, and almost all that are published on the Internet, lack supporting evidence, i.e., they are anecdotal. Yet, we all know that pastors are

Pastors today are under a great deal of stress; stress that often leads to some dropping out of ministry.

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Why do pastors drop out? The following are the nine major reasons gathered from numerous studies.

1. Pastors are part of what is labeled a *helping profession*. Helping professions include doctors, nurses, counselors, clergy, and others in similar jobs.

People in the helping professions often become depressed when they become resentful of the demands being made on them. Thus, a *Helping Profession Syndrome* is brought about through compulsive care giving. When people give care to the exclusion of their own legitimate needs, exhaustion, stress, depression (the symptom can vary) becomes visible.

Psychologist John Bowlby explains, "A person compulsively gives to others what he would like to have for himself which of course leads to a severe deficit in the emotional

balance of payments. Other people's needs then begin to be felt as demands and the individual is likely to break down into guilt laden resentment, leading to depression."

Why don't pastors change their practice? Some pastors indicate they fear if they say no to demands placed on them they will then be rejected and abandoned, which in part would prove they are unlovable.

2. Lack of pastoral care.

Who is the pastor's pastor? Most pastors do not have mentors or solid advisors, counselors, or friends.

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Who pastors the pastor?

Pastoring a church is one of the loneliest professions.

3. Loneliness.

Very few persons, other than fellow pastors, really understand the role or demands of pastoral work, hence, the feeling of loneliness and isolation in the midst of meaningful work.

4. Geographical relocation.

Pastors often move. When they do almost everything changes, requiring massive readjustments.

5. Economic and career uncertainty.

A pastor's ministry career depends greatly on his or her relationship with a particular church. Much of one's career is out of the pastor's direct control.

6. Lack of ministry completion.

A pastor's work is never really complete. This lack of feeling that a job is finished leads to long-term frustration that the job is impossible.

7. Pastor's spouse.

Lack of support-Care for the pastor's spouse is usually inadequate in a local church. Can a spouse trust church members enough to share needs, difficulties, especially when the problems are with a spouse?

Parsonage living-When the home belongs to the church, there are always tensions. Getting the church to provide maintenance may be difficult.

Finances-It is often difficult to live on a pastor's

salary. Many spouses are forced to work outside the home, even when they have small children.

8. Conflict with the congregation.

This includes unwarranted criticism, too high of expectations of the pastor and his family, continually trying to overcome apathy on the part of church leaders.

9. Personal problems.

This includes personal or professional inadequacy, lack of professional worth, insufficient training, insecurities, and family problems.

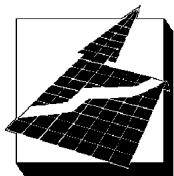
If you are a pastor, with which of these nine reasons do you identify? Which one's are the most troublesome? How are you seeking to redeem them for good in your life and ministry?

If you are a church attendee or leader, what is your church doing to help ease your pastor's stress? Which of these nine areas can you focus on this year?



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Finding Them, Keeping Them

Ministry Insights for Church Leaders

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Finding Them, Keeping Them

Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin have distilled the complex formulae of church growth and retention theory into concepts that are comprehensible to non-experts with a view toward recruiting the church at large in the work of evangelism and discipling.

The authors share principles for finding and keeping new Christians in a local church that have proven to be effective and well-received.

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"*Finding Them, Keeping Them* is an excellent step to help laypeople understand the science of church growth and apply it to their local church. McIntosh and Martin have taken the traditional converts of church growth and written them so the average layperson can understand them.

For many years church growth has been in the hands of scholars and pastors. This book attempts to help laypeople and church leaders understand the terms and apply them to their church."

—Elmer Towns, Liberty University

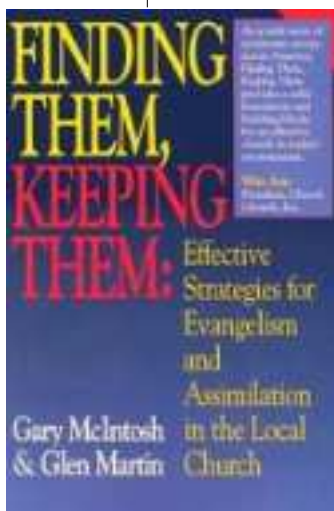
Finding Them, Keeping Them analyses the way in which a church enfolds people into a church and takes them from first contact through the steps of salvation, membership, discipleship, and service. The book is highly recommended for church leaders who want to understand the problems and solutions for attracting and keeping people in a local church.

Martin provide an easy and visible way for pastors and other church leaders to evaluate the outreach and assimilation ministry of a local church.

The book provides practical and useable ideas that church leaders may put to use immediately to make a difference in church ministry. A great read for boards, evangelism committees, and those working in the greeter or newcomer ministry of a church.

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