"Do not assume that he who seeks to comfort you now, lives untroubled among the simple and quiet words that sometimes do you good. His life may also have much sadness and difficulty, that remains far beyond yours. Were it otherwise, he would never have been able to find these words"

- Rainer Maria Rilke

Evangelistic Hyperactivity

By Roger Hernandez

2 Timothy 4:5 "...do the work of an evangelist"

A pastor friend of mine, from another country, was called to the union office to be reprimanded. His leader was not pleased about his approach to church work. He said the pastor was suffering (and I quote), from "evangelistic hyperactivity." As a person who suffers from the same illness, I can relate to this pastor's desire to see more people experience salvation. I believe we need more pastors who become ill, because once you become infected; your life becomes affected (in a positive way). Most pastors would agree that evangelism is both a priority and a challenge, especially in the western world. Here are some suggestions to become more effective.

Effective evangelism answers the following questions:

- **Who do I think they are?** Successful evangelism begins with a clear understanding of the immense value of all of God's children. Some of the names we use to describe people that are far from God (even in church, while they are present!) can be offensive and build walls instead of bridges. Terms like "lost," "non-Adventist," "worldly," "outsiders," while true in their literal definition, convey a message of separation. One author suggests calling them "the people God misses the most." How do you treat a child that has strayed from the path? Remember, those non-christians that you know, they are someone's child. Treat them as you would like your children to be treated.

- **What do I want them to do?** If my goal is to help people come closer to God, I must use:
  - **Truth and experience.** It's not only important for them to think "this makes sense", but "this can change..."
my life". In the book *The Outsider Interviews*, a case is made for service as an effective evangelistic tool. Not just for reaching the people we are serving, but the people we serve with. It can be life-changing. Christianity becomes more than just a set of beliefs - it's real.

- **Listening and speaking.** In the same book, the author says that listening has become fundamental in evangelism. In the old paradigm, we speak, they listen. We know, they don't. We teach, they learn. We have the truth, they are deceived and don't have much to offer. In the new paradigm, we listen, we value, we respect. Then we share. Our message does not change. The way we deliver it does.

May you catch the bug.

Discuss this topic on our Facebook page

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**Media**

**NAD Media Summit On Demand**

Over 200 attended the NAD Media Summit via the live streaming webinar. If you missed the presentations you will be able to watch them via on demand video as they are uploaded over the next few weeks. Beginning with today's release of Best Practices you can watch Dan Jackson's opening message, entitled "The Media Ministry Imperative". One of the favorite presentations was Pastor Allan Martin's brown bag luncheon where he shared some of the social videos and trends that are shaping our culture. You can watch his entire presentation including the videos by going to Vervent's NAD Media Summit channel.

**New Adventist Apps**

Want stay connected with Seventh-day Adventist Church news? Download the ANN App for instant updates from the Adventist world churches' official news source, Adventist news Network. Read news stories and features on topics such as religious liberty, education healthcare, church humanitarian work, mission and outreach. Browse the ANN photo gallery, access the ANN glossary and style guide, and join our global community of readers in active discussion of current church decisions and initiatives.

The BAYDA-iServe iPhone app that will allow for youth and youth leaders to minister, share, and testify through your iPhone. Post a comment to Facebook or Twitter to share the things that are going on around you with your local church ministry. Take and share pictures of service projects, events that you may be a part of or attend. This app will connect you with other youth and youth ministry leaders from around the world.

**Reading for Pastors**

Should a pastor who's experienced moral failure be restored? Good article on the topic from *Ministry Today*.

Alabama's new immigration law: could this get our churches in trouble? Quote: "It makes it a crime for U.S. citizens to give people a ride if they turn out to be undocumented. It doesn't even have an exception for churches that are providing shelter or food or rides."

Interesting interview with Tom Ehrich about "turnaround churches". Quote: "Elected leaders need to stop running churches. Too many lay boards see their role as managing the day-to-day operations of the church, from education to pastoral care to worship to program planning. ... Let the pastor, staff (if any) and key volunteers run the operations. Boards need to be dealing with top-level personnel requirements, what emerging opportunities say about infrastructure."

Is this a new entrant in the Sabbath wars? A Duluth church has moved summer Sunday services to Wednesday. Quote: "While he knows some may question whether changing the day of worship is a biblically correct thing to do, Bagley points to a similar issue raised in the Roman church during the days of the Apostle Paul. According to Romans 14:5-6, he said, 'One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.'"

From Monte Sahlin, on Oprah's religion. Quote: "Much of the energy that some Christians put into criticizing popular figures and writers is simply wasted when it comes to communicating "the truth as it is in Jesus.""

Churches say we could give them more:
People want more guidance from their faith leaders about using technology and internet. UK survey of young people: religious leaders out of touch with issues of sexuality. Quote: "Respondents consider institutional religion a social control mechanism that excessively regulates gender and sexual behaviour, without sufficient engagement with young people themselves. ... What we're trying to encourage is more dialogue with young people as equal partners rather than a top-down approach. Young people need to be listened to. They have experiences and opinions that are sometimes in contrast with what religious professionals have in mind."

How to protect your church against sexual misconduct claims.

According to Forbes magazine, if you're in ministry to get rich, you're pastoring in the wrong country!

To the Point

Here's my observation. Clergy typically fall into one of two camps. Those who, in the face of the brokenness that surrounds them, come to identify their own brokenness and in humility choose to "live with the questions," to borrow the poet Rilke's phrase. This person is reluctant to offer quick answers to the hard questions of life. The other camp is clergy who choose instead to offer confident solutions to life's struggles. The clergy I have watched transgress their ordination vows typically fall into the second camp. The temptation is to shift from speaking about God to speaking for God. When that line blurs in a pastor's mind, all bets are off.

- Mark Barger Elliott

Evil can be undone, but it cannot 'develop' into good. Time does not heal it. The spell must be unwound, bit by bit, 'with backward mutters of dissevering power'--or else not. It is still 'either-or'. If we insist on keeping Hell (or even earth) we shall not see Heaven: if we accept Heaven we shall not be able to retain even the smallest and most intimate souvenirs of Hell."

- C. S. Lewis, The Great Divorce

If you ignore your duty as a wife and mother and hold out your hands for the Lord to put another class of work in them, be sure that He will not contradict Himself. He points you to the duty you have to do at home. If you have the idea that some work greater and holier than this has been entrusted to you, you are under a deception. By faithfulness in your own home, working for the souls of those who are nearest to you, you may be gaining a fitness to work for Christ in a wider field. But be sure that those who are neglectful of their duty in the home circle are not prepared to work for other souls.

- Adventist Home, p.245

I take the view, and always have, that if you cannot say what you are going to say in twenty minutes you ought to go away and write a book about it.

- Lord Brabazon

Against stupidity the gods themselves contend in vain.

- Friedrich von Schiller

Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately it kills all its pupils.

- Louis Hector Berlioz

All that we call human history--money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery--[is] the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.

- C.S. Lewis

News, Ideas & Reminders

- Humor: The end is when?
- New Adventist Parenting e-newsletter from Claudio and Pamela Consuegra and Pacific Press.
- NAD Festival of the Laity, September 7-10, Dallas
- Previous resource links:
  - Andrews Study Bible
  - The Hope of Survivors, ministry to victims of pastoral sexual abuse
  - iFollow website
  - Dissertation on house churches from Milton Adams
  - NAD NewsPoints (formerly Friday Fax): by email, or on a web page.
  - Clouzet - Standish presentation on creation and evolution
Upcoming NAD Events

Do you have an event you’d like to invite NAD pastors to? Send details to BestPractices@Ameritech.net.

GYC en español 2011: Firmes y Adelante. Jun 9, 2011 - Jun 12, 2011, Southwestern Adventist University, 100 W Hillcrest Street, Keene TX 76059. Participate in seminars, devotionals and mission work. Connect with ministries and other young people from around the country that share a passion for souls and a vision of finishing the work of God in this generation! All youth and adults who await the soon coming of the Lord Jesus. Phone: Kayla Piña (401) 649-9256. For more information, email: kayla.p@gycesp.org

Community Services Leadership Development. Jun 11, 2011 - Jun 12, 2011, Blue Mountain Academy, 2363 Mountain Road, Hamburg, PA 19526. Plan now to attend the Community Services Leadership Development "Reach Out" Symposium where you will develop church growth by building a relationship with the community through outreach ministries. Phone: 610-476-4255. For more information, email: jdare@paconference.org


SEEDS Plus 2011 Multiplication Movement. Jun 14, 2011 - Jun 18, 2011, Blue Mountain Academy, 2363 Mountain Road, Hamburg, PA 19526. Plan now to attend SEEDS 2011 Multiplication Movement a church planting seminar. Come learn the steps necessary to plant a church, or help a recently planted church grow. Phone: 800-255-7566. For more information, email: clarkc@andrews.edu

Great Controversy Tour - Summer, 2011. Jun 19, 2011 - Jun 30, 2011, Italy, Switzerland, France and Germany. Retrace the Adventist heritage in Europe from its roots in early Christianity, through the Dark Ages, to the Reformation. Tour Host: Dr. P. Gerard Damsteegt, Specialist in Adventist Studies and Church History. Phone: 269-471-5172. For more information, email: gctours@mac.com

PSI International Conference on Philanthropy. Jun 21, 2011 - Jun 24, 2011, JW Marriott Indianapolis, 10 S West Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Planned by and designed for the chief executives and fundraising professionals of Adventist organizations, the conference's goal is to foster vision. Recognized internationally, Principles & Techniques gives you the foundation and inspiration to lead your nonprofit to its financial goals. It provides you with the framework for operating a successful total development program. Phone: 301-680-6133 or 6134. For more information, email: Chris.Bearce@nad.adventist.org.

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Why Pastors Fall Into Sin

By Jack Frost

There is an epidemic of moral failure in church leadership today. Why is this happening, and what can we do to turn it around?

The church today is facing an alarming trend of moral failure among its leaders. For 12 years my wife, Trisha, and I have walked many ministers who have experienced a moral failure through a restoration process. It seems that with each couple, the pattern in their relationship that preceded the fall was similar. In earlier years, they had a call of God upon their lives, a passion in their marriage and zeal for the ministry. But somewhere along the way, misplaced priorities led to a gradual decline in intimacy, and ministry began to take precedence over relationship.

This was my and Trisha's story. After only a short season of pastoring, it appeared to her that I loved the ministry more than her. Ministry became my passion. It met my need for significance, self-worth, affirmation and acceptance. I was very good at helping others, but I felt inadequate in convincing my family I loved them more than ministry. So I gave myself to doing what I did best--ministry--and I walked down the path that easily could have led to moral failure.

No one makes plans to serve faithfully in ministry, grow distant from his spouse and end up in moral failure. Before a minister falls, he has usually tripped over a series of four stumbling blocks. It may be wise to examine these pitfalls and see if there are any needed course corrections.

CAUSES OF FAILURE

Most leaders who have fallen followed a similar pattern on the way down. Let's take a closer look at the four common stumbling blocks that often precede a fall.

1. Ministering out of an unhealed need for love and acceptance. Ministry is meant to be an overflow of the love we have experienced in God and with family. The lives and ministries of the fallen ministers I have worked with were not primarily characterized by being comfortable with love and intimacy in their homes. There were unconscious strongholds (ungodly beliefs) in their minds, wills and emotions that exalted themselves above the experience of God's love (see 2 Cor. 10:4-6).

I was raised in a home in which love and acceptance were expressed often based on my performance in sports, at school and in daily life. My response to this negative motivation was to build a habit structure of thinking that said, "I must perform well enough to earn love and acceptance." When I didn't, I did not feel I had a safe and secure place in my parents' hearts, and I closed my spirit to love.

Because I was created for love and intimacy but rarely opened my heart to receive it, in my teens and 20s I sought intimacy in pornography, masturbation and immorality. I was not comfortable with intimacy with my wife. After I came to the Lord, I laid the pornography down as an act of religious fervor and discipline. But the need for love and intimacy was still there, so my unhealed need surfaced in other areas--hyper-religious activity and the need to be needed.
Ministry became the source by which I sought to get my need met. One church crisis after another continued to interrupt family times of intimacy and fun. I became addicted to helping people and to hype and crisis in order to find the adrenaline rushes I fed upon. But it left me with an angry edge at home and with anyone who did not agree with me. Ministering from my unhealed need set me up for stumbling block No. 2.

2. **Living in independence and isolation.** Outwardly, in the eyes of the church and the community, I was anointed and upright. But I was not real, open and transparent. Inwardly, I lived for the praise of man and easily took offense at the slightest rejection or challenge to my authority.

I was jealous of others' success in ministry. Thus, I wore a religious mask, pretending to be more spiritual than I really was, and excusing my faults and weaknesses by blaming my family and others for anything that went wrong. No one knew the real me. To admit I had a problem meant I must be broken and deserving of punishment.

I thought if people really knew who I was, they would reject me, so I could not let anybody get too close. I found security and comfort by controlling my emotions and relationships in order to protect myself from a sense of rejection and failure.

There was no accountability in my life. I could not receive admonition or correction without seeing it as rejection. Therefore, I was not open to receive anyone to minister to my deep personal needs. I ended up in denial: "I'm OK. I have no need because I am spending so much time in prayer, study and doing so many good religious things." There is nothing easier than self-deception!

Once I chose darkness over light, intimacy with God was greatly hindered (see Rom. 13:12-14; 1 John 1:5-7). Because I was so motivated by works, discipline and duty instead of by love, I was out of touch with the needs of the average person in my church. I began to drive them, trying to get them to meet up to my rigid standards and expectations.

What I had to do to feel good about myself was what I required others to do for them to have any sense that I valued and approved of them. I worked hard to please everyone and to build the church in order to prove to others that I had value and worth. This only served to unconsciously lead me more deeply into the third stumbling block.

3. **Being more committed to ministry than to family.** As the stress and demands of ministry increased, I found myself coming home each day with no energy left to love. Often it seemed that life would have been better if I did not have to go home at night. The community loved the work I was doing. But about my wife I would ask myself: Why can't she appreciate the hours I spend daily in the Word and prayer? Doesn't she see the sacrifices I make, the souls I am winning and all I am doing for God?

Communication at home began to break down and often was no more than faultfinding and criticism. We became very dysfunctional. Rarely did we trust each other enough to talk about our true feelings; we centered our conversations around ministry and children. But at church we made sure the family wore their plastic smiles.

Being more committed to ministry than to love, I spent many hours giving away to others what rightly belonged to my wife and children. Many promises were broken as I prioritized others' needs over those of my family. This left my wife and children with unconscious resentment and anger toward me. With that awaiting me at home, it was so much easier to just spend more time ministering to others. After all, they always affirmed me for it.

Tripping over the first three stumbling blocks had finally set me up to fall face first into the fourth--and I never saw it coming.
4. Finding comfort in someone other than one's spouse. With a breakdown in communication and intimacy at home, there always seemed to be women who appreciated the anointing on my life. I found delight in being with them and in their affirmations of my ministry. They were so easy to talk with about my dreams and fears, and I thought they understood me better than my wife did. When Trisha asked why I seemed to light up around certain people but seemed so down when I got home, I became defensive, and it only added to the tension at home and my self-deception.

God designed my wife to be a physical and emotional haven of rest, and a place where I receive His love and comfort through the intimacy we share (see Prov. 5:18-19; Eph. 5:25-33). When I share my private and intimate concerns with someone other than my wife or find more delight in being with another woman than my wife, then I am giving to someone else the position of comforting me in the natural realm. That is spiritual adultery.

Before a full moral failure could ensnare me, Trisha began experiencing depression, partially from stuffing her anger for so many years. I ended up in spiritual burn-out, and we resigned the ministry. I finally began to hurt enough that I opened up to a friend and pastor, Phillip Miles. Trisha opened up to his wife, Lynn. If not for their patience, unconditional love and grace toward us, we may have gone the path of so many other ministers who ended up falling.

**STEPS TO RESTORATION**

How should the church respond when someone falls? "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1, NKJV). Restoration is God's plan. But God is more concerned with the restoration of intimacy and the overall well-being of the leader and his family than He is with the restoration of a leader's ministry.

God forgives the fallen leader immediately when he demonstrates genuine repentance. But forgiveness and healing are two different things. The leader and his family are usually overwhelmed with shame, embarrassment, loneliness, depression and personal torment. They may try to compensate for their feelings through hyper-religious activity, which will increase their insecurities and fears.

Our experience in ministering to these situations through the years has shown that when there is a quick restoration to ministry without a timely season away so the leader can work through issues and become free from his value and acceptance being wrapped up in his ministry, the marital crisis is often repeated a few years down the line.

For lasting healing of the minister's life and family, Trisha and I feel a leader must willingly step aside for at least one year from all ministry and positions so the minister's focus can be placed on healing, finding his identity in God's love and restoring intimacy with his family. This is usually only effective if there is genuine repentance: Deeply convicted, the fallen minister chooses to walk in the light, and willingly comes forward and exposes his sin, willing to do whatever it takes to bring healing to those he has hurt; he doesn't make excuses or seek to put the blame on others.

It is not possible to have the same guidelines of restoration for each situation. Personalities are different. Their depth of repentance is different. The depth of their unhealed needs is different. But here are some practical steps (not all inclusive) to consider when seeking to bring restoration:

**The fallen minister should express an uninhibited confession of the moral failure to the ministry board.**

**He should turn in a written resignation, citing moral decay in his life (no details necessary).**

**He should make a public resignation and confession of moral decay (no details necessary).**
**The ministry board should: emphasize forgiveness, compassion and restoration; give a generous severance package to help the minister's family get resettled; help establish a restoration committee of respected Christian leaders; and help establish the family in a new church, with one of the restoration committee members giving oversight.

**The restoration committee should: help the fallen minister find work in the secular field; provide counseling and ministry to the marriage and family; provide weekly accountability and prayer partners; and determine the goals, boundaries, qualifications and length of time for the restoration process. When the fallen leader has re-qualified himself and his marriage shows the fruit of restoration, then a public restoration service should be held in which he is pronounced restored. The committee should then help the couple locate a new avenue for service and ministry.

Things are different, however, when a minister is caught in sin and unwillingly exposed or made to confess. When this happens, there is often little repentance, only remorse.

Remorse rarely changes the problem. The person is grieved over the loss of his reputation and identity. He may seek to salvage his name, position and salary through blame-shifting, justifying or diminishing the depth of his involvement and seriousness of his moral condition. In this case, the restoration process to ministry should take much longer, or there is a risk of the problem being repeated.

Our hearts should be for the forgiveness and restoration of our fallen leaders. But it should also be for the healing of the church. We need a restoration process that will release greater integrity, intimacy and love in our families and the church, overflowing into a hurting world that is searching for truth manifested in forgiveness, compassion and genuine, self-sacrificial love.

**PARADIGM SHIFT**

There is a need for a paradigm shift in some of our values in ministry in order to abate moral decay.

**We must value intimacy more than ministry.** The Word makes it clear that our primary qualification for ministry and our relationship with God is evidenced by our relationships with our families and the degree to which we abide in love and intimacy (see Matt. 22:37-40; 1 John 4:7-18; Eph. 5:25-33; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:4-8).

**We must value being seekers more than being speakers.** Our study and prayer times need to be motivated by a heart seeking for love and intimacy, not by a desire to receive information or anointing for ministry (see 1 Tim. 1:5-7; 1 John 4:19-20; John 13:34-35).

**We must value a life of humility more than a life of visibility.** "He must increase, but I must decrease" (see John 3:30; Phil. 2:3-9; Matt. 18:4).

**We must value a life of integrity more than charismatic personality.** Integrity is an issue of the heart that makes daily decisions to integrate God's core values into life's daily actions. God values integrity above personality because it is foundational to building security, trust and intimacy in relationships (see Ps. 15:1-2; Prov. 10:9; 1 Chr. 29:17).

**We must value interdependence more than independence.** To whom are you accountable? Have we become like the Corinthian church, which had many teachers but few fathers? And as a result, have we focused our lives on gifts and power but are left walking in lustful passions of the flesh? (see 1 Cor. 4:14-21; Eccl. 4:9-12).

**We must value impartation more than information.** We must focus on being the message more than preaching the message. We impart what we are long before people put to practice what we preach. Paul's
ministry was not focused on persuasive speech but on the power of impartation (see 1 Cor. 2:4-5; 1 Thess. 2:7-8, 11-12).

When God wanted to bring revival to Nineveh, the most sinful city in the world, who did He have more trouble with--the man of God sent to the city or the city itself? When Jonah began to see things from God's point of view, he repented of his fear of failure and rejection, and the city of Nineveh experienced revival.

Revival is needed in our land today. Could it be held back by the love deficit within Christian leaders that has opened the door for many to pursue their need for unconditional love and acceptance in counterfeit affections of the flesh: passions, position, possessions and power? Is it possible that when our motivations and values as leaders come in line with God's, the church will move from purity, to presence, to power--and the revival will come that we so desperately need?

Jack Frost and his wife, Trisha, founded Shiloh Place Ministries (www.shilohplace.org) with a vision to provide a place of healing and restoration for those in ministry.

Tips for Standing Strong

Jack Frost shares eight steps you can take to prevent a moral failure from occurring in your own life.

Here are some daily practical choices I make to help protect my marriage and ministry from moral failure:

1. I choose to embrace the conviction that ministry should be an overflow of relationship and what God is doing within my home and family. I seek to make family needs priority over ministry needs. Several times a week my wife, Trisha, and I share in conversational prayer and intimate discussion.

2. I choose to make time each week to play and have fun with my family. We go to the beach, the lake, or play cards and games.

3. I choose to seek seasons of rest and renewal in the Lord separate from ministry. Several times a year, I take several days for solitude, fasting and contemplative prayer. Remember, Jesus ministered out of relationship and was motivated by His Father's voice, not by the needs of others. (see John 5:19).

4. I choose to have an open heart and to be transparent in relationships. I encourage my friends and prayer partners to ask the hard questions about my personal life. I no longer hide my faults, fears and insecurities from my wife, prayer partners and mentors but choose to walk in the light (see 1 John 1:7).

5. I choose to share the deep desires and needs of my heart with my wife first, before I share them with anyone else (except mentors) or in a group setting. In the 1980s, when I struggled so much with intimacy, this was difficult for me to do. So I began with my prayer partners and counselors (of the same sex), and it began to slowly develop with my wife. What helped me enter into this was reading a marriage book with her and discussing how it was speaking to me.

6. I choose to share with my wife the times I feel weak, have defiling or tempting thoughts, or if I suspect someone is seeking to attach themselves to me in an impure way. We agree together in prayer that no defilement take place. We pray that the cross be between me and the one whom I feel pulling on me. Trisha also daily prays a hedge of protection around me.

7. I choose to avoid ministering to the opposite sex without someone else in the room with me. If at any time I see a name on my calendar or someone during a ministry time who gives me "warm fuzzies," I refer that person to someone else for ministry. I set a personal boundary not to be alone with a member of the opposite
sex.

8. I choose to be honest with myself. When I sense that self-love is resurfacing, my motivations are impure, when I cannot find rest in my family, or when I seem to be putting blame on everyone else, I acknowledge I am in need.

I initiate a meeting with my mentors and/or prayer partners several times a month. Then, at least every year or two, I seek mature and qualified Christian counselors or ministers of healing prayer and receive personal ministry.

I believe the future of my marriage, family and ministry depends on my honesty with myself and my openness to receive ministry and admonition.

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**Help for the Struggling Pastor**

**Are you grappling with a personal issue you fear will tear your marriage and ministry apart? We recommend the following resources.**

Suggested reading that will help you avoid moral- and marriage-failure pitfalls:

*Sex, Men and God (Charisma House)* by Douglas Weiss. How to get and stay free from sexual baggage, [www.charismahouse.com](http://www.charismahouse.com).

*Experiencing the Father's Embrace (Charisma House)* by Jack Frost. Discover the freedom of walking in the Father's love, [www.charismahouse.com](http://www.charismahouse.com).


*Desires in Conflict (Harvest House)* by Joe Dallas. For those struggling with same-sex attractions and their families.

*An Affair of the Mind (Focus on the Family)* by Laurie Hall. One woman's struggle to protect herself and her children from the devastating effects of pornography.

*Divorce Proofing Your Marriage (Siloam Press)* by Linda S. Mintle. Ten lies that lead to divorce and 10 truths that prevent it--strategies for a healthy marriage, [www.charismahouse.com](http://www.charismahouse.com).


*Every Man's Battle (Waterbrook Press)* by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker, with Mike Yorkey. Winning the war on sexual temptation one victory at a time. Log on to [www.randomhouse.com/waterbrook/](http://www.randomhouse.com/waterbrook/).

*Winning the War Within (Intervarsity Press)* by Peter Wilkes. How to stop doing what you don't want to do, [www.gospelcom.net/ivpress/](http://www.gospelcom.net/ivpress/).

**Suggested reading for churches seeking to restore a fallen leader:**


If Ministers Fall, Can They Be Restored? (Pyranee Books) by Tim LaHaye. Why ministers fall into sexual sin, how to avoid it and what the Bible says about restoration. Log on to www.amazon.com.


**Audiotape series that will help you deal with the root issues that hinder intimacy with God and family:**

Don't Call It Love by Chip Judd, pastor. An intense look at the forces shaping male sexuality; and Developing Emotional Intelligence. Helping to break the cycle of renegade emotions and get control of your life. (843) 546-8242.

Avoiding Pitfalls for Leaders by Jack Frost. The five major stumbling blocks that lead to marriage and ministry failure and how to avoid them; and Developing Intimacy in Marriage. Exposing root issues that hinder intimacy in marriage and finding restoration in God's love. (843) 365-8990 or www.shilohplace.org.

Recovering From Infidelity and Overcoming Sexual Addiction by Focus on the Family, with H.B. London Jr., www.family.org/pastor/.

**Ministries available for restoration, counseling and prayer ministry to Christian leaders:**

Bayridge Family Center, Burlington, Ontario. Professional counseling for depression and mood disorders, (905) 319-1488.


Shiloh Place Ministries Conway, South Carolina. Conferences, retreats and healing prayer ministry. Call (843) 365-8990.

Singing Waters, Orangeville, Ontario. Personal prayer and healing ministry, (519) 941-0929.

**Other Web sites for ministries caring for ministers in crisis:**

CareGiver Ministries, a ministry of Focus on the Family. An extensive list of services, retreat centers and counselors for ministers. Call (800) 232-6459.

PastorCare Network, connecting hurting pastors with support ministries throughout North America. Call (919) 787-7024 or log on to http://www.concentric.net/~Pstrcare/.

*This article appeared in the Mar/Apr 2003 issue.*

Print this Article | Email this Article
Alabama governor signs tough new immigration law

(CNN) -- Alabama's governor has signed what he billed as tough illegal immigration legislation, requiring police to check the status of anyone they suspect may be in the country illegally when stopped for another reason.

The bill, due to take effect on September 1, was signed into law by Republican Gov. Robert Bentley on Thursday.

Its passage makes Alabama the latest in a series of states, including Georgia and Arizona, to enact controversial new laws aimed at tackling illegal immigration.

Civil rights groups and the Mexican government have been quick to condemn the move.

According to a fact sheet presented by Alabama House Republicans, the bill will require law enforcement officers "to attempt to determine the immigration status of a person who they suspect is an unauthorized alien of this country".

The legislation also makes it a criminal offense to provide transport or housing to an illegal immigrant. The state will have to check the citizenship of students, and any business that knowingly employs an illegal immigrant will be penalized.

A spokesman for Bentley told CNN that the governor had signed "a tough illegal immigration law."

Republican state Rep. John Merrill told CNN he had no hesitation in backing the legislation, saying it is "good for Alabama" because it will reduce illegal immigration to the state.

He rejected suggestions the law is discriminatory, and said he is confident it was drafted in such a way that it will survive legal challenges.

But critics say it has far-reaching consequences and will have a particular impact on young people because it requires the state to check the citizenship of all those seeking to enroll in schools.

Mary Bauer, legal director of the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights group, condemned what she called a very radical law, telling CNN it is "mean-spirited, racist, unconstitutional, and it is going to be costly."

She said not just illegal immigrants but also many American citizens could be impacted by the new rules.

"It makes it a crime for U.S. citizens to give people a ride if they turn out to be undocumented. It doesn't even have an exception for churches that are providing shelter or food or rides," she said.

Earlier the SPLC issued a statement saying the state stood to lose "millions more in lost tax revenue from Alabama businesses that will bear the brunt of boycotts of Alabama goods and services and lost sales to documented and undocumented immigrants who flee the state rather than deal with racial profiling and the state's anti-immigrant climate."

The Mexican government warned that the law could affect the human and civil rights of Mexicans living in or visiting the state.

Several immigrant and civil rights organizations filed a class-action lawsuit last week against a new Georgia law aimed at cracking down on illegal immigration.

That law allows police to ask about immigration status when questioning suspects in certain criminal investigations.

Meanwhile, Arizona's governor said last month she would appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court after portions of the state's new immigration law were blocked by federal courts.

The Arizona bill catapulted the issue onto the national stage last year, drawing a lawsuit from the U.S. Department of Justice, which
argues that the law is unconstitutional.

Lawmakers in at least 20 states weighed similar proposals during the past year, according to the National Immigration Forum.

Find this article at:

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

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Turnaround churches

By Ronald E. Keener

Tom Ehrich is president of Morning Walk Media, New York, NY. He publishes newsletters on church development and personal faith, writes two nationally syndicated newspaper columns, and does extensive consulting with congregations, church leaders and judicatories, primarily on church development.

His most recent book is, *Church Wellness: A Best Practices Guide to Nurturing Healthy Congregations* (Church Publishing). *Church Executive* asked Ehrich a few questions about turning around congregations.

**You talk about “invisibility;” to whom and by whom?**

Neighborhood churches once were the centers of their neighborhood—visible, part of the landscape. Neighbors knew who worshiped where. People went to each other’s churches for special events. Neighborhoods changed and became less cohesive; many moved to suburbs and started living in different ways. Churches lost connections in both cases. They weren’t being talked about. People knew each other, but religious affiliation became a smaller part of that knowing. Churches that overcame visibility – large campuses, active community presence, charismatic and visible clergy, strong “buzz” – have done well. People are still hungry for faith.

**What do you mean by “touches” in moving people along to potential affiliation and membership?**

A “touch” is a contact, a connection, maybe not deep or permanent, but a starting point. A church touches many people: regular constituents, visitors, day school families, church fair attenders, friends of friends, etc. Few of these lead to formal affiliation, and yet the people feel a part of the congregation and are being served by the congregation. Many will support it financially. A touch is where we start as we build relationships. If we just wait for people to show up on Sunday morning and then go through our membership process, our churches will die.

**One of the touches is to send an electronic message. Why is that important?**

The point is to respond to people right away and to follow up with consistency, using communications media that they value. That means e-mail, social media and blogs. Churches waste their money when they send out printed publications through the postal service. Better to send a series of targeted newsletters—e.g. the regular one that all constituents get, a special newsletter designed for prospects, and niche ones for appropriate interests (such as young adults, families with children). If done well – short messages, links to website, focus on human needs and not on institution – people will read them and, over time, begin to identify the congregation as a part of their lives.
DULUTH, Minn. — For hundreds of years, people have gone to church services on Sundays. But at one church in Duluth this summer, Sunday will not be the day to congregate and celebrate the Lord.

Instead, that day will be Wednesday.

"You've got to do something bold and different once in a while," said the Rev. Peter Bagley, who has been the pastor at United Protestant Church for more than nine years.

It started with one member of the congregation who reportedly said, "I like church. I also like going to the cabin."

That sentiment, plus an annual decrease in summer church attendance, got others thinking — until they had a revelation.

"Our solution is to have our regular worship service at a time when our disciples can attend," Bagley said. "While some churches will add a Saturday night service, we have decided to take what may seem to be a very unusual step and move the whole service to another day and time."

He believes his church may be the first in the Duluth area, and maybe the first church in the state, to make such a switch. While he knows some may question whether changing the day of worship is a biblically correct thing to do, Bagley points to a similar issue raised in the Roman church during the days of the Apostle Paul.

According to Romans 14:5-6, he said, "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it."

Charlotte Franz, pastor at sister congregation Pilgrim Congregational Church in Duluth, said she wishes United Protestant well in their endeavor.

"I hope that for their church members that it is positive and for those interested in finding out more about a church, to check this out if it better fits their schedule," she said.

She said her congregation also has been taking stock of what she called a "habitual way to operate" and see if it's really effective in today's world.

"We didn't consider taking away Sunday," she said. "For us it was more about doing things cooperatively with other people. I think more and more churches are realizing we just can't operate out of habit."

To that end, Pilgrim is joining Hope United Methodist Church, Chester Park United Methodist Church and United Baptist Christian Church for services on the Sundays of Memorial Day weekend, July 4 weekend and Labor Day weekend.

"I think it's a way of building relationships in a time when attendance is down for all of us," she said. "I think of this as a time of experimenting with things. We'll try it and evaluate and see if it works."

In the meantime, Bagley is getting used to talking about Wednesday services.

"It's a little strange to say it's on Wednesdays," he said. "But we promise to make Wednesday a day of esteem for our Lord and we encourage people to give it a try."

http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/64b89553ef7d43b099ec23c3711...
How Does Oprah Define God?

During the last show of her 25 years of doing a daily conversation show on television, Oprah Winfrey spoke to the concerns voiced by some Christians as to how she defines God. She said simply, "By God, I mean the same thing you do." She then used many traditional terms and phrases that almost all Christians would recognize and hear as orthodox, although she mixed in one or two references that are non-traditional.

The fear expressed by some is that Oprah has communicated a "new age" version of God, not "the God of the Bible." It is evident that she does not think that is what she is doing. She sees herself as a typical American black Protestant of her generation. She does not intend to define God in an unorthodox way.

The difficult thing about this question is that most American Christians (like Oprah) are not educated in the technicalities of Protestant or Catholic doctrine. They have not memorized the traditional phrases or language used to define God. They use a mix of traditional terms and newer phrases that they have picked up from the popular media. The editors and journalists who produce most of our newspapers, television and radio are entirely uneducated in theology and when they try to simplify the terminology they hear from church spokespersons, they often do not realize that they are muddying the water ... at least for some people.

To further stir the pot, there are very conservative Christians who look for any negative critique they can find of the popular media or ideas propagated in popular culture. They seek to draw a line between the mainstream culture that most Americans live in and a counter cultural Christianity. Anything that provides another instance of distinction, that indicates the "sinful" nature of popular culture is immediately and uncritically accepted. It is a kind of "if it works, use it" mentality without real intellectual honesty or fairness.

Added to this is a relatively small number of Christians who see everything through the lens of a conspiracy theory. "New age" is not just the result of sloppy journalism and sentimental, uneducated popular culture. It is defined as an actual organization trying to promote a faith that undermines the truth in Scripture. These folks reject the reality that "New Age" is only a label invented by bookstores to shelve together a bunch of otherwise unrelated books; that the beliefs of all of the thousands of "New Age" gurus and groups are so diverse as to be impossible to lump together. They take Oprah's amateur theology and expressions of personal feelings and make her a "New Age evangelist."

Oprah's comments in her closing show make it clear that she has no agenda to create or promote a new, unorthodox understanding of God or any other doctrine. Those who accuse of this have no evidence regarding her intentions. Their only evidence is some of the things she said and a lot more that she is accused of having said, but cannot even be documented as actual statements by Oprah.

Here is the reality: Christians who believe in the God of the Bible and His truth cannot teach Oprah or the average American (including many in the pews) the Bible doctrines by starting at a point of disrespect or put-down. All of the critiques and criticism are useless in terms of actually conveying a better understanding of Scripture and the authentic doctrines of Christian faith. It is better to build on the things that Oprah gets right than it is to attack or "correct" the things she gets wrong.

Much of the energy that some Christians put into criticizing popular figures and writers is simply wasted when it comes to communicating "the truth as it is in Jesus." Jesus did spend His time on such activities. He demonstrated that for people to come to a deeper understanding of Scripture, they must first have a strong relationship with Him. Those who make a serious commitment to follow Jesus can then study the Bible and learn a better theology, if they connect with spiritually mature believers who know how to listen, show respect, and build a relationship as well as impart Bible knowledge. It is really not about Oprah. It is about your neighbor.

May 26, 2011 in Ministry | Permalink
Many adults and teens would like to receive guidance from their churches on media and technology, a Barna Group study revealed. The problem is, most of them aren't getting any.

The study shows that most parents and tweens/teens (children ages 11 to 17) expect churches to address technology, but "most families are not getting any coaching or assistance when it comes to integrating technology into their family life."

"Technology is shaping family interactions in unprecedented ways, but we seem to lack a strategic commitment to the stewardship of technology," Barna Group President David Kinnaman says in a report explaining the results.

"The Christian community needs a better, more holistic understanding of how to manage existing and coming technological advances," Kinnaman explains. "Parents, tweens and teens need more coaching and input in order to face the countless choices they make regarding how technology affects their attention, interests, talents and resources."

Forty-two percent of parents and 33 percent of tweens and teens showed interest in "a Christian or faith-based perspective about how to be a good user of entertainment and technology without letting things negatively impact your family relationships," according to the Barna Group's report on Monday.

Kinnaman says the Christian community needs to increase its concept of managing the area of media and technology. "Perhaps technology should be added to discussions about stewardship," Kinnaman explains. "Technology is as old as craftman's tools. But today's digital and emerging technologies are in a different class than hundreds of other hobbies or interests because they have come to significantly define the use of time, the development of talent and the allocation of money."

Click here for the full Barna Group report.

What do you think? Is your church offering any training on technology? If not, would you be interested in it if they did?
The digital age is affecting more than how America communicates. It is also shaping parent-child relationships in striking new ways.

Barna Group recently completed a study about the influence of technology in families, releasing the findings in a new digital report, The Family & Technology Report.

The research was conducted in partnership with Orange, which is part of the reThink Group. The innovative study included nationwide interviews among parents and 11- to 17-year-olds from the same households, allowing comparisons between the parents and the tweens and teenagers who reside in the same home.

Highlights from the study included the following five findings:

1. **Parents are just as dependent on technology as are teens and tweens.**
   Most people assume that teenagers are driving the technology gap in families. Yet the research points out that the gap is much smaller than most imagine. In reality, parents are using technology and media to nearly the same degree as their 11- to 17-year-olds.

* Parents are more likely than their tween and teen offspring to report regular use of cell phones and desktop computers. They are just likely as their teens and tweens to use laptop computers and tablet-like devices.
* Parents watch just as much television and movies, use the Internet for as many minutes per day, and spend more time on the telephone and emailing than do their tween- and teen-aged children.
* The technology and media-related tasks that young people do more often than their parents are listening to music, texting, and playing video games. Even in these categories, most parents are surprisingly active.

Like other national studies have shown, parents are spending nearly the same amount of time per day as their tween and teen-aged kids consuming media and using various digital technologies. The gap was even smaller among families with parents who are still in their thirties or early forties. In other words, younger parents are even more technology- and media-dependent than older parents. All of this points to the fact that the digital world has influenced all members of the family, not just teens.

2. **Most family members, even parents, feel that technology has been a positive influence on their families.**
   While many assume that families are fed up with technology, by nearly a two-to-one ratio parents think of technology like computers, cell phones and video game systems as making their family life better rather than worse (32% to 18%). Most describe the influence as neutral (51%). Interestingly, parents are actually even more favorable toward entertainment like music, movies and television than toward technology, saying its influence is more positive than negative by a five-to-one ratio (38% versus 7%). A slim majority of parents feel entertainment is neither good nor bad (55%).

As relatively unconcerned as parents are about technology and media, the students in their home are even more positive about these elements of modern life. Tweens and teens are substantially more likely to describe technology’s influence as positive rather than negative (47% to 6%); similar ratings hold true for young people’s view toward entertainment (56% to 2%).

The conclusion is that most families welcome technology and media with open arms, rather than with suspicion.
One of the reasons for this may be that many families use technology, including television, movies and video games, as a shared experience.

3. Very few adults or youth take substantial breaks from technology.
Americans' dependence on—what some might call addiction to—digital technology is apparent in the study's findings. One out of three parents and nearly half of 11- to 17-year-olds say there are not any specific times when they "make the choice to disconnect from or turn off technology so they can have a break from it." And those who take such breaks tend to be driven by convenience rather than intentionality. For example, only 10% of parents and 6% of teenagers say they try to take off one day a week from their digital usage.

This reliance translates into some interesting behaviors and habits. Nearly half of both parents and teens said they emailed, texted or talked on the phone while eating in the last week. Two out of five youth and one-third of parents have used two or more screens simultaneously during this time period. And half of students and one-fifth of parents have checked email or text messages in bed in the last seven days. The question arises whether families are in control of their technology or being controlled by it.

4. Families experience conflict about technology, but not in predictable ways.
First, parents and their children experience conflict about technology, but not frequently. Only about one in every four parents said they had "strong disagreements about the limits on media and technology" on a weekly basis. About the same proportion says that "technology causes tension between me and my parents / kids." Still, half of parents (49%) worry about technology and media wasting their children's time, among other things. For their part, one-fifth of youth (21%) say their parents have a "double standard when it comes to technology." And one-sixth of these tweens and teens (17%) say their parents "bring their work home with them too much," a habit certainly abetted by pervasive technology.

Second, parents and youth are most disappointed by technology because it is "so expensive to get the latest," not because of the unwanted content or the isolation it can bring. In fact, only 39% of parents and 27% of tweens and teens say they get frustrated by technology because it "makes it hard to have conversations." The conclusion stemming from the research is that technology seems to amplify the relational patterns and problems already in place: families that have healthy and frequent conversations find technology aiding that process, while families without such healthy interactions find that technology exacerbates the isolation of its members.

5. Few families have experienced—or expect—churches to address technology.
Most parents and tweens/teens have not heard any kind of teaching in a church, religious setting, or public forum (like a school) about how families can best use media, entertainment or technology. In other words, most families are not getting any coaching or assistance when it comes to integrating technology into their family life. When asked if they would be open to one version of such training—"a Christian or faith-based perspective about how to be a good user of entertainment and technology without letting things negatively impact your family relationships"—about two-fifths of parents (42%) and one-third of tweens and teens (33%) expressed interest. The implication is that faith communities could take a leadership role in teaching about the proper use of technology in healthy families.

Commentary on the Findings
David Kinnaman, president of Barna Group, expressed the need for the Christian community to expand its concept of stewardship. "Perhaps technology should be added to discussions about stewardship. Technology is as old as a craftman's tools. But today's digital and emerging technologies are in a different class than hundreds of other hobbies or interests because they have come to significantly define the use of time, the development of talent, and the allocation of money.

"Technology is shaping family interactions in unprecedented ways, but we seem to lack a strategic commitment to the stewardship of technology. The Christian community needs a better, more holistic understanding of how to manage existing and coming technological advances. Parents, tweens and teens need more coaching and input in order to face the countless choices they make regarding how technology affects their attention, interests, talents
About the Research

The research is based on a representative, random sample of 416 U.S. households with parents and tweens and teens (ages 11 to 17). Interviews were conducted among 416 parents and 416 tweens/teens from the same households. The online surveys were conducted March 14, 2011 through March 22, 2011.

The estimated level of sampling precision for each group is +/- 5.0% within a 95% confidence level.

The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population operated by Knowledge Networks. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled panel. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, Knowledge Networks provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection. People who already have computers and Internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online and are sent emails each month inviting them to participate in specific research studies. Potential panelists are randomly selected from the population at large to join the panel; those who have not been randomly selected but wish to participate are not able to join in the sample.

The research was conducted in partnership with Orange, a division of the reThink Group. Further information about the research can be found in a new report from reThink entitled The Family & Technology Report.

Barna Group (which includes its research division, the Barna Research Group) is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organization under the umbrella of the Issachar Companies. It conducts primary research, produces media resources pertaining to spiritual development, and facilitates the healthy spiritual growth of leaders, children, families and Christian ministries.

Located in Ventura, California, Barna Group has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984. If you would like to receive free e-mail notification of the release of each new, bi-monthly update on the latest research findings from the Barna Group, you may subscribe to this free service at the Barna website (www.barna.org). Additional research-based resources are also available through this website.

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Religious leaders are out of touch with issues of sexuality, survey reveals
Results also indicate young people are finding it difficult to combine their religion with their sexuality

Chris Arnot
guardian.co.uk, Monday 21 March 2011 16:45 GMT

Sex and religion are subjects traditionally avoided at dinner parties, especially in the same sentence. But the supposedly conflicting pulls of sexuality and religion have fascinated writers from the Book of Genesis onwards.

So it is perhaps surprising that there has been little in the way of academic research on the subject until now, says Dr Andrew Yip, lead author of a new report, Religion, Youth and Sexuality, a multi-faith exploration, by sociologists from Nottingham and Nottingham Trent universities.

Aware of what Yip calls "the increasingly sexualised culture in British society today", the researchers set out to look at the challenges faced by young adults of religious faith. "We wanted to explore how they understand their sexuality and their faith, and the significant factors that inform such understandings," Yip says. "Also the strategies they have developed to manage their sexual, religious, youth and gender identities."

What they found was that, although most of the young people felt their religion was a positive force in their lives, there was a strong feeling that religious leaders are out of touch with issues of sexuality.

Nearly 700 people were interviewed, aged between 18 and 25. More than 72% were students, from further and higher education, and they came from six different traditions: Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism as well as those of mixed faith. "There were, for instance, a few Christians that we interviewed who are now exploring Buddhism," Yip says before confirming that, yes, Buddhists are more liberal on issues of homosexuality and sexual diversity. "Broadly speaking, our Muslim and Christian respondents tended to hold more conservative views."
Those who took part initially filled in an online questionnaire. Later, there were face-to-face interviews and, in some cases, week-long video diaries were recorded. Extracts from the diaries are printed in the report, revealing considerable inner torment in some cases. "There are young people finding it enormously difficult to combine their religion with their sexuality, especially if they are lesbian or gay," says Dr Sarah-Jane Page, a colleague of Yip's at Nottingham's school of sociology and social policy.

A bisexual woman who is an Orthodox Jew says: "I can't see myself living in a long-term relationship with another woman because of my community and my religion. I had a relationship with a girl," she goes on, "and, at some point, I realised that I was gay. But I didn't feel comfortable being Orthodox Jewish and gay, in that I don't want to live in a fringe community ... I couldn't leave Orthodox Judaism. That's my home, my people, where I feel comfortable."

A bisexual Muslim man is quoted as saying: "Telling my parents ... maybe I will feel very relieved, but if it did get out into the community, it will just hurt my parents, and I know it will be hard for me to face the community again. Maybe I'll be thrown from the mosque ... It's quite scary."

Despite these painful dilemmas, Dr Michael Keenan from Nottingham Trent University says: "The majority of religious young adults felt their religion was a positive force in their lives, and many felt that their faith was the most important influence on their sexual values and practices."

However, there is strong feedback from the survey suggesting that religious leaders don't know enough about sexuality. According to Yip, "Other respondents consider institutional religion a social control mechanism that excessively regulates gender and sexual behaviour, without sufficient engagement with young people themselves."

He goes on: "We'd like to see the creation of more safe places in religious communities for young people to engage with religious professionals so they can talk with honesty in the full recognition that they are not being judged. What we're trying to encourage is more dialogue with young people as equal partners rather than a top-down approach. Young people need to be listened to. They have experiences and opinions that are sometimes in contrast with what religious professionals have in mind."

Nearly a third of the 693 young people interviewed believe that celibacy is fulfilling, and more than 83% support the idea of monogamous relationships. Surprisingly, perhaps, more men than women felt that celibacy would be fulfilling, though whether they had themselves or their sisters in mind is not clear.

And which sex most values monogamy? "More women than men, but not considerably more," says Yip. "And it doesn't mean that they think marriage is the only context for monogamy, particularly those who are in same-sex relationships. Even among a significant number of heterosexual respondents there was a firm belief that sex should be allowed within a strong, loving relationship between a couple committed to each other although they may not be in a position to get married."

Yip hopes that the survey, backed by nearly £250,000 from the Arts and Humanities and the Economic and Social research councils, will be of use to professionals involved in youth work and sexual health. "Often, religious sensibilities are not at the forefront of their consciousness," he says, "and we'd like them to take the issue of religious faith seriously."

As it is, sexuality and religion will continue to be considered "uncomfortable bedfellows" in an increasingly secular society, as the researchers put it in their introduction to the report before going on to show that the issue is a lot more complicated than that.
Religious leaders are out of touch with issues of sexuality, survey reveals...
When trust is broken the costs are devastating

Protect your church against counseling sexual misconduct claims.

By Eric Spacek

As the spiritual advisor of a church, pastors are the ones most often turned to when a congregation member is in need of spiritual guidance and counseling. While this type of service is part of the job, it also is very important that certain guidelines and boundaries are established and maintained. Sadly, 20 percent of GuideOne’s sexual misconduct claims involve adult claimants, with the overwhelming majority of these incidents taking place in the counseling setting.

For example, a male associate pastor undertook counseling of a female 21-year-old church member. “Counseling” took place away from the church premises at various locations, such as a park, a restaurant and other places. One evening they met for counseling at a restaurant. They both ended up drinking and went from the restaurant to a hotel where sexual activity took place. Later, the female alleged that the sexual activity was not consensual. Rather, she alleged that the pastor sexually exploited her by taking advantage of his position as a counselor, while she was in an intoxicated state. A lawsuit was filed against the associate pastor, the senior pastor and the church.

While these claims can take many forms, from negligent counseling to sexual battery, having the proper safeguards in place to protect yourself and your congregation is crucial to the financial security and spiritual health of your organization. Below is a list of safeguards to consider when providing counseling at your facility.

Discuss opposite gender counseling: Deciding how opposite gender counseling will be handled is important to avoid allegations of impropriety. Some churches prohibit members of one gender to counsel the other. Other organizations allow it, but require a third person to be present. Having a third party present during a session does have its own implications for the clergy-penitent privilege, so if this is your policy, contact a local attorney to discuss the laws in your state.

Limit the scope of counseling: Limit the range of topics discussed during your counseling sessions to spiritual and biblical counseling. If the counselee needs assistance on other issues, such as domestic abuse, substance abuse, or mental health concerns refer them to a professional counselor in the area.

Limit number of sessions: Meeting with a counselee too many times can lead to an inappropriate relationship. Avoid an open-ended counseling relationship, as it could potentially continue for an extended period of time. Instead, establish a limit on the total number of times you will meet to counsel one person in a year. A reasonable number is three to five sessions. If the counselee is in need of further counseling after your maximum number of sessions has been met, refer them to a local professional health counselor.

Limit time and duration: In that same vein, it is wise to limit the amount of time you are available to provide counseling to those in need. Consider limiting your availability to the church’s established office hours. Likewise, set limits on the duration of each counseling session and stick to that limit. A reasonable length of time is 30 or 45 minutes. If counseling is needed beyond that amount of time, refer the counselee to a professional counselor.

Maintain confidences: If notes or other documents are generated during the counseling session, make sure that those documents are kept in confidence in a locked location. Also, as a counselor, you should not discuss the substance of the counseling sessions with other parties but should keep
God is good, especially if you’re a Nigerian pastor with some business savvy. These days, millions of souls, desperate for financial breakthroughs, miracles and healing, all rush to the church for redemption. And while the bible expressly states that salvation is free, at times it comes with a cost: offerings, tithes, gifts to spiritual leaders, and a directive to buy literature and other products created by men of God.

Pastors are no longer solely interested in getting people to Heaven; they’ve devised intelligent ways to make good money while reaching out to souls.

Take Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, for example. He is the founder and lead pastor of the Christ Embassy, a thriving congregation with branches in Nigeria, South Africa, London, Canada and the United States. His publishing company, Loveworld Publications, publishes ‘Rhapsody of Realities,’ a monthly devotional he co-authors with his wife. It sells over 2 million copies every month at $1 apiece. He also owns television stations, newspapers, magazines, a hotel, a fast-food chain, and more.

Many other Nigerian pastors are similarly building multi-million dollar empires from their churches. Today, pastors fly around in private jets, drive fancy cars like Daimlers, Porsches and BMWs, don Rolexes and Patek Phillipes, and own breathtaking mansions all over the world.

After the blog post I wrote in May about Nigerian pastors owning private jets, I was bombarded with emails from readers requesting to know the richest pastors in Nigeria. So I set out to investigate the assets of some of Nigeria’s most prominent pastors, and I came up with conservative estimates of their fortunes. I contacted representatives for all of the pastors and all except Matthew Ashimolowo’s representative confirmed ownership of the assets I list. Representatives for Pastor Ashimolowo did not respond to my emails.

**Bishop David Oyedepo**

Affiliation: Living Faith World Outreach Ministry, aka Winners Chapel

Estimated net worth: $150 million

David Oyedepo is Nigeria’s wealthiest preacher. Ever since he founded his church in 1989, Bishop Oyedepo has expanded his ministry into an international one, with branches in more than 150 countries. His church includes over 100,000 members, and his multimillion-dollar empire includes hotels, a newspaper, magazines, television stations, and a charity called the Winners’ Chapel International School. Oyedepo is also known for his philanthropic activities, including the construction of a hospital and the building of a new headquarters in Lagos.

**Matthew Ashimolowo**

Affiliation: Kingsway International Church

Estimated net worth: $130 million

Matthew Ashimolowo is the pastor of the Kingsway International Church in London, which is one of the largest African churches in Europe. His church has over 20,000 members and includes a network of affiliate churches across the UK and other parts of Europe. Ashimolowo is also involved in various lucrative businesses, including real estate and hospitality.

**Pastor Chris Oyakhilome**

Affiliation: Christ Embassy

Estimated net worth: $120 million

Pastor Chris Oyakhilome is the founder and lead pastor of the Christ Embassy, a church with branches in more than 150 countries. His publishing company, Loveworld Publications, publishes ‘Rhapsody of Realities,’ a monthly devotional he co-authors with his wife. It sells over 2 million copies every month at $1 apiece. He also owns television stations, newspapers, magazines, a hotel, a fast-food chain, and more.

**Pastor Enoch Adeboye**

Affiliation: Redeemers Church

Estimated net worth: $110 million

Pastor Enoch Adeboye is the founder and lead pastor of the Redeemers Church, one of the most prominent churches in Nigeria. His church has over 100,000 members and includes a network of affiliate churches across Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Adeboye is also known for his philanthropic activities, including the construction of a hospital and the building of a new headquarters in Lagos.

**Pastor T.B. Joshua**

Affiliation: Synagogue Church of All Nations

Estimated net worth: $100 million

Pastor T.B. Joshua is the founder and lead pastor of the Synagogue Church of All Nations, one of the largest churches in Nigeria. His church has over 100,000 members and includes a network of affiliate churches across Nigeria and other parts of Africa. Joshua is also known for his philanthropic activities, including the construction of a hospital and the building of a new headquarters in Lagos.
End Game
Posted By Angus On May 23, 2011 @ 12:32 am In The Illustrated Sandwich | 20 Comments

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Dear Parents and Friends,

**Welcome**

Adventist Parenting needs you!

The Family Ministries Department at the North America Division of Seventh-day Adventists is developing a new multi-media parenting resource - and wants to know - what you would like to see included!

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Until next time,

Karen Pearson
Editor, Adventist Parenting

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INTRODUCTION

People have been writing about the end of the “megachurch” for years. The funny thing is, research continues to confirm that megachurches are healthy, with more and more people attending them. And this is true even in recent tough economic times.

It’s not by chance, gimmick, or popularity contest that big churches keep getting bigger, even though many critics might want you to believe that or would *still* say that megachurches are just a fad. The reason large churches continue to grow and thrive is they are strategic in their approach to alignment, adaptability, leadership, and reach.

As you read this eBook, take note of which factors are in play at your church and which ones need to be incorporated so you can continue to be the vibrant, strategic, growing church necessary to reach more people for Christ.
In November 2010, the Leadership Network released its “Large Church Economic Outlook Report.” This report, which compiled research from a survey of large churches, found that “generally, the larger the church, the more likely it is to have experienced an increase in attendance and giving from 2009 to 2010.”

In very difficult economic times, when you might expect “big church” to experience the same downturn as “big business,” just the opposite has been the case. Bigger churches are healthier than ever.

This comes on the heels of Outreach magazine finding that the fastest-growing churches are growing faster than they have in the past. Also, the Hartford Institute for Religion Research has documented that the number of megachurches has grown from 350 in 1990 to 600 in 2000. Today, they are tracking more than 1,400.

It’s interesting to me that the voices talking about the decline of the megachurch seem to get more vocal as the number of big churches continues to increase. Have you noticed that? With that in mind, let’s look at four factors that are foundational to so many big churches that keep getting bigger and stronger.
In churches that have stopped growing or have started to decline, you are likely to find people just trying to “do church.” They’re doing what other churches have always done—hoping (and praying) that their repeated efforts generate different results.

Typically the larger the church I go into, the more aligned the church body is. You’d expect the opposite. You’d expect that smaller churches would be more focused and have less complexity because they have fewer people and resources. Honestly, though, there’s usually an inverse relationship. Larger churches are more focused and more aligned, and smaller churches haven’t clarified their purpose and are often very complex in both structure and ministry programming.

Here’s a picture of what it looks like to be fully aligned as a church:

• The primary purpose or mission of the church is established.
• A focused ministry and/or discipleship strategy has been established to accomplish its vision.
• All of the church’s ministries and programming are intentionally designed to fit into that strategy.
• The church is structured with staff and volunteer leaders and teams around its strategy.
• Resources on the master calendar—such as money, facilities, and space—are distributed to maximize impact rather than maintain fairness.
• There’s a Web and communications strategy in place to keep everyone focused and moving in the same direction.
• The teaching includes life application that identifies specific next steps to engage people in a discipleship journey that mirrors the overall strategy of the church.
• Rather than celebrating large attendance numbers, the success of any special event or initiative is measured by how they helped people engage in the journey.
• The church is capturing stories and measuring data to determine if the strategy is working as intended.
Being fully aligned begins with the end in mind. We have to identify what we ultimately want to accomplish as a church. And we have to identify what we ultimately want people to look like at the conclusion of our discipleship process. Again, most churches don’t do this. They just do what other churches have always done. Here’s a little secret: What churches “have always done” isn’t working.

The only way things are going to change is if churches clarify where they’re heading and then make sure they’re fully aligned to experience the intended results. Most larger churches are willing to engage the difficult and time-consuming process of ensuring full alignment of everything they’re doing behind a big vision.

Critical to alignment in any organization is routinely saying no to good ideas. In an October 12, 2004, BusinessWeek Online article, here’s how Steve Jobs explained this critical piece of the culture at Apple:

Innovation comes from people meeting up in the hallways or calling each other at 10:30 at night with a new idea, or because they realized something that shoots holes in how we’ve been thinking about a problem. It’s ad hoc meetings of six people called by someone who thinks he has figured out the coolest new thing ever and who wants to know what other people think of his idea. And it comes from saying no to 1,000 things to make sure we don’t get on the wrong track or try to do too much. We’re always thinking about new markets we could enter, but it’s only by saying no that you can concentrate on the things that are really important.

In order to maintain alignment, many times you have to say no to expanding the vision. Many times you have to say no to adding a new ministry. Many times you have to say no to doing another special event. Many times you have to say no to communicating something to your entire audience. Many times you have to say no to good people with good ideas. Big churches get that. They understand that saying no helps the organization maintain alignment and creates opportunities to say yes to the things that will make a bigger impact.
One of the factors I believe leads to a growth momentum for big churches is their adaptability factor. You would think that a larger church would find it more difficult to embrace change. The reality is that large churches have become large for a number of reasons, and one of them is because a willingness to change methods is built into their culture. Not every large church has this in their DNA—and that’s why not every large church is growing—but I truly believe the vast majority of large churches are willing and able to ebb and flow as necessary.

So, when people think church services are boring and irrelevant to their lives, churches adapt and begin changing their worship services to reach new people. When the ministry environments have so many people that gatherings seem impersonal, churches adapt and begin offering a path for people to connect in small groups and serving teams.

When the culture shifts and raises the value of serving the hurting and the hopeless, churches adapt and begin engaging missional communities and strategies to impact people outside the walls of the church.

When it seems people are less likely to attend services in auditoriums that seat thousands, and when creating bigger buildings exceed financial feasibilities, churches adapt and begin gathering in multiple locations in smaller venues.

Throughout the years, there have been many folks who have talked about the eventual demise of the megachurch, assuming these churches would never shift tactics and philosophies. The reality is, one of the reasons they became large in the first place was because they were willing to shift tactics and philosophies. The megachurch today is not the same megachurch it was ten, five, or even two years ago.

When a church becomes married to its methods rather than its mission, the church plateaus and eventually declines. Typically, large churches don’t experience this because they have the adaptability factor. They’re willing to change and try something new, even if some of those new initiatives fail.
I’m in the camp that believes leadership is a spiritual gift. Romans 12:8 tells us, “If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously.” One distinctive of large, growing churches is that they value leadership development. That’s not the case in small, declining churches.

In many small churches, leaders are controlled. This typically happens through the way churches are structured. Instead of giving pastors and other ministry leaders the freedom to make decisions and make ministry happen, churches add layers of boards and committees and create rules and processes to prevent leaders from doing just about anything on their own. Typically, the smaller the church, the more complex the structure.

In growing churches, what I usually find is that leaders have been released to lead. Boundaries are established to create a framework for making decisions and taking actions, but within those boundaries is the freedom for leaders to leverage their spiritual gifts. Unfortunately, many churches are willing to embrace shepherds, teachers, and pastors . . . but they’re unwilling to embrace leaders.

Churches that understand the leadership factor share these characteristics:

- They are staff-led and not committee-controlled.
- They empower the senior pastor and the spiritual authority of that position.
- They see leadership as critical not only at the very top of the organization but in every layer of ministry.
- They know leadership is a gift and that it must be developed.
- They understand not everyone is a leader, and they’re intentional about moving people into ministry that best fits their gifts.
- They embrace both staff and volunteer leaders (paid staff are not the only people with the leadership gift).
- They recognize leadership isn’t just for men over the age of 40.
- They are careful to prioritize the character of a leader over skill.
The bottom line is that it’s impossible to grow a healthy church and have an environment that values control over empowerment. Show me a large church that continues to grow, and I’ll guarantee you it’s a church that values, encourages, and develops the gift of leadership.
I have the great fortune to work with churches across the country on a regular basis. Within many of those churches are ministries that combine to form a church. This is what I call “The Reach Factor.” Not every church has it—and not every ministry within a church shares it. In fact, many churches might have what you could call “The Keep Factor,” which is an entirely different approach to ministry.

When churches value keeping who they have over reaching people outside the church and outside the faith, their thinking, language, and actions tend to look like this:

- They program for people who already attend church.
- They create environments that assume only Christ followers will be present.
- They use insider language that’s confusing to people new to church.
- They assume any growth that happens will be initiated by a heart-change outside the church rather than one inside the church.
- They never stop ministries for fear of offending someone inside the church.
- They are slow to do something new because they fear the unknown.
- They think they must choose between “going deeper” and “reaching the lost” when they can actually do both.
- They choose personal preferences over potential ministry impact.
- Ultimately, they make decisions based on who they’ll keep rather than who they’ll reach.

There are a couple of ways to know whether or not your ministry has “The Reach Factor” in play. One way is to think about this scenario: Suppose someone was just hired as the student pastor (or any other ministry role). If one of the key objectives in his or her first days on the job is to try to get people who have left the church to return, that’s a good sign your church or ministry is more about “The Keep Factor.”
Another way to determine which of these two factors is at play within your church is to use an exercise I often utilize while consulting. List every single ministry environment at your church. Then create two columns, one titled “Reach” and the other titled “Keep.” Go through the entire ministry list, moving each ministry to either one of the columns. You’ll soon discover whether your church believes it’s better to reach people outside the church or keep people already in attendance. I’ve noticed that churches that aren’t growing tend to have an overabundance of “Keep” ministries. Sure, healthy churches need to have ministries to help people take their next steps toward Christ, but it’s not healthy when almost every ministry is a “Keep” ministry.

Oh, and one more test . . . How you emotionally react to this section is probably also a good sign of where you and your church stand. In my experience, churches that are healthy and growing almost always have “The Reach Factor.”
I don’t believe healthy churches are necessarily big churches. However, I do believe that healthy churches are growing churches. Whether your church has 100 people or 1,000 people or 10,000 people, are more people becoming Christ followers and taking steps in their faith? Are you hearing more stories of life change?

It might be appropriate for you to break away as a leadership team to get off-site and really dig into these four factors.

1. **Assess yourself.** As a team, talk through each section and then rank your church on a scale of 1 to 10 in each area.

2. **Identify next steps.** Starting with the area with the lowest score, what are some specific action steps you could take to bump the score by a couple of points in the coming six months?

3. **Assign ownership.** Don’t establish a game plan without giving someone the ball. Figure out who is going to own the next steps. Who will make it happen? Who will report back to the team?

4. **Schedule checkups.** Don’t wait until the end of the six months. Schedule checkups every month or two to make sure the action plan is working and to discuss any tweaks that may be needed.

5. **Measure results.** Don’t measure activity. Figure out a way to measure whether or not your changes have actually made an impact. Is your church growing? Are you seeing more life change?

I’m praying this eBook helps you consider how your church can have a bigger impact in your community and in the lives of people who connect with your ministry. When that happens, I hope you’ll email me at tony@tonymorganlive.com and share your story.
CONCLUSION

So now you see there’s no one, mysterious “it” factor for big churches that continue to get bigger. Instead, there are four key factors that have proved to be invaluable to their strategic growth and increased overall health.

If your church is experiencing great vitality and growth, that’s great! Keep moving in the direction you’re going. Hopefully you’ve picked up a few things in this eBook that will strengthen you even more. If you know your church is not as healthy as it should be, though, then you and the leaders around you may need to examine your church’s approach to alignment, adaptability, leadership, and reach.

Use the study questions that follow to examine your church’s DNA, and discuss with your leadership team what steps you need to take to be more effective in furthering the gospel and developing disciples.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How aligned is your church when it comes to purpose and programming?

2. Where is your church heading, and how do you intend to get there? Is the “end” in sight? Are you on track? If not, what adjustments do you need to make?

3. In what ways are you married to your methods rather than your mission? If it’s the other way around, why is that?

4. How well has your church embraced change in the past? Do people look forward to it or dread it?

5. In what specific ways does your church embrace its leaders and give them the freedom to lead?

6. In what ways has your church been guilty of having “The Keep Factor”?

7. What tough decisions has your church made to operate under “The Reach Factor”?

8. What is the first “factor” your church needs to focus on changing so it can experience greater growth and better health?
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

TONYMORGAN live

Tony Morgan is the Pastor of Ministries at West Ridge Church near Atlanta. He’s also a strategist, coach, writer, speaker, and consultant who equips leaders and churches to impact their communities for Christ. More important, he has a passion for people. He’s all about helping people meet Jesus and take steps in their faith.

For more than ten years, Tony served on the senior leadership teams at NewSpring Church (Anderson, South Carolina) and Granger Community Church (Granger, Indiana). With Tim Stevens, Tony has coauthored Simply Strategic Stuff, Simply Strategic Volunteers, and Simply Strategic Growth—each of which offers valuable, practical solutions for different aspects of church ministry. In his book Killing Cockroaches, Tony shows leaders how they can stop getting bogged down in the mundane and small details of church life to instead focus on making a bigger impact through leadership and life.

Tony has also written several articles on staffing, technology, strategic planning, and leadership published by organizations such as Outreach magazine, Catalyst, and Pastors.com. Tony and his wife, Emily, reside near Atlanta, Georgia, with their four children—Kayla, Jacob, Abby, and Brooke.

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Tony Morgan loves consulting with, speaking to, and coaching leaders. Based on his fifteen years of strategic leadership experience working for three growing churches and numerous church clients, he can assist you with:

- Consulting & Ministry Health Assessment
- Staffing & Structure Review
- Volunteer Strategy Development
- Weekend Service Review
- Speaking & Training

Additionally, Tony partners with some great organizations to assist churches with creative design, technology, multi-site, executive recruiting, stewardship, facility design and construction, and brand strategy.

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