Addressing Pastoral Burnout Part 1
Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

Philippians 2:29,30 NKJV

Burnout is not a term or phenomenon that is new to contemporary times, but it is a recurring issue in the work of the ministry, and therefore needs to be addressed. What causes burnout? What about the work of pastoral ministry causes ministers to burn out? What spiritual solutions or practical steps, if any can be taken to prevent burnout? Is there any hope of renewal for the pastor experiencing burnout? Can passion and zeal for ministry be rekindled? Do not be discouraged if you do not have the answers on your own, but continue to read on and you will find the answers. Read More.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON FACEBOOK

Prodigal Pastor's Kids?

PKS are often stereotyped as either straight-laced, spiritual Mini-pastors or hell-raising rebels. The Barna Group surveyed pastors nationwide and found that PKS aren't so different from their peers. Here are the comparative results.

40%
Pastor's kids age 15 or older who went through a period where they significantly doubted their faith.

38% Millennials with Christian backgrounds who did the same.

7% Pastors kids who no longer consider themselves Christians.

9% Millennials with Christian backgrounds who did the same.

Source: LeadershipJournal.net

JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON FACEBOOK

Webinar for Ministerial Directors

2015 Ministerial Convention: Updates, Information, and Assignments - Thursday, April 17, 1:30 pm EDT

Space is limited.
Reserve your Webinar seat now at:
https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/590572696
Join us for the latest news, specific information, and assignments about our 2015 Ministerial Convention.

We will discuss the registration process, the new app for the convention, marketing recommendations, general information about speakers & seminars, and ministerial director assignments.

Title: Webinar for Ministerial Directors -- 2015 Ministerial Convention: Updates, Information, and Assignments
Date: Thursday, April 17, 2014
Time: 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM EDT

Where Lust Leads
One pastor's journey through sex addiction.
This article is for Ministerial Directors only. To read it, click here and login.

A Point to Make
"Courage is not the absence of fear -- it's inspiring others to move beyond it."
Nelson Mandela, Former President of South Africa

Calendar
April 17
Ministerial Directors Webinar
1:30 p.m. e.s.t.

**May 1-4**
Summit on Abuse
[Visit Website]

**May 13-15**
NAD Administrators Restructuring Meeting

*Best Practices for Ministerial Directors* is published by [NAD Ministerial](http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs169/1101578508634/archive/1116730588922.html). Editor: [Ivan Williams](mailto:ivanw@adventist.org). Managing Editor: [Dave Gemmell](mailto:daveg@adventist.org). Copyright 2012 North American Division Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists. v(301) 680-6418
Addressing Pastoral Burnout Part 1

by Ivan Williams

Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

Philippians 2:29,30 NKJV

Burnout is not a term or phenomenon that is new to contemporary times, but it is a recurring issue in the work of the ministry, and therefore needs to be addressed. What causes burnout? What about the work of pastoral ministry causes ministers to burn out? What spiritual solutions or practical steps, if any can be taken to prevent burnout? Is there any hope of renewal for the pastor experiencing burnout? Can passion and zeal for ministry be rekindled? Do not be discouraged if you do not have the answers on your own, but continue to read on and you will find the answers.

In Webster’s New Ninth Collegiate Dictionary burnout is defined as “exhaustion of physical or emotional strength.”[i] Ralph Douglas Haynes in his thesis entitled “An Outline of Clergy Depression with Suggested Procedures and Strategies for Healing,” reflects on three illustrations of the use of the word burnout by referring to the devastation of a fire. These three illustrations are exemplified as: a burned building gutted by a devastating fire; a circuit breaker overloaded and blown, no longer able to carry currents; and lastly, a forest devastated by fire, unable to restore itself.

Reflecting on an empty building gutted by a devastating fire, Haynes observes that burnout is like an empty shell with nothing left but walls. In comparison, the burned out individual feels empty, having all internal resources burned away with nothing left to offer in ministry but external manifestations. This is the act of simply going through the motions, without emotion or passion for the work of the ministry. He suggests that this may be the result of emptiness.[ii]

Haynes also compares burnout to destructively high temperatures that have caused electrical circuits to overload and blow, causing all circuit breakers to melt the electrical wires, and making them incapable of carrying any currents. Here the person who experiences burnout is left helpless to continue functioning in a normal manner. The circuits are gone, and they can no longer expend the energy necessary for the task, but they continue on. Haynes suggests, that by the person pressing on, he/she may be in a state of helplessness.[iii] Many Adventist pastors find themselves trapped in this vicious cycle of continuing on in ministry with nothing more to give. They really wish that they could leave pastoral ministry, but because of educational training, years in service, and the fear of financial loss they remain in ministry. They have no creative ideas to give, no visions for direction to render, and no desire to emphasize mission. They continue on because it is all that they know, and it is all that they have been trained to do. Many remain in ministry years after the passion has dissipated, simply because of their fear of not being able to find other employment and of being perceived as a failure. Others remain in pastoral ministry because they personally believe that to leave is to forsake their calling by God.
Lastly, Haynes sees burnout as relating to a forest fire so intense that it destroys everything, including the life giving humus, leaving the forest without the capacity to restore itself. Haynes equates this with a sense of hopelessness within the pastor.\[iv\] Some pastors leave ministry never to return. Some even become so disillusioned that they leave the church of their denomination. Intense ministry for the Adventist pastor must be followed up with intense debriefing and deliberate efforts of seeking help. It is very important that pastors get help along their pastoral journey and long before this stage in their work.

Burnout is therefore defined as a multi-faceted experiential feeling of exhaustion. It is felt physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. It drives the pastor to care for nothing and even robs the desire to be cared for. It causes feelings of negativity and feelings of numbness, and may lead to depression.\[v\] Burnout as described in these patterns of experiences and characteristics involves the body, mind, and spirit.\[vi\] which equals the total person. Because burnout is real in pastoral ministry, so is the renewal and recovery from it. Renewal from pastoral burnout is essential to the hope and assurance of those called to ministry in times of ever-increasing demands.

1 Webster’s New Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “burnout.”


\[iii\] Ibid., 138-39.

\[iv\] Ibid., 139.


\[vi\] G. Lloyd Rediger, Coping with Clergy Burnout (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1982), 18.