

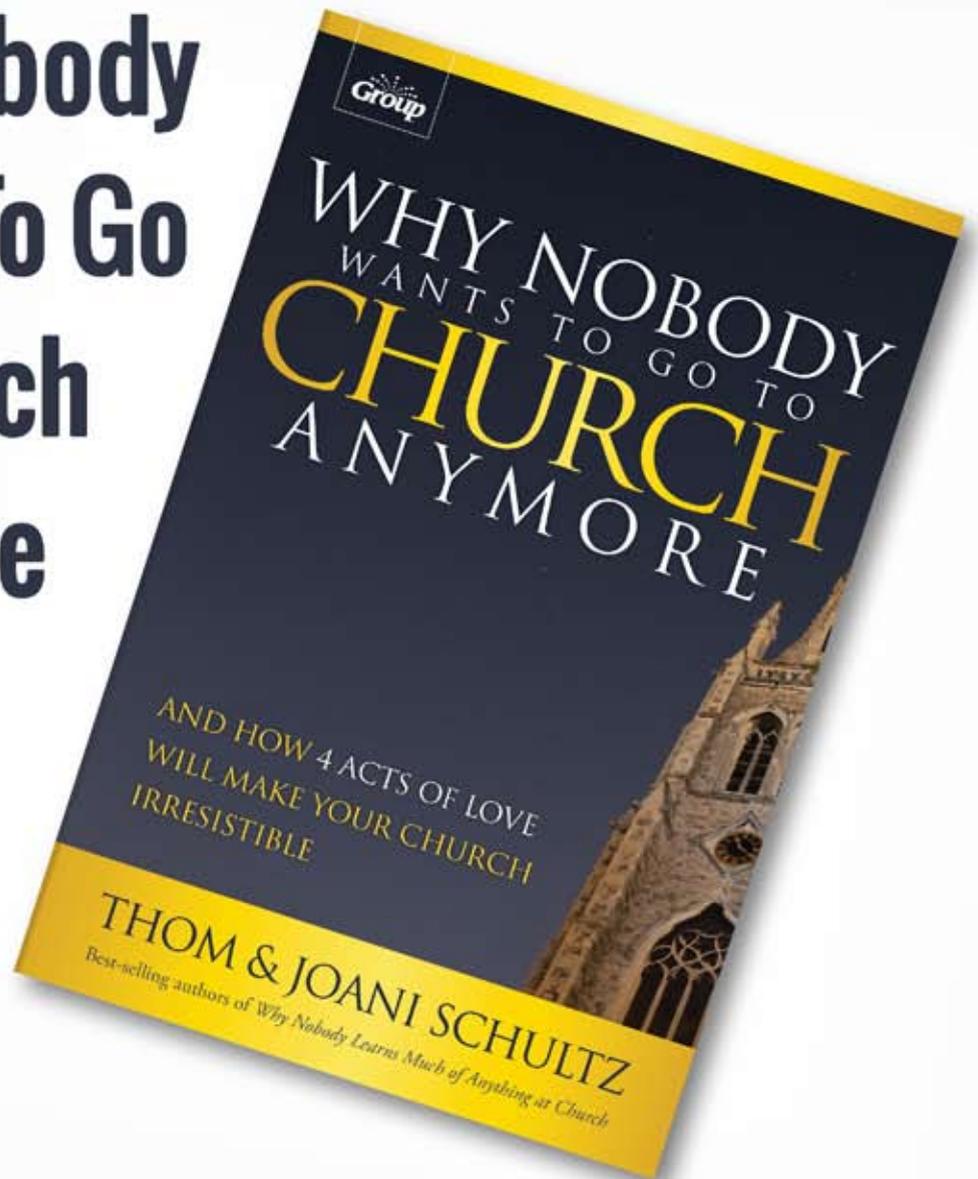
October 2013



# The American Church Magazine

## Why Nobody Wants To Go To Church Anymore

A book review  
by Steve Hewitt



Dedicated to helping the church in America find their purpose, define their mission and reach their community.

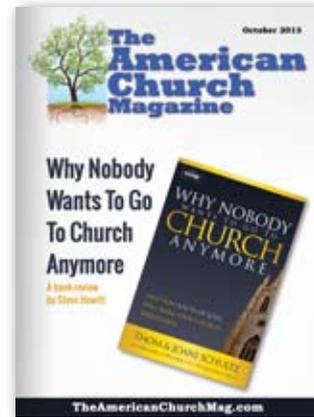
October 2013

Vol. 2 No. 10

**6** **No Longer Church As Usual**  
Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones,  
but Names - They Will Define Me  
By Tim Kurtz

**10** **Article**  
"Don't Serve Outside Our Church"  
By Thom Schultz

**12** **Navigating Transitions**  
12 Signs Its Time to Call an Expert  
By Lavern Brown



**3** **Cover Story**  
Why Nobody Wants to Go to  
Church Anymore  
A Book Review By Steve Hewitt

**Editor-in-Chief**

Steve Hewitt - [steve@ccmag.com](mailto:steve@ccmag.com)

**Contributing Editors**

Max Strother  
Mike Turner  
Lavern Brown  
Thom Schultz

**Copy Editor**

Gina Hewitt

© Copyright 2012 by The American Church Magazine. All Rights Reserved  
Written materials submitted to The American Church Magazine become the property of The American Church Magazine upon receipt and may not necessarily be returned. The American Church Magazine reserves the right to make any changes to materials submitted for publication that are deemed necessary for editorial purposes. The content of this publication may not be copied in any way, shape or form without the express permission of The American Church Magazine. Views expressed in the articles and reviews printed within are not necessarily the views of the editor, publisher, or employees of Catholic Technology Magazine.

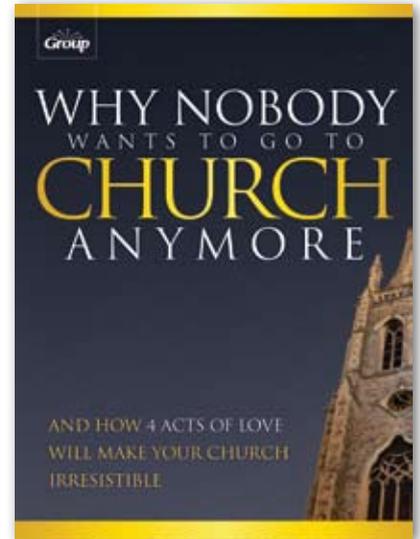
Corporate Home Office Mailing address:  
306 Eagle Glen Ct, Raymore MO 64083  
Phone: (816) 331-5252 FAX: 800-456-1868

Highlighted articles are provided by our Partners  
[http://www.ccmag.com/2007\\_03/2007\\_03editorial.pdf](http://www.ccmag.com/2007_03/2007_03editorial.pdf)

# Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore

## And How 4 Acts of Love Will Make Your Church Irresistible

A Book Review By Steve Hewitt



**W**hy Nobody Wants To Go To Church Anymore by Thom and Joani Schultz has a provocative title that grabs your attention, and for some, causes the hair to rise on the back of their neck. I have done street interviews asking very similar questions and found that while you get some good information about what people feel about church, you also will draw some anger from frustrated church members who love their church and attend faithfully.

The purpose of the title is to grab attention. But, it also promotes a very important fact about the church in America. It IS in decline, and the decline is not just because people have moved away from a desire to find God or have a relationship with Christ, it is because they are rebelling against the institutional church. This book starts off pretty bold right in the Introduction. The first statement lays the foundation for the reason for the book, “There’s no easy way to say this, but it needs to be said: The American church is broken”.

In Chapter 1, the book provides some of the basic stats to show that the decline in attendance, the number of churches, the offerings, etc., are all in decline, and have been for over 20 years. Chapter 2 seeks to reveal why it is that the unchurched say they do not want to attend. Thom and Joani share “man in the street” interviews from people and conclude that most of the reasons fall into one of four reasons. I am not going to provide a spoiler here and give you the four reasons, but the reasons they share are ones that I would agree with based



**By 2025,  
your church  
will lose...**

**...half its people.**

They're "spiritual but not religious." They're eager to talk about God, but done sitting through sermons.

**Want to reach young adults? Start a conversation.**

They're looking to participate, not to be an audience. So let them ask hard questions. Grapple with tough stuff. Discover how God is reaching out to them.

**And Lifetree Café is all about conversation.**

Relaxing around tables, Lifetree participants hear inspiring stories, tell their own stories... and draw closer to God and each other. On college campuses, at coffee shops, and even in churches, life-changing conversations are underway.

**When you're ready to connect, connect with us.**

We'll help you provide tested, ready-to-go, hour-long guided conversations that let young adults experience God in a fresh, new way.

Call **877-476-8703** or visit **Discover.LifetreeCafe.com** to learn more.

*Lifetree Café is now available in Canada!*

\*Projected 2025 church attendance from George Barna's *Revolution*



"Doing life. Doing good."

**Discover.LifetreeCafe.com**

Copyright © 2013 Group Publishing, Inc.



upon my own interviews with the un-churched. The rest of this chapter does an excellent job of defining today's church. Obviously all churches are not the same, but the book does a pretty good job of categorizing churches into different six different types. Frankly, I had never thought about how most churches fall into one of these six categories, and found this part very eye-opening (and very true)! The book provides the opportunity for you to step back and see if or which category your church might fall into. And, then the rest of the chapter provides some great content on why all six should be avoided in order to make your church more effective.

Chapter 3 is where we begin to see the true heart of Thom and Joani as they express some God's calling in their life to look at church and ministry with some new eyes, the eyes of love. This is probably why I love their ministry and love this book. After being an "institutional" church pastor earlier in my life, the last church I pastored centered strongly on Love God, Love People (in fact, I have an ministry by that name.) In this chapter, Thom shares how he received his calling for what, in my opinion, is one of the greatest program/ministries Group or anyone else has come up with, Lifetree Café.

I first experienced a Lifetree Café while attending the Future of the Church Summit last year in 2012. I fell in love with it immediately. I helped start a Lifetree Café in the small church I served as volunteer pastor, and am working now to start another one near a low income area of Kansas City near a major state college. Everything little thing about Lifetree Café has a reason, designed to remove the reasons people object to coming to church in the first place. At the beginning of each Lifetree Café, the host is to make the following comments. "You're welcome just as you are" counters the claim that people feel judged when they come to church. "Your thoughts are welcome; your doubts are welcome" counters the claim that people feel they are only lectured at while in church, and that we don't care what they think. "We're all in this together" counters the complaint that the church is full of hypocrites. And, "God is here, ready to connect with you in a fresh way" counters the thought that people feel God is irrelevant to their life.

By now you might be asking, "What does a Lifetree Café program developed by Group have to do with the book "Why Nobody Wants to Go

to Church Anymore?" Because this book takes the principles and concepts that Thom applied to Lifetree Café, and suggests these same principles could be applied to church! This is summed up on page 58 when Thom asks, "What if...churches offered a new way to experience God?"

Starting in chapter 4, the book introduces us to the four acts of love that Thom and Joani believe will change a church if enacted. Again, all four of these were foundational principles when Group created Lifetree Café. They are: 1) Radical Hospitality 2) Fearless Conversation 3) Genuine Humility and 4) Divine Anticipation. Not only does the book provide a chapter on each in helping us to define these concepts, but a chapter is provided for each with practical ways to accomplish these in today's church!

The book concludes with a challenge to become a radical, fearless, genuine, divine leader! And, again, it provides real help for church leaders to strike out in a new direction, one that should change their church, making it mission and message more impactful not only to its membership, but to the unchurched as well.

## My Conclusions

I love this book. I wish someone would have handed it to me when I finished getting my degree and started pastoring 40 years ago. The information is not only vital, but it is presented in a way that makes it a fun read. Thom and Joani share stories from their own experiences throughout the book to provide illustrations that help make their points come alive. They have traveled to the four corners of the world, and God is using the experiences from those trips and from their lives to help bring the ideas of this book alive for the reader. I suggest three things. First, get a copy of this book and read it from cover to cover. Second, find a Lifetree Café near you and learn from the experience. You will quickly see the concepts of what is being suggested in the book, come alive in the ministry of Lifetree Café. And, finally, make new commitments and begin to become a radical, fearless, genuine, divine leader.

To purchase the book, please [click here!](#)





# Sticks and Stones May Break Mt Bones, but Names – They Will Define Me...

By Tim Kurtz

**W**hen we were children, our little immature spats would often involve calling each other names. “You are ugly!” “You have a big head!” Or, “You have big ears!” were verbal weapons meant to embarrass our little opponent in front of our friends. The classic childhood response to these taunts was “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me!” Names may not hurt physically, but they do have an impact on us, often in ways we may have not considered.

There is an old African proverb that says, “It’s not what you call me that matters – it is what I answer to.” A name evokes an image. When you hear a name it creates a picture in your mind that creates a good or bad emotional response. In this edition of No Longer Church As Usual, I want to address two names – the first is the name or title ‘Christian’, and the second is ‘church’. Many people have proudly adopted the name (or title) of being a ‘Christian’. However, the image of what a Christian is has become distorted in modern times. The term is not often associated with being Christ-like. Almost anyone you ask will claim to be a Christian

– regardless of what they believe or how they live. When you combine this with the fact that many of these ‘Christians’ are no longer attending a ‘church’, which for years has been closely tied to those calling themselves Christian, it should alert you to a change in the religious atmosphere.

The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). There is some dispute among theologians as to who gave them this name. It is not, generally, known whether the name Christian was intended to be derisive or complimentary, but it is clear that this name was given to the disciples in order to separate them from the other religions

of the day.

No longer are we simply Christians, but we are now Christians that are defined by a particular belief system that makes us distinct from other Christians. We identify ourselves as Baptist Christians, who attend Baptist churches, or Methodist Christians who go to Methodist churches, or Pentecostal Christians who go to Pentecostal churches, and the list goes on with names like Lutheran, Presbyterian, Holiness, Apostolic, and hundreds more. We, generally, worship with 'Christians' with the same beliefs. Our denominational names, whether we realize it or not, often lets the world know the parameters of our beliefs. Our labels are a reflection of our form of Christianity, and serve to subtly divide the Body of Christ.

A greater distortion comes when you hear of those who claim to be homosexual Christians, New Age Christians, liberal Christians, and the like. These people often redefine Christ to fit their beliefs. You see them in the media spewing their 'live and let live' philosophies under the banner of being Christian.

In recent years, a new name 'non-denominational church' has arisen. Like the other names, non-denominationalism points to a belief system. Think about it. What usually comes to your mind when you hear of a church calling itself a 'Christian Center', a 'Family Center,' or even a 'Worship Center'? These names often imply that such churches are Charismatic or possibly Pentecostal.

A recent study by the Pew Forum found that nearly one-fifth of the U.S. public and a third of adults over 30 are religiously unaffiliated. The assumption for those in the 'church world' is that these unaffiliated are not 'true Christians'. But studies show otherwise. Many are firmly committed to Jesus Christ, but find no spiritual fulfillment in church systems. Some have migrated into small groups that meet in homes. Again, the tendency to camp around certain ideologies comes to the surface, as even among these groups labels are beginning to surface. First, the message coming forth was house church-ism. Slowly, I have seen the message regress into various forms of house church-ism. There are 'house church groups', 'simple church groups', 'organic church groups', 'hybrid church groups' and probably a few more. I understand the reason for the adjectives organic, simple, and house being used to define a particular type of church, but the fact remains that these adjectives



## How will you reach them... *after* the service?

### SPREAD THE WORD...

with One Call Now Voice, Text and Email messaging for churches.

Visit us online at [onecallnow.com](http://onecallnow.com) or call 877-698-3262 to learn more.

201208LS259

[onecallnow.com](http://onecallnow.com)

One Call **Now**

30 DAY FREE TRIAL

BROADCAST  
YOUR SERVICES

LIVE!

FREE TRIAL 



STREAMINGCHURCH.TV

have the unfortunate potential of creating new sects in the Body of Christ. They have the same impact as identifying a church by its denomination. Our names inadvertently and sometimes willfully separate us.

Recently, I was in a phone conversation with a woman who had left the denomination she had been part of for years. Her previous church had a strict dress code for women. In her new church, she bragged to me that she was 'free' to wear pants because she was now in a 'Word' church. Her statement made me think, "Aren't all churches supposed to be 'Word' churches?" Shouldn't we all be teaching the Word of God? By claiming to be a 'Word Church' was she inadvertently implying that other churches did not teach the Word of God? Even when we innocently say that we are 'full gospel', are we implying that other groups are 'partial gospel'? Every time we embrace a name, it has the potential of creating another line of division in the Body of Christ.

I love the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. I want to, emphatically, make it clear that I am not against any group. I am not anti-denominational as much as I am pro-Jesus Christ. I grew up in a

Baptist church. Soon after I was married, I joined a local Pentecostal church. For many years I served as a musician for a Methodist church, and before launching out on my own, I was the assistant pastor in a Charismatic Church. Among these wonderful people I often was involved in discussions of their doctrines. These discussions were often an interpretation of scripture that was intended to prove why they didn't do things like the church across town. Or worse, in some cases they implied that their beliefs made them better Christians than the church across town. The early church dealt with this issue. Paul wrote "For it has been reported to me concerning you, my brothers, by those who are from Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos," "I follow Cephas," and, "I follow Christ." (1Corinthians 1:11-12). These first century believers were personality driven, which caused unnecessary division among them. Yet, in the twenty first century we are still repeating this same error. We continue to have a propensity to huddle around our favorite personality, doctrine, or style of worship. I wonder if we realize that the world around us could care less.



**ACTIVE**  
network.

**MY ACTIVE IS...**  
Church. Family. Friends.  
Volunteering. Faith.

Our **Church Management** software is changing the way churches connect and grow.

Find out more at [fellowshipone.com](http://fellowshipone.com) & [serviceu.com](http://serviceu.com)

WHAT'S YOUR ACTIVE?

I entered the ministry during the time of two of the most publicized scandals in the Christian world – Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. I was a little upstart kid wanting to live for and represent Jesus Christ, but immediately found myself being labeled as ‘one of them’. I was guilty by association. Not because I knew either of these men personally, but because I claimed to be in the same profession under the same banner.

This taught me a valuable lesson. The world could care less about our denominational beliefs or forms of worship. They really don’t care what we call ourselves. They tend to lump us all into the same basket. They laugh at our infighting and consider our message as irrelevant or insignificant on the world stage. We can separate ourselves from each other with our names, but the world sees us as one and the same – and too often in a negative light.

The world has attempted to define the church and what it means to be a Christian. People will attempt to control you by defining you first. We must not accept the world’s definition of who we are. I believe we must work to restore in the minds of all what the church is, and what it means to be

a Christian. We must follow the non-compromising example of the disciples in the first century church whose lives earned the right to be called Christians.

In my book, *NO LONGER CHURCH AS USUAL (SECOND EDITION)*, I espouse the importance of embracing the values of the first century church. The first value we must embrace is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Remember, ‘DISCIPLES’ were first called Christians in Antioch. The foundation of being a Christian is first to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. The more you sit at the feet of Jesus, the more likely you are to be dubbed a Christian by the world. You and I are not Christians because we proclaim to be one; we are Christians solely because of our relationship to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is still building His Church – His way in the 21st century. He is building His Church on the revelation of who He is – not with our myriad of eclectic beliefs. His building materials consist of lively stones that collectively form a spiritual house (1Peter 2:5). These lively stones are you and I who must embrace the truth that we are many members, but one body (1Corinthians 12:20). The church is not brick and mortar buildings. The church is not choirs, ushers, or dynamic preachers.

The church is not programs, events, or fundraisers for noble causes. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1Timothy 3:15). The church, Jesus is building will demonstrate God’s wisdom in the earth (Ephesians 3:10). Jesus declared that the gates of hell will never prevail against His Church (Matthew 16:18).

Okay, sticks and stones – the attacks from the world may at times be painful; but I pray that when the world comes face to face with the church that Jesus is building, a church that is filled with Christians who are His disciples, I pray that the world will see that God is still on the throne – the devil is defeated – and Jesus is Lord!

## When managing your benefit plans, do you really know if...

- All **eligible employees** are **enrolled**?
- **Only eligible** employees are **enrolled**?
- Plan provider enrollments **reconcile** with your **payroll** records?
- Your administration **expenses** are **reasonable**?

Use existing payroll data to quickly determine employee eligibility and plan contributions, giving yourself more time to invest in attending to other business activities.



888-561-2072 | whoswhere.org



Contact Info



# “Don’t Serve Outside Our Church”

By Thom Schultz

It’s becoming clear to the churched and unchurched alike. Serving others is valid and righteous only if it is done inside the confines of the congregation.

They frequently encourage them to volunteer and serve—in the official functions of the congregation. But not elsewhere.

- After the recent Colorado floods, coordinated community-wide work days were organized to help the victims of the disaster. But some church leaders refused to cooperate or encourage their members to serve. One said, “Why would we want our people out there working if our church isn’t the main sponsor?”
- A pastor recently said he’d never make his congregation aware of opportunities to serve with Habitat for Humanity or other community agencies. “We need our people serving here,” he said. “We can’t afford them spending their time out there.”
- A child-mentoring organization links congregations with local public schools. But they have more schools than churches that are willing to partner. “Why would we do that?” a pastor asked. “I don’t think those kids or their parents would ever come to our church, or give to our church.”
- One church noticed that some members were pursuing their passions and creating new non-profit organizations to serve in the community. Church leaders formed a new policy discouraging such activity and denying the church’s support. “Those spin-offs don’t help our church’s brand,” a leader told

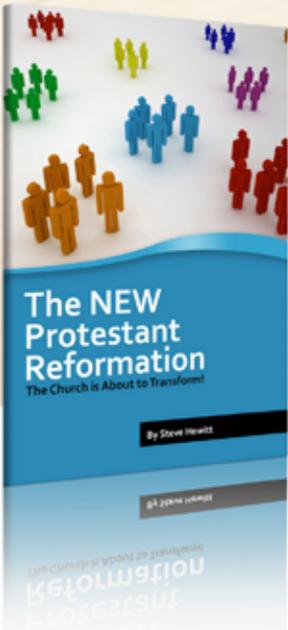
me. "If we don't control it and put our church's name on it, we don't want our people involved."

This myopic practice is killing the mission of the church—especially among the young. Millennials, who are eager to serve, simply do not get the church's possessiveness when it comes to volunteers. It's a major turn-off that is contributing to the Millennials' flight from the church altogether.

Clutching volunteers also corrodes the public's perception of the meaning of "church"—as a self-serving institution, in a building, that meets at a certain time during the week.

This behavior is anesthetizing our people from being salt and light in the real world. They're assuming that the only acceptable expression of their faith happens at church. Once they leave the parking lot, they can forget about following Jesus—until they plop in the pew next week.

I like what Leadership Network's Reggie McNeal says in our upcoming documentary, "When God Left the Building." He said, "The big issue for the church is not how to do church better. We've been doing church better and better and better with the result of an increasing disaffection. The real question for the American church is how to BE the church better. How do you be church where people already are? How do you take church to the people instead of just expecting people to come to church?"



## Introducing Steve Hewitt's NEW E-Book!

# *The NEW Protestant Reformation*

*The Church is  
About to Transform!*

Click Here to Download  
This FREE E-book

"I think the difference between what I feel led to do, and what others are doing, is centered around my belief that the church "outside" our buildings, institutions, and denominations DOES exist, but in a form that we don't accept as "the church". I believe at least 100 million Christians (yep, million) live in America, yet they do not attend services or meetings in any church building on a regular basis."



## LOVE GOD, LOVE PEOPLE MINISTRIES

"Our mission is simple; help start one million Love God, Love People Micro-churches in America!"

Learn more about  
Love God, Love People Ministries  
by visiting our website at:  
[www.lglpministries.com](http://www.lglpministries.com)



## 12 Signs It's Time to Call an Expert

By Lavern Brown

**W**hat's your first move after your pastor tells you he's resigning? It's Thursday morning. Your pastor of nine years just dropped the bomb in the Diner. You've lost interest in polishing off breakfast. That silence before the waitress comes to top off the coffee and clear the table numbs your mind. You're the Chairman of the Board. Now it's in your hands. What's your first move?

The first thing a church must do is retain an intentional interim pastor, especially if it meets any of these criteria:

1. The pastor left after a long tenure (experts differ, with figures from 7 to 15 years).
2. The church churns pastors (a series of short tenures).
3. The pastor left under duress.
4. The church's leaders can't state or agree on the church's mission.
5. It has been three years since the last ministry audit (reviewed for "mission fit").
6. It is a "commuter church" (members are different from those who live nearby).
7. Attendance has plateaued (people coming in offset those who leave).
8. The church faces financial challenges.
9. There's big difference between the mem-

bership roles and attendance.

10. A large percentage of the people express interest in switching denominations.
11. It has been more than ten years since the last property "refresh."
12. Facilities seem to worn and tired.

Any church entering transition between settled pastors should pay careful, prayerful attention to these criteria. If not, there is a danger the leadership team might utter five perilous words that inflict damage that requires a decade or more to repair.

1. we
2. can
3. do
4. it
5. ourselves

These might be said in a church with the rare good fortune of leading a robust, vigorous congregation. But most church leaders utter them because they don't know what they don't know. They don't know what an intentional interim pastor does, the training he has acquired and what skills he brings to the church.

### What is an intentional interim pastor?

The title "interim pastor" is vague as these practitioners fall on a continuum from "pulpit supply" to "interventionist." Along this continuum the degree of involvement in day-to-day operations of the church escalate as we move from pulpit supply to interventionist.

"Intentional interim pastor" [IIP] signifies practitioners trained in the skills required guide a church through a difficult transition, removing obstacles to its growth, and making preparations so the church is poised to fulfill its God-given potential (but qualitative and quantitative) under the leadership of its next settled pastor.

### The IIP's job

An IIP brings mission-critical skills needed during this critical time in the church's life. A well-trained intentional interim pastor has mastered the skills needed to lead churches through difficult transitions. These includes skills in:

- 1. Assessment.** The IIP discerns the true state of the church with various assessment tools. The result is a report that states the findings, analysis, and a proposed course of action.
- 2. Grief Resolution.** The church may need to deal with grief related to the loss of a beloved pastor, to destructive conflict, the loss of vigor and energy in the church or other reasons. An interim pastor bring the congregations relief and to a "new normal."
- 3. Direct Action.** The IIP provides leadership that resolves problems that are immediate threats to the church's welfare. He may have to deal firmly with strong personalities. It requires skill to keep the "main thing the main thing" without getting sucked into a personal clash.
- 4. Leadership Training.** The congregation in transition needs training. The specifics will

vary by church, but an IIP brings the right resources to bear. The goal is to prepare the church to sustain the key systems of a healthy church.

- 5. Mission, Vision and Strategic Planning.** An IIP will have the skills necessary to guide the congregation into their own understanding of God's mission. The result should be a mission the members "own", a vision that energizes them and a simple ministry plan they can execute while the new pastor gets up to speed. The IIP must know how to guide the congregation or its leaders so they are the ones who do the work. If they don't, the mission, vision and plans aren't theirs!
- 6. Change Management.** Introducing change is tricky. Even people who embrace the need for change can be thrown. Most people will naturally react to change with resistance born of fear. An IIP has the tools to manage the change process. Successful change prevents the church from slipping back into status quo ante when the new pastor arrives, creating more work for him.
- 7. Pastor Search.** The next pastor is crucial to the church's future. The IIP must know how to train the Pastor Search Team to conduct a search, perform a thorough background check and an informative interview process, and make sure that the pastor is not only the right fit, but one who can help the church fulfill in its mission and vision.
- 8. Transition.** The IIP's duty to the church is not finished when the new pastor arrives to begin his ministry. The IIP coaches the new pastor to insure he doesn't step on any landmines, learns how to work with the strong figures in the congregation, and quickly gains the trust needed to lead.

### Training the intentional interim pastor

These mission-critical skills are not taught in seminaries during the pursuit of a graduate degree. These skills are far beyond the scope of what is required to prepare for ministry. Nor is it likely that retiring ministers coming off a long career will have mastered these skills over the many decades of pastoral service. An IIP learns these skills in cooperation with organizations that specialize in this sort of training.

About this training one noted expert in the field

has said, "It is my conviction that it requires more than a powerful and pleasing personality to make an effective intentional interim. One needs special training beyond the theological degree and ordination." (William Avery, Revitalizing Congregations, p. 21.)

### Conclusion

If you attend a church that is entering the transition period that begins when your pastor leaves, please consider these danger signs. If you are a leader in such a church, please guard against uttering those five dangerous words without first giving serious thought to what you stand to lose if you don't retain the services of an intentional interim pastor and what you stand to gain if you do.



## Online Church Donations Made Easy—with LPI's WeShare.

### WeShare is easy, secure, online.

- ✓ One sign-up for your members simplifies recurring donations, event ticket sales, and any special fund contributions.
- ✓ Stewardship options, online where your members already are.
- ✓ The highest level of security with PCI level one compliance

All from a company with 40 years of experience helping churches like yours connect with their community.

Learn more and sign up for a one-hour webinar at [www.4LPI.com/WeShare](http://www.4LPI.com/WeShare).



Liturgical Publications Inc

Connecting Your Community for 40 Years  
1972 • 2012

## Subscribe to Christian Computing Magazine Right Now for **FREE!**

We have been helping churches use technology to enhance their ministry for over 23 years! Find out why CCMag has been a trusted source for so long. Click the link to take a look at our online community and to get your FREE subscription.

**CLICK HERE**

