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QuietWaters

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Go Into All the World



from the President Jim Schlottman



Every day in the news we hear that the world economy is impacting our economy. APNews this month reported that President Barack Obama urged European leaders to take a more forceful approach to the continent's debt problems, which could slow an already-faltering U.S. economy. Even as the world economy affects us financially, we at QuietWaters are seeing an even more important worldwide impact on kingdom work. So while we recognize our need to keep abreast of the dizzying flood of worldwide changes, our Lord is the same in every generation.

Missions is no longer "From the West to the Rest." Missions now must be done, and should be done, in increasing partnering with non-Western Christians. How should QuietWaters respond? How should we partner with national Christians? These leaders are the "new" missionaries and are, in fact, pastors in their countries. Does QuietWaters have a calling to serve this "new" missionary population?

The answer was brought to our doorstep five years ago when we were approached by a pastor from a South American country who was ministering to those from his country living here in the United States. He was experiencing burnout, and his request to us was: could we provide counseling for him and his wife who did not speak English? As you can imagine, discussing personal emotional issues through a translator is difficult and is not good clinical practice.

We were able to find a temporary solution to provide the requested

counseling. However, when the second request was received, we knew we needed to begin a search for a counselor with not only the ability to counsel in Spanish, but an understanding of the Latin culture. That is when Christine Denlinger joined our team. Christine grew up as a missionary kid in Central America and is fluent in Spanish. She worked in international missions along with her husband for many years and continues to be involved in missions through counseling, consulting and pastoral care for missionaries.

Since then we have seen an increasing number of pastors requesting counseling in their native language—Spanish. The word has been spreading from pastor to pastor, and now pastors are coming to us from Central and South America—some speaking only Spanish. They are the "new" missionaries.

In this issue, Christine Denlinger will help you gain an understanding of the Hispanic ministry the Lord has opened up to QuietWaters. She delves into how the Latin culture interacts with the issues that need to be addressed during counseling.

But that's not all the Lord is doing with QuietWaters in this changing world. About three years ago I became acquainted with Chi Eng Yuan, a Chinese pastor. He shared with me his heart for the North American Chinese pastor. Chi Eng became my prayer partner. This year Rev. Yuan, now Dr. Yuan, received his doctoral degree from Denver Seminary. The topic of his doctoral theses was burnout among North American Chinese pastors. I asked Dr. Yuan if he would share

some of what he learned during the preparation of his thesis in an article in this issue of *Compass*.

Dr. Yuan made us aware of the counseling opportunities with Chinese pastors. At his urging, we have begun searching and praying that God will bring a Chinese Christian counselor to QuietWaters Ministries. That decision to search and pray was confirmed when a denominational leader told us that, for her denomination, there is a growing need for counseling for Chinese-speaking pastors. She made this suggestion unaware of our searching and praying for a Chinese Christian counselor.

As God has opened this worldwide door, we are also hearing about counseling opportunities for pastors in India and Pakistan. Please pray that the Lord will make us worthy and equip is for this work. To state QuietWaters' role, I'm taking the liberty of expanding on what Mark wrote in his Gospel: QuietWaters, "Go into all the world and [provide support to those who are called to] preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15, NIV). ■

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MINISTRIES

"He leads me beside quiet waters."
Psalm 23:2

Internet Web Page: www.QWaters.org

Ministering to Hispanic Leaders

by Christine Denlinger

Opportunities and Challenges for the 21st Century

Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group in the United States, and ministry among them is increasing accordingly. The National Hispanic Association of Evangelicals, the largest Latino Christian organization in America, states that there are over 15 million Hispanics living in the United States who identify themselves as evangelical. The rapid growth of the evangelical church among Latinos is exciting. However, ministry leaders among this population are struggling to keep up with the demands of shepherding their congregations well. While zealous for the work God is doing among them, these leaders are frequently overextended and underresourced, leaving them vulnerable to high levels of stress. Not managed appropriately, this stress can lead to burnout, marital and relational dysfunction, addictive patterns, depression, and ultimately resignation or termination from ministry.

This presents unique opportunities as well as challenges for the church. This article focuses on general trends among Latino ministry leaders based on the current literature as well as my personal experience counseling Hispanic ministry leaders in Spanish.

The rapid growth of the evangelical church among Latinos is exciting. However, ministry leaders among this population are struggling to keep up with the demands of shepherding their congregations well. While zealous for the work God is doing among them, these leaders are frequently overextended and underresourced, leaving them vulnerable to high levels of stress. Not managed appropriately, this stress can lead to burnout, marital and relational dysfunction, addictive patterns, depression, and ultimately resignation or termination from ministry.

While younger generations of Hispanic Americans often prefer English to Spanish, a large majority of the Hispanic population continues to function primarily in its native tongue.

Providing the best counseling services for these leaders must include an understanding of their cultural identities as well as their individual personalities. Regardless of ethnicity, it is vital that ministry leaders be valued as unique individuals with their own personal histories and ministries. Many Hispanics living in the United States continue to have ties back to their families' country of origin. Often relatives living in Latin America are receiving money, visits, and information from family members living in the United States. QuietWaters is seeing the expansion of its services to Hispanic ministry leaders begin to reach into Latin America as personal stories of healing and transformation are shared with family and friends, colleagues and parishioners.

With all this in mind, here are just a few of the issues facing Hispanic ministry leaders in the United States and in the many countries that comprise Latin America.

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Underresourced and Underfunded

Hispanic ministry leaders as a whole have less formal ministry training, financial resources, and organizational support than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. Those ministering through larger and more established denominations such as the Assemblies of God and the Southern Baptists may be exceptions. Many Hispanic pastors living in the United States often have secondary employment in order to make ends meet. Their congregations are frequently a mixture of people with modest incomes and basic educational training and those living in a lower socioeconomic environment. Due to lack of funds and quality ministry resources in Spanish, operating with significant limits has become the norm. According to Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, current president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, the Hispanic church in America will be a leading force in the revival and expansion of Christianity in the United States in the twenty-first century. Provision of and accessibility to the resources needed for Hispanic ministry leaders to engage in this task is therefore imperative.

Caudillo-Style Leadership

Those called into Christian leadership have unique challenges simply by being Christ followers, regardless of ethnicity. They are expected to model a life of integrity and care for the needs of those they shepherd.

Many Hispanic pastors living in the United States often have secondary employment in order to make ends meet. Their congregations are frequently a mixture of people with modest incomes and basic educational training and those living in a lower socioeconomic environment. Due to lack of funds and quality ministry resources in Spanish, operating with significant limits has become the norm.

This includes giving spiritual vision, training, and direction to groups of people who are at varied life stages and who have a gamut of life stressors and experiences. Cultural context, though, presents unique challenges for those desiring to emulate Christ’s example of servant leadership. A leadership style seen frequently throughout the Latino world is *caudillo* leadership. *Caudillo*, originally a military term, literally translated means “warlord” or “strongman.” The *caudillo* leader might be a benevolent dictator or an authoritarian leader who rules with a heavy hand. The *caudillo*-style ministry leader may surround himself with family members or close confidants who support him and are

willing to protect him regardless of his decisions that may not always be in the best interests of the congregation or may even be unethical. This self-elevation, preservation, and protection of the leader creates opportunities for corruption, entitlement, and abuse of power. For the Hispanic ministry leader who seeks to function from a biblical framework, the cultural model of *caudillo*-style leadership can present obstacles for operating in a Christlike fashion.

High Value of Relationships

Healthy interpersonal relationships are an admired aspect of Hispanic culture, but this can also create ministry dilemmas for the Hispanic Christian leader. Often ministering in small communities, the leader faces the sometimes-opposing agendas of family members or close personal friends, making it difficult to act for the overall good of those under his ministry care. Learning how to navigate relationships both within and outside the church without compromising biblical standards is a pressure Hispanic ministry leaders face regularly.

Historically in Latin America, women have come to Christ more readily and are more committed to the local church than men are. This presents a number of issues for male pastors who are trying to lead effectively within their cultural context. It is not uncommon, particularly in churches that adhere to a more Pentecostal theology, to have a husband and

wife pastoring together in the same congregation. This model, which does not always have clearly defined boundaries around leadership roles, can create marital conflict and power struggles for the ministry couple.

Within the context of the larger Hispanic culture, women often carry a lot of power and authority within the family structure. Latino culture may appear patriarchal and hierarchical, but in reality it is more matriarchal in function. Because of this, male leadership or authority in the church can be undermined by women who have been taught by their culture to exert their power and agendas regardless of the established organizational structure. Combine this with the authoritarian style of male leadership and you can have a very volatile situation.

Boundary Complications

Individualism, clear boundaries, and self-sufficiency are highly valued among whites in the United States. These life principles come from our country’s early history and to some degree have been assimilated by minority groups. However, the majority of cultures in the world do not hold these values as priorities. Latino culture is no exception. As members of a collective society, meaning that the good of the group is more important than the good of the individual, Latinos mainly operate out of the expectations of others, whether that be family, congregation, friends, or authority structures in their lives.

Healthy interpersonal relationships are an admired aspect of Hispanic culture, but this can also create ministry dilemmas for the Hispanic Christian leader. Often ministering in small communities, the leader faces the sometimes-opposing agendas of family members or close personal friends, making it difficult to act for the overall good of those under his ministry care. Learning how to navigate relationships both within and outside the church without compromising biblical standards is a pressure Hispanic ministry leaders face regularly.

While able and willing to express their own opinions, they are careful about the impression others may have of them, wanting to please others or the group even at the cost of honesty. For the Hispanic ministry leader, while desiring to live by biblical truth, there is also much pressure to honor the expectations and desires of others and

minimize the potential for conflict, which could be divisive in a group. This pressure creates vulnerability for unethical practices, ultimately compromising the leader’s integrity.

When a Hispanic leader faces a crisis and seeks help, he is naturally concerned about privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. Whether he has a very public platform such as itinerant evangelist or pastor of a megachurch, or a less visible role such as worship leader within a moderately sized congregation, the need for a safe help environment looms large. A Hispanic pastor attending a QuietWaters Leadership Intensive stated, “We’re here at QuietWaters because we don’t trust counselors in our town. We come from a small community where everyone knows everyone’s business. I don’t trust that confidentiality will be honored. It’s really hard to find a Christian counselor, let alone one whom I can trust completely. In my country, counselors don’t always adhere to the ethical standards that are practiced more consistently among counselors in the United States. I don’t feel there is a safe place in the Christian community where I can work through our problems without the fear of being exposed.”

While this may be true for some Latin countries or contexts, within Hispanic communities in the United States confidentiality is more honored, particularly because of greater accountability by professional

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organizations offering counseling services, as well as U.S. law. Many Christians in Latin American countries are also working hard to change some of the looser practices around confidentiality, recognizing that client safety and privacy are critical for healing, regardless of cultural influences. Nevertheless, places like QuietWaters become invaluable resources for those who worry that their vulnerabilities and leadership struggles might be used against them because of careless exposure by those who are supposed to be “safe” people.

The face of Hispanic ministry in the United States is changing. Hispanic pastors and ministry leaders are now on the front lines of God’s kingdom work. All leaders carry battle scars from the enormous responsibility of shepherding the people of God. They grow weary and need a place where they can find rest, renewal,

Ministry leaders, regardless of ethnicity, need a place where they can be led into deeper relationship with the One who has entrusted them with a high calling. As the psalmist declares of the Good Shepherd (who speaks Spanish as well as many other languages), “En verdes pastos me hace descansar. Junto a tranquilas aguas me conduce.” (Salmo 23:2 NVI) “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.” (Psalm 23:2 NIV).

and restoration. In his book *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Forty Daily Reflections on Biblical Leadership* Dr. Timothy S. Laniak recounts his yearlong experience living among nomadic shepherds in the Middle East, drawing biblical-leadership insights from his journey. He writes, “We have reflected often on being shepherd leaders, but the Twenty-Third Psalm is a reminder that we are both shepherds and sheep. Biblically, leading always involves being led. Followership is the beginning—and end—of effective leadership.”

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Christine Denlinger, MA, LPC

QuietWaters Counselor



Why Do I Feel So Hopeless?

The Six Universal Causes of Pastoral Burnout

by Chi Eng Yuan

In the last forty years burnout among pastors has become epidemic. And research reveals a cause-and-effect relationship between burnout and leaving the ministry. Gary McIntosh, in *It Only Hurts on Monday*, cites the results of a survey of pastors who had recently left the ministry and concluded that 40 percent experienced a form of burnout.

Berkeley professor Christina Maslach, in *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*, identified three major indicators of burnout (italics mine): “*Emotional exhaustion* was recognized as fatigue caused by extensive interaction with others, *depersonalization* was characterized by development of an uncaring and cynical attitude toward others, and *lack of personal accomplishment* was indicated by deterioration in self-confidence and decreased personal satisfaction with one’s achievement.”

Basing my definition on Maslach’s, I define pastoral burnout as a state or process of fatigue or frustration brought on by keeping at a distance from God, others, and ourselves, which can be measured as increased emotional exhaustion, progressive depersonalization of the congregation, and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment.

Basing my definition on Maslach’s, I define pastoral burnout as a state or process of fatigue or frustration brought on by keeping at a distance from God, others, and ourselves, which can be measured as increased emotional exhaustion, progressive depersonalization of the congregation, and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment.

Burnout takes place over a year or so and can be accompanied by a range of adverse physical and psychosomatic symptoms. A recent internal survey by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America found that 69 percent of ministers reported being overweight, 64 percent had high blood pressure, and 13 percent were taking antidepressants.

Burnout is a serious problem not only among American pastors but also among pastors in other parts of the world. According to a 1999 survey, Hong Kong, one of the most crowded cities in the world with a population of seven million, had churches with

2,862 pastors and 756 vacancies. One third of these active pastors had moved from one church to another within the previous two years. Daniel Wu, the general director of the Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement, in *From Moving Out to Matching Ministry*, comments:

Pastors in Hong Kong churches find themselves facing higher and higher expectations from their congregations. Because fewer lay leaders are involved in the work of the ministry, full-time clergy feel increasing pressure, and in turn more full-time clergy are hired to meet congregational needs. However, some churches do have strong lay leaders in key administrative roles; unfortunately this dynamic results in a revolving door for the pastoral position.

The survey revealed that 439 pastors moved out within one year of ministry and that many Hong Kong pastors burn out toward the end of their second year.

From this overview of burnout in the West among North American pastors and in the East among Hong Kong pastors, we must recognize that all pastors are at risk. All face the possibility of potential burnout.

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As a Chinese pastor of Hong Kong Evangelical Free churches, I am especially interested in the causes of burnout among pastors. In a survey conducted between 2006 and 2007 among The Association of North American Chinese Evangelical Free Churches (ANACEFC), nearly 40 percent of responding pastors named unrealistic expectations for pastoral performance as the main factor contributing to burnout. Comparison with other key factors revealed: congregational politics or powerful individuals (21 percent), spiritual dryness (17 percent), lack of friendship (17 percent), being unfit or staying too long (17 percent), and incompatibility (11 percent). Once a pastor begins to experience fatigue and frustration, he (for smoothness of reading, I'm using just the male pronoun, but all this applies to female pastors too) may well go on to exhaustion or burnout. To quote one pastor I interviewed from ANACEFC in 2007: "I just can't hold it together anymore. I'm disappointed with a lot of things that happened in the church."

When pastors exhibit symptoms of burnout, they become even more exhausted as they discover that their influence is waning and they find themselves with no direction. They lose their spiritual enthusiasm for the kingdom of God, and as a result the church suffers. Well stated by MacIntosh in *It Only Hurts on Monday*: A burned-out pastor eventually loses vision, disengages from even primary duties and tasks, and becomes unproductive.

Burnout can produce a profound and lasting depression. The pastor physically experiences a long, sustained period

When pastors exhibit symptoms of burnout, they become even more exhausted as they discover that their influence is waning and they find themselves with no direction. They lose their spiritual enthusiasm for the kingdom of God, and as a result the church suffers. Well stated by MacIntosh in *It Only Hurts on Monday*: A burned-out pastor eventually loses vision, disengages from even primary duties and tasks, and becomes unproductive.

of exhaustion. Archibald D. Hart, in *Coping with Depression in Ministry and Other Helping Professions*, writes:

Under continued pressure the protective and regulatory mechanisms become disturbed and the emergency system of the body uses up its reserves. Consequently, the person becomes less flexible, more guarded and sensitive, and depression ensues. In such cases the depression is both a protective mechanism and a reaction to the increased possibility of loss that comes from a diminished physical capacity for coping with life and work.

Pastors who start careers caring about others can become preoccupied with themselves, and the longer a pastor experiences burnout, the greater the likelihood that emotional exhaustion

will cloud the pastor's perspective, causing him to view everything through a filter of negativity. Healthy psychological function shuts down, and this leads to apathy. At this point, the pastor either drops out or moves to another church or ministry.

Burnout in the Bible

Although the word "burnout" is not a biblical term, the concept can be explored in the lives of Bible characters and in biblical teaching. The existential reality of burnout—as evidenced by chronic asthenia and fatigue, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and development of negative self-concept and negative attitudes toward all aspects of life—is obvious among certain leaders in the Bible. Understanding burnout as a state of existential distress permits us to examine prominent biblical leaders with a view to elucidating the causes of burnout among God's servants.

A classical biblical example reflecting the symptoms of burnout is the prophet Elijah. Elijah's confronted the false worship of his time under King Ahab, standing against the power of hundreds of opponents (1 Kings 18:19). First Kings 19 then recounts Elijah's ensuing burnout experience. In spite of his position and great achievements in an uneven war through God's power, such a dramatic experience could only enhance the sense of fatigue Elijah must have felt. For two years he had been in hiding, with few companions other than a widow and her son (1 Kings 17:1-24). It is therefore no surprise that Elijah fled for his life to Horeb, fearing reprisal by Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-8).

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At this time, Elijah experienced mental exhaustion and feelings of inferiority. His emotional exhaustion was expressed as hopelessness: he collapsed under a tree and told God that life was hopeless and that he wanted to die. Elijah's hope and expectations faded, and he became disillusioned and apathetic, which often characterizes the final stages of burnout.

Moses, another faithful man of God, had to cope with the stubborn demands of the Israelites over many years. While not explicitly described as such in Scripture, Moses experienced progressive emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of the Israelites under his care, as well as a decreased sense of personal accomplishment, because the Israelites complained so incessantly—despite God's provision—and brought their complaints to Moses. Moses, experiencing the symptoms of burnout, ultimately resented the Israelites. He felt alone, without friends or support, and he wanted to abandon his responsibilities. Moses was honest about his emotional exhaustion and asked God to put him to death (Numbers 11:10-15).

Although Jeremiah was eager to serve the Lord, he appeared to feel that he did not receive enough affirmation or feedback and thus reacted negatively: "Should good be repaid with evil?" (Jeremiah 18:20-21). Jeremiah hoped that his flock would still like him after they were directly confronted by the word of God, but the text actually chronicles his path to burnout. He asks, "Why did I come forth from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?" (Jeremiah 20:18).

A pastor needs a support system to help reestablish priorities, regain perspective, and find refuge in times of trouble. To find real friendship can be complicated, depending upon how the pastor views himself. If he views himself only in the terms of his vocation, a relational distance may separate him and the congregation. Finding the needed support is also compromised by a prevailing culture that promotes the values of individualism, intelligence, and self-sacrifice.

Six Factors Contributing to Burnout

Six significant factors that frequently contribute to burnout for pastors all over the world are:

- Spiritual dryness
- Incompatibility with ministry
- Lack of a personal confidant
- Cultural clash
- Insufficient rest
- Conflict

Spiritual Dryness

Pastors are invariably at risk of "spiritual dryness." Seeking life from sources other than God (Jeremiah 2:13) or Jesus Christ can be devastating to those called out of the "desert" to the "living water... welling up to eternal life" (John 4:10, 14). Jeremiah described such "spiritual dryness" in one who is avoiding God: He "will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one

lives" (17:6). Spiritual dryness refers to when a pastor feels he has no time for, or spends less time in, devotions or being alone with God. The result is a minister who begins to feel like a plant without water. Comparing similar patterns throughout the course of church history, theologians such as Bruce Demarest and Charles Raup, in an article for *Criswell Theological Review*, "Recovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality," warn that American Christianity suffers from excessive dependence on a self-determination, "intellectualism," and "ethnic achievements."

Incompatibility with Ministry

Incompatibility with ministry may occur when an individual does not appreciate the true nature of the pastorate or the extent of his personal limitations and/or gifts. When pastors believe themselves to be inferior and incapable of facing the challenges, it's typically because (1) they have doubts about their callings; (2) the particular pastoral position comes with an overwhelming job description, and (3) lay leaders and congregations reinforce the natural tendency to put pastors on pedestals.

That is the time for the pastor to review God's calling, for He is the one who provides the strength for His servants to meet the needs of the sheep, and He never leaves a pastor without the resources he needs to fulfill his calling. The pastor also needs to wrestle with Jesus' call for His disciples to be "servants of the Lord"; spiritual authority and leadership come only through the path of suffering and sacrifice (Mark 10:38-39). For example, Paul did not abuse his leadership position but was humble enough to serve with those same status symbols (2 Corinthians 3:9; 11:26-29).

Lack of a Personal Confidant

A pastor needs a support system to help reestablish priorities, regain perspective, and find refuge in times of trouble. To find real friendship can be complicated, depending upon how the pastor views himself. If he views himself only in the terms of his vocation, a relational distance may separate him and the congregation. Finding the needed support is also compromised by a prevailing culture that promotes the values of individualism, intelligence, and self-sacrifice.

There are times when the need for a confidant in ministry is imperative. Even Our Lord needed a personal confidant, a trustworthy disciple to support him. Jesus asked his disciples, especially his core group—Peter, James and John—to accompany Him when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-38). Paul, too, needed a confidant. He described Timothy as "one soul, one spirit, and one mind" with him, to share friendship (Philippians 1:27, 2:20). Thus, Paul naturally requested Timothy to be with him near the end of his life (2 Timothy 1:16-18; 4:17). He also treasured those "true yoke-fellows, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel" (Philippians 4:3). In his friendship with the church of Philippi, he was bathed in spiritual prayer and material support.

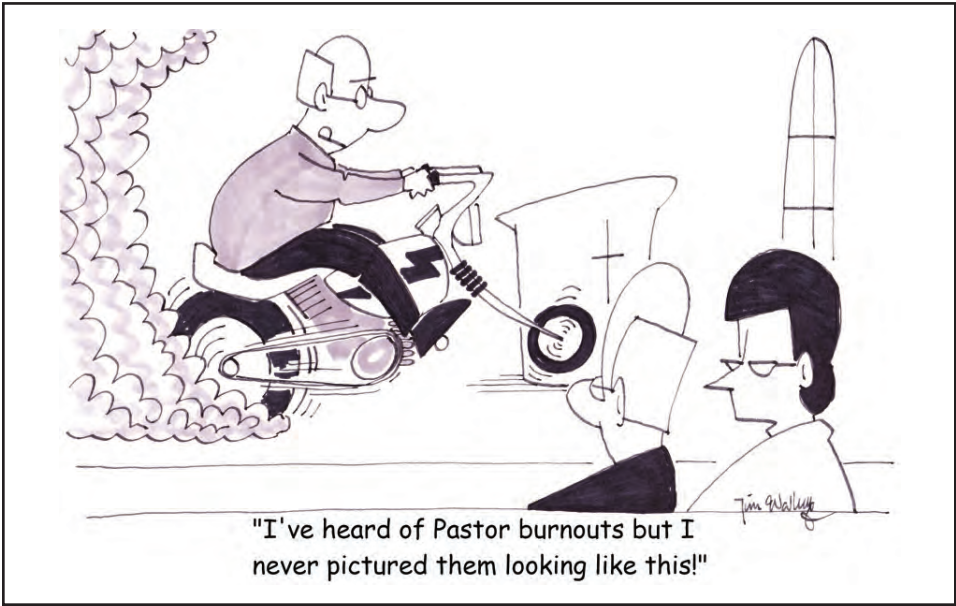
Cultural Clash

Cultural clash results from conflicting expectations between pastors and their congregations or unrealistic expectations pastors might have of themselves. An individual may be exposed to multiple cultures from childhood, but these may clash significantly. Accepting a pastoral calling but failing to recognize the diverse cultural values one has absorbed may negatively impact ones ability to fulfill the pastoral role. Trying to meet all the various expectations associated with one's

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- Conflict



family, national, and racial values may create tension, anxiety, weariness, and depression, all of which contribute to burnout.

Pastors should present their whole lives to God as a sacrifice (Romans 12:1). However, when cultures clash, similarities and differences must be addressed to avoid confusion and conflict. Even when we belong to a new realm, a new culture from the Lord Jesus Christ, we must still resist the influence of the old realm. That is why Paul commanded us “not to be conformed to this world” but “be transformed by the renewing of your mind,” a lifelong process of “approving the will of God,” as pastors understand, agree with, and put into practice God’s will by following the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:2).

Insufficient Rest

Survey after survey has documented the contribution of insufficient rest to burnout among clergy. Excessive demands on time—fueled by the unrealistic expectations placed on pastors by both their congregations and the pastors themselves—and the attendant lack of sufficient rest have become the norm among pastors nowadays.

Burnout does not occur just because of the heavy workload but also because of inadequate time for Sabbath and rest. The association of Sabbath with creation is found in Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:11, which is part of the fourth commandment. Under normal circumstances a day other than Sunday is usually set aside for pastors to spend time with God, family, and others. That day is the pastor’s Sabbath. By understanding the true meaning of the

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Sabbath, any time or day can become the pastor’s Sabbath, because the same Resurrection that inaugurated our Lord’s present reign in power and attested His deity has also transformed every day into His day.

Conflict

Conflict is another significant factor that may contribute to burnout. My research shows that a number of pastors are forced out as a direct result of conflict between themselves and powerful leaders or between the senior pastor and other pastoral staff. Since conflict in ministry is inevitable, and unresolved conflict likely contributes to burnout, it is critical for a pastor to manage conflict effectively, both with other pastoral staff and with the congregation.

While conflict can display the true character of a pastor, it can also push a pastor into imbalance and even progress to burnout. Paul’s experience recorded in 2 Corinthians made him

the perfect candidate for burnout. Paul loved the Corinthian church but encountered repeated challenges and even attacks from the body of Christ. Paul was at great risk for emotional exhaustion and withdrawal from those who attacked him, and it could well have caused him to evaluate himself negatively, particularly in regard to his ministry with the Corinthians. Tension between a godly pastor and a worldly church, resulting in emotional exhaustion or even burnout, can be due to longstanding conflict, just as in the church of Corinth in the first century.

Partnering to Combat Burnout

Perhaps the pastoral search committee and the entire congregation needs to be educated about the causes of pastoral burnout. Then, pastors and their congregations can put in place safeguards against those feelings of hopelessness, fatigue, alienation, and ultimate withdrawal from ministry. What those safeguards might be are beyond the scope of this article, but the investment a congregation makes in calling a pastor ought to motivate them to ensure his spiritual, physical, and emotional health, leading to a long ministry among them. ■



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About QuietWaters: QuietWaters is addressing an urgent Kingdom problem. Pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders face greater odds today than ever before. Many who began their work with fervor and idealism have lost their joy in ministry and are experiencing burnout.

QuietWaters is a ministry focused on the spiritual, emotional and physical health of Christian Leaders and is dedicated to facilitating and encouraging transformational change at the core of Christian Leaders’ life. It is their desire to see men and women strengthen in their families, life, work, leisure and in all of their relationships. Glen Eyrie is excited to have QuietWaters facilitate this marriage retreat that will increase the impact that ministry leaders have on the Kingdom.

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