

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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Closing Our Doors: Part 2

Door Slammer 6 - We have no teenagers or children in our church.

A church without children and teenagers is a church with no future. Children and youth bring life, vitality, and enthusiasm to the work of the church.

Solution - Hire a youth or children's minister and remove obstacles to teens and youth coming to participate.

A children and/or youth

minister can offer programming to attract youth and children. Eliminate obstacles by accepting their music, dress, hairstyles, and removing any stringent requirements that they would see as extreme. Include them in decision making.

Door Slammer 7 - Our membership has died off or moved leaving no one to run the programming, pay bills, or take care of the facility.

If you are down to only handfuls of senior adults, your church is likely to shut down sooner than later. Small memberships stuck with large facilities risk sudden closure when finances and manpower shrink.

Solution - Consider merging with another church, selling your present facility and building something smaller, or realistically evaluating your continued existence.

A merger may give life to the new church by offering fresh potential. And relocation to a smaller facility assures future life by using the funds from

the old facility to build a new one. As a last resort, if a merger or relocation is not possible, dissolve as a body.

Door Slammer 8 - No one has accepted Christ as Lord and Savior in a long time.

New converts signal a church understands and fulfills The Great Commission. It speaks of a live and vibrant church. Absence of new believers suggests approaching death.

Solution: Hire an evangelistic pastor or launch an evangelism emphasis by holding events whose only purpose is to present the gospel.

Pastors who lead by example in sharing their faith produce congregations who follow suit. By saturating all you do

“A church without children and teenagers is a church with no future.”

-Danny R. Von Kanel

Check out Dr. McIntosh's new website for additional articles.

New website address:

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Children and youth bring vitality!

A church without Bible teaching is a contradiction in terms.

with evangelism, and offering key evangelistic events, new converts will come.

Door Slammer 9 - We are having worship wars.

Music breeds many opinions on appropriateness of certain styles. Point to remember: "It's not about us. It's all about Him." Music wars encourage disunion, usually between older and younger members. Some conflicts have led to church splits.

Solution: Go to a blended service or offer two - a traditional and a contemporary.

Though a blended service is easier and most popular, it doesn't completely satisfy either disheartened group. Two services, though taxing on church staff, gives each affected group what they want.

Door Slammer 10 - The Bible is not preached and taught in our church.

A church without Bible preaching and teaching is a contradiction in terms. Indeed, what characterizes the church is its reliance on God's Word. Without it we are no more than an organization.

Solution: Return to God's Word.

In a business session seek to get your church to affirm their adherence to God's Word. Read it in your services. Start Bible study classes. Preach it. God's Word is the only book God says, "Will not come back to me void" (Isaiah 55:11).

If one or more of the above door slammers describe your church, begin now to implement a solution. Turn your tendency towards decline and demise to rebirth. It's a journey worth taking. Questions for discussion:

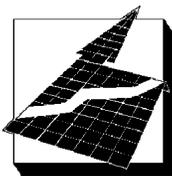
1. Is our church losing members or attendees? If so, how many are we losing each year? If the current rate of loss continues, how long will it be before we have to close our doors?
2. Why is our membership or attendance declining? Which of the door slammers mentioned do we see in our church?
3. What danger signs do we see for the future of our church?
4. Which of the solutions can we begin to put into practice this month or this year?
5. If we don't do something now, what will the future hold for our church?



Danny R. Von Kanel is this month's guest writer. He can be contacted at dannyvon@bellsouth.net.

For information about training workshops, seminars, and church consultations call 951-506-3086.

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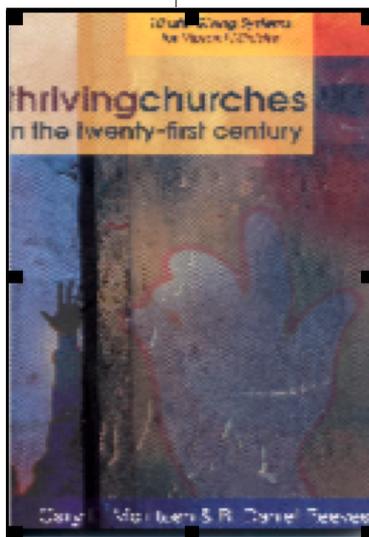
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