

# Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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## Managing Stress

One of the reasons pastors leave ministry is due to the stress of the job (see September 2015 issue). Sometimes the stress of leading a church results in pastors becoming burned out. Here are five signs you, or your pastor, may be facing a time of burnout in ministry.

### Spiritual Symptoms

Burnout is often the issue when a leader's prayer life is meaningless, when Bible reading

Are you expending an increased amount of effort, but accomplishing less? You may be burned out.

becomes mechanical, and God seems miles away.

### Social Symptoms

Burnout is often the issue when leaders are cynical, resist connecting with others in social ways, and are uncharacteristically rude to people in their social network.

### Physical Symptoms

Burnout is often the issue when a leader wakes up tired after a full nights sleep, is constantly fatigued, and frequently sighs.

### Emotional Symptom

Burnout is often the issue when a leader is depressed, feels trapped, and lonely,

### Mental Symptoms

Burnout is often the issue when a leader's ability to concentrate diminishes, he or she misses deadlines, and resists new information.

If just a few of these symptoms mark your life, you may be simply be going through some mild or moderate stress. However, if most of these symptoms are present in your life, it is likely that you are going through a time of burnout.

In addition to the above symptoms, if you are putting in an increased amount of work or effort, but seeing fewer results, you may be facing burnout.

Put together, the above symptoms are subtle signs that you are likely overworked, under too much stress. Left unaddressed, a leader may experience mild headaches, shortness of breath, depression, irregular heartbeat, or even a heart attack. .

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# Do your best; leave the rest.

Do at least one thing every day for yourself.

## Stress Busters

The following are ways that leaders manage stress. See how many you can employ in your life in the coming month.

1. Exercise at least 30 minutes a day, even if you feel stressed. Just walking helps ease tensions in your life.
2. Schedule some brief times for solitude, prayer, and reflection in your schedule every day. Set up an appointment on your calendar for reflection as you would any other appointment; then honor that appointment like all others.
3. Speak with your church board and ask for the weekend off every time there is a fifth Sunday in a month. Use the time off for rest and reflection.
4. Write problems, discouragement's, and worries down in a journal and pray about them.
5. Write your joys, victories, and praises—no matter how small—and read them every night before you go to sleep. Thank God for them.
6. Eat better and eat less. Always leave the table a little bit hungry.
7. Do at least one thing for yourself every day. Remember that you need to care for yourself as well as others.
8. Take a short nap, say, thirty minutes, each afternoon.
9. Restrict or eliminate sugar, carbonated drinks, caffeine, and similar items from your diet.
10. Practice fresh spiritual disciplines, e.g., use a new version of the Bible for your devotions, listen to a devotional book on your digital device, pray while walking each day, or get down on your knees to pray. Do something different!
11. Listen more; talk less. Make fewer promises; keep the ones you make.
12. Go to bed an hour earlier; get up fifteen minutes earlier.
13. Turn off the TV, leave your cell phone in the car, put your computer away - if just for a few hours. Give yourself quiet space to think, pray, dream.
14. Write down the things you need to do and prioritize them in order of importance. Work on the first item until it's done, then move on to the next thing on your list. At the end of the day throw the list away and make a new one for the next day.
15. Simplify; simplify some more.,



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Ministry Insights for Church Leaders

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## A Biography of a Premier Missiologist

In this first full-length biography of Donald A. McGavran, Gary L. McIntosh tells the complete story of one of the twentieth century's greatest church leaders and influential thinkers.

Now, for the first time, discover the roots of the modern Church Growth Movement to fully understand what is applicable to ministry today. To understand any movement, it is important to know the founder—his family, life, ministry, and motives. This biography tells the complete story from McGavran's birth in India through the birth of the Church Growth Movement.

No other person so impacted the growth of the church around the world, as well as in North America, as "Dr. Mac," as his friends called him.

McIntosh describes McGavran's compelling story from his years as an evangelistic missionary in India, to his founding of an influential school of missiology, to the beginning of a movement that changed the entire face of mission.

Join McIntosh on a discovery of McGavran's life and work as God molded him into the premier missiologist of the twentieth century.

"When it comes to applicable truths concerning the growth of the Christian church, McGavran's story reveals critical insights that many in ministry today have been missing for far too long."

—Nelson Searcy, Founder, Renegade Pastor's Network

With over 500 endnotes, McIntosh's new book is well researched and documented. If you've ever wondered what the real facts are concerning the genesis, birth, and growth of the Church Growth Movement, this is the book to read.

Gary L. McIntosh is recognized as the foremost spokesperson for classical Church Growth Missiology in the USA, and he is an expert on the life and ministry of Donald A. McGavran.

The retail price is \$49.95, but order today for the special price of \$35.00.



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