



# EQUIPPER

The monthly e-magazine from the U.S. Ministry Development Team of  
Grace Communion International - Church Administration and Development.

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 The challenges of ministry;  
the dangers of burnout
- 2 The statistics; sources of help

Dear faithful servant of Jesus,

Participating in ministry with Jesus is a joy, though often very challenging. The challenges have been particularly great within GCI, given our now decades-long journey “from the fringe to the fold.”

While we rejoice in where God has brought us, I know that you are personally acquainted with the price that has been paid to lead with Jesus on this lengthy journey.

With that in mind, I want to extend my sincere and deep appreciation to our pastors and other congregational leaders. Because words are insufficient to properly thank you for all the sacrifices you have made over the years, I pray that God will give you special blessings in the years ahead. Well done, good and faithful servants of Jesus!

Of course, our journey forward is not over. Perhaps you sense, as do I, the Holy Spirit calling us to greater levels of effectiveness in participating in what Jesus is doing to multiply his disciples in a rapidly changing world.



At times, the Spirit’s call can seem a bit overwhelming. After all, none of us is getting any younger, and we face issues that we have never faced before! Therefore, caring for ourselves—in body, mind and spirit—is more important than ever. To help us do so, this issue of *Equipper* addresses the vital topic of avoiding and recovering from ministry burnout.

In providing this information, we are not wanting to heap on you additional burdens. Please pick what is helpful to you, and if you know of other resources, please let Ted Johnston know by email at [Ted.Johnston@gci.org](mailto:Ted.Johnston@gci.org). He will share this information in future issues of *Equipper* and *GCI Weekly Update*.

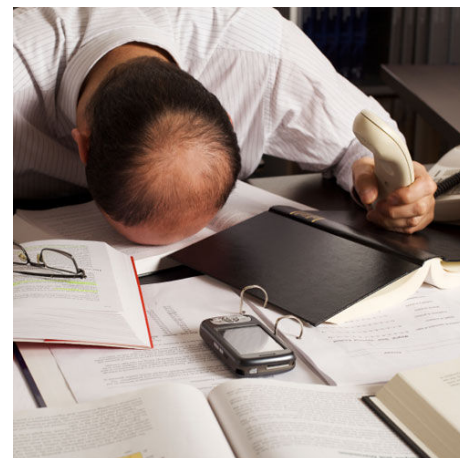
Serving with you,

Dan Rogers,  
Director, GCI Church Administration and Development, USA

## The statistics

In *Pastors at Greater Risk*, H.B. London and Neil Wiseman provide a long list of statistics derived from surveys of American pastors. Though 86% of those surveyed said they would choose ministry as their career if they had it to do over, other responses point to the growing incidence of ministry burnout:

- 80% of the pastors surveyed believe their ministry negatively affects their families
- 40% say they have considered leaving their pastorates in the last three months
- 20% say they view pornography at least once a month
- 20.5% say they would not see anyone were they in trouble
- 45.5% say they have experienced burnout to the extent they needed a leave of absence from ministry
- 57% do not have a regular exercise routine and 21% say they do not regularly take days off



For more statistics, see <http://blog.beliefnet.com/jesuscreed/2007/08/burnout-for-pastors.html#ixzz1mYIPEX4M>

## Sources of help

Though not everyone reading this is a pastor, most have a church leadership role of some sort. From time to time, church leaders need help to avoid or recover from ministry burnout. Below are resources that can provide help. Consider discussing one or more in a ministry team meeting.

- *Connections for Clergy Family Support* – a GCI.org webpage that links resources designed to help ministers and their families: <http://www.gci.org/pastoral/support>
- GCI's health insurance plan for full-time US employees covers counseling services. If you are deeply discouraged, feeling dependent or burned out, a skilled counselor can be of great assistance. For the story of how counseling helped GCI regional pastor, Ken Williams, see <http://update.gci.org/?p=8795>
- The book *Leading on Empty* by Wayne Cordiero
- In the surveys mentioned above, 40% of pastors surveyed reported experiencing serious conflict with a parishioner at least monthly. An inability to deal successfully with church conflict is a root cause of ministry burnout. For a helpful "how to" article that addresses this issue, go to <http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/2011/07/stuck-at-no/>
- An article on dealing with ministry stress and burnout by Rowland Croucher: [http://www.churchlink.com.au/churchlink/forum/r\\_croucher/stress\\_burnout.html](http://www.churchlink.com.au/churchlink/forum/r_croucher/stress_burnout.html)
- An article on ministry survival skills and soul care by James White: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2009/summer/survivalskills.html>



Avoid the burn-out trap of trying to be an omni-competent pastor by equipping and releasing other leaders. For help, go to <http://mindev.gci.org/strategy.htm>