

## Chapter 15 (The good pastor)

The recent Star Wars movie has a plot twist. In the revenge of the Jedi, the Emperor Palpatine is tossed to his death by Lord Vader. (Christians follow me here) In this new movie (Rise of Skywalker) the emperor did not die. He has been building an army for thirty years. We then find out that he uses the force to impregnate Lord Vader's mother with the savior Rey. Confused?

Ok, so, a church planting organization wants to build a group of churches. They call on current pastors to join them in this adventure. Then they begin to plant churches through men and women that are without Biblical schooling. (Is it starting to tingle your senses yet?) Some of these church plant pastors begin to train new believers to be pastors. No biblical training required. Just Biblical training through a pastor who never had university training. Ah, building the church on a solid foundation.

Ok, let's take a small breath. Again, in Star Wars one upstart master (pastor) decides to train a child who is too old to train. He gives this boy (new believer) his personal training. Not the Jedi (university) training. To make this analogy worse, these new pastors are considered a better version. An improved version. Why? How? That is not the point. The point is that they follow the new order.

In the past, our forefathers trained us in university institutions of Biblical learning. Today, we are willing to train by discipleship. No higher learning required. In Star Wars the disaster becomes clear. Bad training turns into an evil empire. The opposite of the good ways of the Jedi. Allowing men and women to be called pastors in the name of Jesus (only) is a terrible idea. I can't prove it, but letting leaders decide their own faith and beliefs is an epically rotten idea. This will not go well. Men and women that are able to mold, guide, and disciple their own denomination is cultish. Not being held to a higher standard is disastrous.

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Star Wars is a tale of respecting the traditions of the past. The Jedi are called old. The evil empire is called the new order. Yet, the ways of the Jedi got them to this point. It worked. Sometimes men of the past set-in place safeguards that seem old, heavy, burdensome, and archaic. Throughout Biblical history the Israelites are always trying to veer from the system of God. They felt the need to do it their way. Are the traditions of the church old? Do they need to be replaced with new ways?

The new way says “just train them with a small amount of knowledge and let God do the rest.” It looks doable. Again, how long does it take to train a mature Christian? If we look at the Peter and Paul as examples it takes a ton of time. Years! How long does it take to train a leader to guide a flock of new believers? Without a theology degree? Years, months, or what? I know Star Wars is just a movie. I know it’s not Christian. It does not take a rocket scientist to see that George Lucas used Biblical themes in his original Star Wars saga. What if his message was taking a shot at the church?

This book is called from the outside in. If you’re wondering why I ask a lot of questions, it’s because I don’t understand a ton of churchy stuff. I was not raised to play the church game. As an outsider, I can see it. I can see what church is trying to do. Maybe I just don’t understand. That’s why I am painfully trying to make an analogy between Star Wars and church.

I come from outside the four walls of a church. At the beginning of my walk with Jesus some men asked me to follow the Bible as my guide. It’s what Christian Jedi do. Ok, what do I know? I’m an outsider. As I read the good book, I began to ask questions. Why does church do it this way when the Bible says do it another? I always got the same answer. Trust us, we do it this way for a reason.

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Why do we have a feeling about something? Why is it that we say “I saw that coming?” It’s because of two things for me. One is that we can see it coming. If it looks like a banana, well guess what, it will taste like a banana. Simple right? Secondly, we have seen this being played out before. History tends to replay itself. Who knows why? I will be writing another book called Wasted time. The whole theme will be knowing the outcome but doing it anyways. It’s like dating a troubled soul. Who knew it would go badly? So, as history replays itself, we can see it coming. Untested and untrained pastors training new believers will go badly. We’re having enough problems with the ones with degrees. Why is Biblical and traditional training optional all of a sudden? Oh, I know why! It’s to lower the bar.

Recently, I saw a video of a mother saying that parenting is like a relationship breaking up with you slowly. We all know that the kids have to go their own way. There will be fights and misunderstandings. In the end they will leave and start a new life. It’s harsh but I wonder if that is where I am with the church. It’s the ultimate chick flick movie. I meet the girl that I hate. Through a series of mishaps, we fall in love. Then over time the reason I hated her in the first place becomes clearer. There are misunderstandings and conflict. Like Hollywood my relationship with the church is resolved and we love each other for eternity. Right?

In my church love story, the ending is becoming quite different. I love her. Yet, she still is all the reasons I hated her in the first place. This is not going well. Was it wasted time? No, I don’t think church has been a waste of time. However, I’m not so sure I love her. I’m not so sure she is beautiful on the inside. It’s not wasted time but it sure feels like it. I think one of the reasons I’m having so much trouble with church is the training. Modern church thinks it can plug and play and leave the rest to God. No, traditional training needed. I fear it’s more like no traditional training wanted. They have created a new way. Their way.

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Our first church fathers gave us a small template. Funny, God gave a small template of Ten Commandments too. Ten easy to follow rules. Our church fathers continued that tradition with a simple Apostle's Creed. How hard could it be to treat people well? To further that question; why abandon the ways of the past? They say it's to stay relevant. Aren't the ways of God still relevant? My church disconnection and confusion might come from Bible reading and the ways of God. Why is the church going a different way? When I ask why; why does the church get so defensive about not following the Bible?

It's back to what I said near the beginning of this book. Train a child in the way they are bent and in their old age they will not depart from it. The Bible is not dumb. Follow the word. Follow the creeds. Why? It's because they were put there so that people would not run amuck with their own thoughts. Sanctioning men and women to learn the church their own way without proper training is a terrible plan. I'm convinced it's not creating the good pastor.

Is that where the pastoral is going? We have attended a few church plants recently. They are not shy about branding a person (pastor) without training. If your hired to lead people then you're a pastor. Ok, Trump loves God. He loves to attend church. He is a Shepard of over 300 million people. He is the ultimate American pastor. Wait a minute. Several readers just spit out their coffee. Trump isn't a preacher. Really? Has he ever preached the word to the American people? Does he set programs in place to take care of his flock? No training required.

Ok, as an outsider I can see it. If the church leaders are not required to have university training, then what do they need? Do they need confirmation from men? Do they just need to say they believe and have faith? Do they require baptism and a Holy Spirit moment? How about Education? Biblical knowledge? How much Biblical knowledge is required to be a pastor? A

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new believer reading the (large) Bible for three years? Is that enough? What makes a good pastor?

I have a friend who went to university with me. He has always been keen on fringe Biblical thoughts. Throughout my years of knowing him, he has veered to the left and right like he is a drunk driver. This guy has Biblical university training. If he can drive all over the Gospel Road, what do you think a degreeless pastor will do? Who will stop him or her? The kicker is the church plant organization. They oversee the appointees. Yet, each church drives its own way under the model. It's simple church now. Plug and play has evolved into driverless cars.

When I went to university to become a pastor, I hoped to learn. I never expected to be pushed, challenged, and stretched like I was. I am positive that I came out four years later a better Christian. They did a great job on me. Am I a carbon copy of my professors? It's yes and no. They wanted me to be my own leader. Yet, they gave me guidelines we can all agree on like the creeds. My education gave me respect for the traditions of the past. It charged me with upholding the creeds. Why? To implement plug and play? No, heavens no. It was to make sure the gospel is left in good hands for the next generation. I was charged with passing on Gods training to the next generation.

Let's talk about the new pastor, no education thing. Imagine a teacher with no education teaching? Imagine a President with no political knowledge. Imagine a pilot given the basics. Oh, patrick that is extreme. Is a pastor so insignificant that only basic training is required? Is the church and its history so insignificant that anyone can plug and play? Copout or not, the reason I did not start my own church is accountability. I wanted good men and women to keep me straight. I can't stomach the thought of doing my own thing. I want to further the old thing.

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The reason we have denominations is directly because some people disliked where the church was headed. They thought they could do better. So, this is biblical? This denomination begat this denomination and so on. In the end, we are allowing people to claim pastor status because they were raised Christian, a pastor's kid, or they take orders really, really well. The corporate Papal plug and play method works. Build it and they will come.

My university knew me after 4 years. They gently asked me to plant a church. In reality they did not think I was cut out for a pastoral team. No sense having one guy wanting to express himself and row at a different speed. Just do it their way. Churches told me that my way is not Gods way. Their way is Gods way because they are ordained. So, the church sets up a church planting group. Its model is based on what has worked. They have refined, organized, and in-(corporate) the church planting model. In I walked, and almost in the same breath, out I walked because I can't just plug and play.

I can't follow Gods will for me through a church program or a church model. But Patrick, you just said that we need to follow the traditions of the past. That is correct. I have read that the Bible guides people through the Spirit. It was men and women that listened and looked for Gods leading. I want to stick to the Biblical teaching. However, my God is not confined to a model. He is not constrained by demographics. Gods' way is rarely a corporate model or a straight line. God's ways always take weird paths.

I want to follow pastors. I want to honor church traditions. I dig the Bible. From the outside it's simple. Follow God. Follow Jesus. Yet, can I follow the new order of church? Can I plug and play because that's the new way of growing Christians? Why is church using a business model? Why? I came into the church to get away from the world. What you're asking me to do is not the way Jesus does business. This is not pastoral to me. Hence, the church and I have issues.

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The current church leadership is in control and charge of the next pastoral generation. Who will be *The Church* when your gone? I can tell you this. If you're not afraid of ruining what you're for-fathers left, the sky (to heaven) has no limits. Crosses draped in rainbow flags work. Sin is subjective works. Dropping baptism and communion works. Rampant speaking in tongues works. Making life groups the blood of a church works. Oh, they are just people who want to gather in the name of Jesus to watch football, play board games, and knit. Growing deep Christians?

Bible studies, prayer meetings, and discipleship is not entertaining church but it used to work. Now, saying "*In the name of Jesus*" with everything works. Traditional church does not drive large numbers and full spreadsheets. A church of 300, boasting of 25 groups with 6 people in each does not necessarily equal a growing Christian base. What it does mean is that you have 25 potential clicks. What it does mean is that you have 150 people that are not invested in your church. Half of the congregation is not playing your way! Yet, it also means 150 are playing it your way. Those are pretty good numbers (I bet) in the board room. Half participation is good!

In the meantime, the pastor just travels around from group to group supporting them. He preaches on Sunday maybe throwing in a little slight quip about the parables not being real. He knows that how? The church does not have a cross because it's offensive. No mention of sexual practice because it's dangerous. No sin, blood, and crucifixion talk unless its sensational. Remember how plug and play works. Repeat over and over "Love the person and endorse them as individuals." Traditional Christian lifestyles are laughed at now. This is how church rolls now.

Here is the issue. Those who join the groups are committed to the church way. The others are not so sure. They are invested enough to come to church. Invested enough in God's word. Yet, they are unsure of the church model. Plug and play seems so hollow. There has to be more

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doesn't there? Many who are looking are just trying to fit in. Searching for their place in God's church. They are not that invested in being placed. These people are looking for their spot in the puzzle. A place cut out by God just for them. The issue is that untrained pastors are plug and play. They are schooled to plug and play people too.

Life groups are always a certain way. You can't just fit in any group. Ministry is a certain way. Each one is not for everyone. Can I serve in the nursery? I could but I would not flourish in kids' ministry. Would someone in kids' ministry flourish in the tech booth? No, it does not work that way. The only way to get everyone to play ball equally is a level playing field. Are you dedicated to serve? Are you dedicated to conforming and fitting in? A pastor expecting little of himself will expect little from those below him or her. Why do half plug and play and the other half float from church to church? It's because only half will accept ordinary as the norm.

I will admit that the pastoral bombed itself when they excluded women. They bombed itself when they denounced people because they had a drink. The gay thing is all wrong. Hate the so-called sinner and denounce the sin. Ok, God is disgusted by several of those sins. But you ignored a ton of other sins, didn't you? It's never really been about whether being gay is a sin. It's always been more about bashing all the sins that you are not doing. Or, the best one, bash the sins you are doing to deflect. The pastoral accepts it all now because the criteria for being a leader is: anything goes.

We have gone so far from the truth. Jesus is our homeboy now. I have seen people mouthing "I love you Jesus." Yet, they don't tithe. They don't pray very much or read their Bible. How exactly does Jesus' rock your life? I listened one January to an address to the congregation. The pastor gave a plea to do more. To reach the lost. He gave a ton of examples that he said to get excited about. They did none of it. However, it might have been the best-



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selling sermon of the year. We love that stuff. Why didn't the congregation call him out a year later? Because within the plug and play system, a year goes by very fast. Who really remembers the bla, bla, bla when your entertained?

To the hollow pastor. Here is your plug and play formula. Be a great speaker. You could sell a cobra to a church mouse. Put in place three words that describe the church. Use some innovative words like believe, become, and belong. Then create three programs that we do every year. Promote life groups so that pastors don't have to be the main personal trainer. Have 250 people circled on your white board. When you hit that number, you have achieved, arrived, and moved forward. At the end of the year, give a round of applause to the past year. Then hit replay, repeat, and recycle.

Seems harsh, but is it? If you wrote down how church rolled this year, how off the mark am I? For heaven's sake, use themes in preaching. Have several series. Then research the Bible to find passages to fit the themes and series. Read books and scour the internet for stories that fit your themes and series. The Bible? Listen, tell yourself over and over that God has ordained you to lead this church. Convince yourself that what you speak about is sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. Then pull out those verses in a sermon. Surround them with your stories to make the series fit nicely. Entertain the hell out of people. Next year, do it all again. Plug and play preaching.

How we roll today. To the good pastor. Don't read your Bible and feel convicted. Don't pick a book or chapter of the Bible that challenges you. Use commentaries to give you an opinion before you write. Don't write the sermon by what the Spirit tells you? Lord knows the Bible writers never did that. Never go into the real world and tell real stories of real change. Just use great stories that make us laugh and cry. You know the ones on pastor.com. Use props and

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quotes. Actually, use quotes from people you have never read. It works. Pray for the things you want done in the church. Prayer is a great medium for telling the audience what you want them to do. Oh, and as a nice finishing touch. Tell your congregation to ask God to convict them as you have been convicted in your study. Don't push people to go deeper and be better Christians. You don't want people to be better trained than you are. Be the good pastor and follow a model.

I'm sure the pastoral know that their attitude is passed on to the church they reside in. If the pastor does not attend prayer meetings, neither do the congregation. If the pastor does not seek the lost outside his building, then what do you think happens? It's passed down to his children too. Why is it that so many PK kids are hired so easily? They have been indoctrinated in how church rolls. Why do more than half of the congregations' kids quit church after high school? Plug and play church is not real, that's why. They are not as stupid as you wanted them to be. They know fake because they experienced fake.

In all seriousness. I know some pastor's kids that would make great pastors. The ones who chose to lead in their father's footsteps are great kids. They have a good foundation. I have to tell you that God has ordained beautiful pastor children. I never saw more stunningly beautiful girls as I did in Bible university. Great loins my children. Wow! I won't admit that the jocks of the school were the famous pastors' kids. I didn't notice that at all. The ones the professors asked the most were not famous pastors' kids either. Yet, I know several great Christian men and women that came from that school. I also know that far too many of those normal kids are living lives outside the church ministry.

What makes a great pastor? That is a good question. Charles Spurgeon is known as a great pastor. So was G Campbell Morgan. Both were unschooled. Both loved their Bible too much. Each of them preached like no-one else. They were famous for their sermons. Some of

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these sermons are almost considered cannon. Yet, they struggled at home. Spurgeon smoked. I'm betting a few of them drank. Some like the great Charles Stanley ended in divorce. What makes a good pastor?

Is school a requirement? I have struggled with this. So, some people don't need school and others do. Why have Bible universities at all? Clearly, preaching isn't rocket science. Is reading the whole Bible required? It seems like a stupid question but I know pastors that claim the New Testament is the only Bible of this generation. I know evangelists that preach the Old Testament and Revelation only. How much head knowledge is needed to be Bible literate?

I'm just asking dumb questions the lost might ask. What credentials must a pastor have? Is growing up as a PK kid good enough? Is having worked in church circles for twenty years good enough? Is ministry work required? How about just having passion for God? Just tell me? If a man can be an atheist, writes a book on Jesus, make millions, and claims to be a pastor without any biblical training: is that good enough?

Can a pastor be a woman? I say yes. Yet, the Bible says no. Like I stated before, the Bible is cultured just as much as it's a message. Things change over the years. We don't stone people anymore. With that said, I do believe the Bible warns us. Men can lead. Women can lead. Who is better at it? Who cares? Yet, once women lead, then men tend to cower. They will not fight a woman's leadership. It's not manly. Who will attempt to replace a woman in power? It's just a slippery slope.

Once a few good women lead, then a few good men won't try. Men love their mothers. There is no way in heaven or hell that a man will challenge a woman's leadership. It's not going to happen. If women lead then men just won't bother. Will they attempt to keep her in line? No,

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who talks down to their wife or mother? Men will just quit leading. My point is this. Once women lead the men won't. It's just that way. It's not that those women aren't capable. What happens to a church when the men step down? When men stop being men? That is a bigger question.

Must a pastor be sinless. First of all, we expect that. Pastors are encouraged to sweep their other life under a rug. Keep the image clean. Some of that is not their fault. In a way it's a damned if you do and damned if you don't thing. Calling out your own sin in public could give a license for others to sin. On par with the pastor? Secondly, look squeaky clean and everyone feels they are less than stellar. When the mighty fall, it's a rather large boom. People love to trip up the squeaky clean. Yet, they secretly despise the sinful pastor too.

As a rule of thumb, I don't preach on anything that I don't believe or do. I'd like to believe I'm an honest preacher. Probably too honest. I know a pastor that embraces horror and Halloween. Actually, they spent more effort at Halloween than at Christmas. Does that give the congregation a license to spend more time with sin than with God? Just saying? I know a pastor that believes he should work 10% more than the business leaders in his church. He said he does this to gain their respect (probably their money too). Yet he preaches family time. Ok, what is wrong with that picture?

Sin is weird. I know a pastor that claims he does not willfully sin anymore. That is a really good trick. I thought Jesus was the only sinless one. If I come from outside of the church, what should I expect? With that said, what should you expect of me? I knew two girls that did not grow up Christian. They had some type of worldly upbringing. When they were paired with an unchurched guy (me at the time) and all hell broke loose. I've made mistakes. The church had a hard time with me. Why? For (at-least) the first year of my Christian walk I represented the

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world. Change does take time. The church wanted change now. Becoming a good Christian or pastor takes time. Too much time!

To be fair, how was I to change? Did they give me a mentor? Well, no they asked me to attend church regularly. Get involved in a life group. Then they expected the best results. They even tried to pair me up with good Christian girls. What is good? These ladies served, prayed, and looked clean. However, when we fell into unbiblical passion, they were not that clean. Then the church leadership gave me a book to read called “what is a Christian man.” This book told me that *what a man allows happens*. I was new, not discipled, and mildly churched. Just give me a good book to fix my baby Christian status. Now I could steer clear of a wanting Christian woman. That worked! Not!

Back to the pastor thing. As the facilitator of the plug and play method. Is it necessary to know your leaders deeply? Doesn't the plug and play model take care of all the problems? Whose fault is it if a new Christian man falls for a slightly seasoned Christian girl? Is it his or her fault? My pastors said the plug and play works. I was just not playing right. To be honest here. One of the girls I slept with was given no book or talking to. She was the victim. However, a few months later she did it again with an unchurched man. That worked! Do uneducated pastors make uneducated decisions? My former pastors were educated but made uneducated plug and play decisions.

I'm going to keep asking: what makes a good pastor? As we head into the new year, each church has a new opportunity to change a life. An opportunity to invite in the lost. There will be focus groups, board meetings, and programs put in place. New ideas will cross the table on how to draw them in. Yet, within all this is credibility. An unchurched friend posted a statement that Marijuana does not make you a bad person and church does not make you a good person. There

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is a disconnect within this world between the so called saved and the so called lost. From the world's perspective church does not define goodness.

Will you fix it? Will your healthy numbers fix it? Is the divide and disconnection between the church and the lost fixable? They will say we can't save them all. That is true. No degree or master's certificate can fix it. A PK kid that grew up in church circles can't fix it. A boy that grew up as trailer trash could maybe. Yet, what is Bible education to him? Did the Bible literate pastor in his youth fix the trailer problem? Is it a problem? Being poor is always a problem. So is being rich. So, is being lost. Being an unpassionate Christian is apparently not that big of a deal as long as their connected in a plug and play church.

How to bring church leadership closer to the lost? I say that we should pay our pastors too much. Make it nearly impossible for them not to indulge. Why? They preach abstinence to those with little to give. Ministers love to preach at the ones that would have to sacrifice the most. Make your pastor feel the pain of being rich. I want my pastor to struggle with abstinence when they have too much. This is what I think it would do? It would cause your pastor to make hard choices with money. Make it tough to hide their wealth. Make that eye of a needle real. Have them admit they are a strained nat. The poor? They already know about all that.

I would require your pastor to work in the real world at-least three years before he can go to school. Sorry, Christian university cannot be attended by children. Equally I would require those same adults to be pushed in school. Your life experiences would butt up against your faith. The pride in thinking you know it all would butt up against tradition. What makes a good pastor? Allowing the gospel and tradition to win over the world they experienced. Allowing our desire to have the world butt up against a wanting Jesus. These struggles would make a good pastor.

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Here's what I don't like. No life experience means you don't know. I think Jesus and God were cool directly because they wanted to know our side. That's a cool God. To take their divinity and butt it up against our humanity. You get a Jesus that appeared messy and loved sinners. Loved them so much that he would die to save them. A pastor does not need to die for his congregation. Make a pastor experience rich, poor, and the hard choice. Then they would rather die than lose one single sheep in the flock. All of a sudden, they would care too much. Why? Because he was one of them just like Jesus was one of us.

Here's what I don't like. Growing up as a PK kid to know right more than wrong. Growing up as a homeschooled kid being sheltered by mommy and daddy. Who temps you? Who helps you say no when you are alone in the world? What if the world is not totally wrong? What if there are good things in this world? What if you're sick of church tradition because it's all you ever knew? A Pastor needs to love tradition because it's a gift from our for-fathers. He needs to love the world as Jesus does. Not as your parents hated it. A good pastor is grateful he is saved because he knows the other side all too well.

Here's what I don't like. I don't want to you to believe that I talk a good talk or I came up with the right model to draw you in. I don't want pastors to believe that people are grown within programs. That church is healthy directly because of the numbers. I don't like believing people came to church because I am smart. If you were one of us, then your office would be closer to the door hoping someone would walk in. Why not hope for the next hand shake? The next straight talk into their eyes. Would your home always have people in it? Could you be a people hub? Was Jesus? Yet, Jesus knew that the Father draws. That His Will was people.

I knew a mayor that had a reputation as a partier. His opposition hated him for that. Every election they would call him out for being this and that. Yet, why did he get the highest recorded

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vote in the city ever. Why did that happen several times? It's because he did not claim to be one of us. No, he acted as one of us. I will have to admit that our current Prime minister keeps winning directly because he is trying to be one of us. Good leader? That is subjective. I will admit he is as dopey as all of us.

So, a good leader is one of the boys? It's just not that simple. Jesus immediately surrounded himself with boys, with sinners. Why? I do believe he surrounded himself with the best that humanity had to offer. Great leaders? No, great humans. Even Judas just wanted to be straight with Jesus. I do believe Judas had attitude towards many things. So did Peter and Thomas. Did Paul have attitude? Jesus surrounded himself with humans. Why? So that he could look human at times.

My mayor might not have been a great leader. It's up for debate. Yet, he surrounded himself with humans. He and they were one of the boys. Yet, they knew people. They related to people. I suspect we could vote out the current Prime Minister because he is corrupt. Yet, the other options are not human. They just don't relate. Good leaders? I bet they would be, but not relatable.

Why has my home town had such a hard time with church? Nine churches are not enough. Twenty-one churches are not enough. Why? Twenty-one flavors of plug and play is not relatable. Catering to personal sin is not relatable. We all struggle with sin. even the lost struggle. Far too often church people think the lost don't struggle with sin. Why do they seek a church or attend once a year? Trust me they struggle too. We all want a safe place to relate to.

Finally, what makes a good pastor? He or she needs to have grounding. Someone who has no degree in Bible things only has his or her understanding. We know humans. They float



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from one thought to another. We need to be grounded in church tradition and education. We need a group of people that challenge and affirm us. They are the rock we desire to be. New ideas must be carefully challenged. The gospel has survived quite well without us to this point.

A good pastor is one of us. By telling relatable stories? Yes and no. Be a people person. Be starved for the next hug or hand shake. I knew a guy who believed his pastor was cold just because he did not get a “hi” or hand shake on Sunday. I know it’s not that simple. Yet, a hello or handshake makes the difference. Shuffling people into life groups gives hugs and handshakes, but it does not humanize the church. You think it does but it does not. It’s a segregation tool and an inclusion tool all rolled into one. Rarely is it a deepening Christian tool.

If a pastor loves too much then, in time, the congregation will love too much. They say a pastor’s church will emulate him within three years. If your church is struggling to tithe and pray, you may have to look in the mirror. Read Malachi 3 a few times. See the word heart. it was never about giving or effort. God was always asking where the heart is. A good pastor is desiring above all else to create good hearts. Plug and play church is heartless. It’s time to go there.