

11 Signs of a Monster Pastor

In a previous post, I wrote about “monster churches” in reference to congregations that chew up and spit out pastors on a regular basis. Monster churches are highly dysfunctional and rarely fruitful.

The congregation, however, is not always the problem. Just as monster churches are a factory of discord, *monster pastors* take trouble with them wherever they go.

Nicknames for monster pastors include: *dictator*, *authoritarian* and *control freak*.

Biblically speaking, they may be false teachers, greedy for selfish gain, deceitful workmen and ravenous wolves. They specialize in hijacking congregations and then abusing their power.

Monster pastors have little regard for the sheep (or the Chief Shepherd for that matter). Instead, their first priority is self, masked by other agendas. Such pastors may use pressure tactics, political maneuvering, and/or persuasive speech in order to manipulate a congregation into acting on their behalf.

When they don't get their way, monster pastors usually 1) move on to another church, 2) cause a stir in their current church and/or 3) blame the congregation for not following their lead. Simply put, monster pastors are building their own kingdom rather than Christ's kingdom.

As a general rule, monster pastors:

1. Are always right and never wrong.
2. Cannot accept criticism without becoming defensive.
3. Are not willing to share the pulpit.

4. Do not support other ministries.
5. Overly use the personal pronoun, "I."
6. Resist accountability.
7. Feels threatened by former pastors.
8. Surround themselves with "yes men" rather than edifying leaders.
9. Do not entrust ministry to other leaders.
10. Undermine programs that they cannot control.
11. Insist that everything in the church run through them.

Rarely do you see a monster church matched with a monster pastor. Why? I think they can sniff each other out. Just like a bully rarely picks on another bully, choosing instead to prey upon the weak. Many times, monster pastors leave behind congregations with empty bank accounts, warring factions and a tarnished reputation.

Like a codependent spouse, abused churches typically continue to hire abusive pastors. The best thing that these churches can do is to stop and evaluate their situation before hiring another pastor (read this post to learn more).

If your church is in this predicament, consider bringing in a trusted interim pastor with a strong track record of long, peaceful pastorates. Ask the interim to help the congregation address problems and patterns that have wreaked havoc in the past. Spend time creating a plan to move forward and a strategy for selecting a new pastor.

Consider investigating candidates before interviewing them. Look for red flags such as a pattern of short-lived pastorates and a history of conflict. Take seriously the qualifications for a pastor found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

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*After serving in campus ministry at the University of Central Arkansas and coordinating student conferences for the Department of Church Ministries from 2000-2005, **Scott Attebery** pastored Wyatt Baptist Church in El Dorado, Arkansas. After seven years of pastoring, Scott was selected as the Executive Director of DiscipleGuide Church Resources, a department of the Baptist Missionary Association of America. You can read his blog at .*

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