



The Vital Role of Soul Care for Senior Pastors

CapinCrouse National Church Virtual Seminar

November 14, 2024

Question 1:

Do you want to receive credit?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

Thought experiment:
what do

Assisi, Italy

Harvard University

the YMCA

and Arthur Andersen

have in common?

Dallas Willard, Living in the Vision of God

What, then, is the general pattern? Intense devotion to God by the individual or group brings substantial outward success. Outward success brings a sense of accomplishment and a sense of responsibility for what has been achieved —and for further achievement... **The mission increasingly becomes the vision.** It becomes what we are focused upon. The mission and ministry is what we spend our thoughts, feelings and strength upon. Goals occupy the place of the vision of God in the inward life, and we find ourselves caught up in a visionless pursuit of various goals. Grinding it out.

This is the point at which **service to Christ replaces love for Christ.** The inward reality of love for God, and absorption in what he is doing, is no longer the center of the life, and may even become despised, or at least disregarded. "No time for that" becomes the governing attitude, no matter what we may say.

...here are things any person can do —and must do —to receive and sustain the inner spiritual fire that **keeps mission and ministry in its proper place**, preventing them from becoming the limiting vision that obsesses us and eventually strangles us.

<https://dwillard.org/articles/living-in-the-vision-of-god>

CS Lewis

First Things & Second Things

**You can't get second things by
putting them first.**

**You get second things only by
putting first things first.**

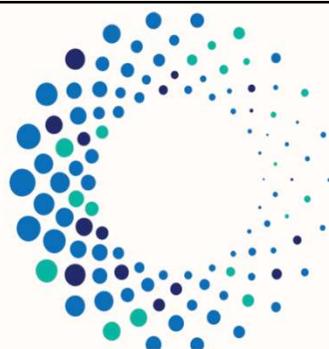
(CS Lewis, God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics)
(Jesus, Sermon on the Mount: Seek first the Kingdom...)

**The care of your soul
is a first order priority.**

**Our work is a
second order priority.**

When these get reversed,
our souls wither
AND
the work ultimately
suffers.

We lose both first
and second things.



Lausanne Movement
North America

**North American
Regional Report —**

The Necessity of Future Sustainability Models

Across regions, ministry specialization, and cultures, few challenges registered as consistently and urgently as the toll of ministry burnout. The pandemic certainly accelerated both in terms of scope and severity as pastors and ministry leaders were often left to bear the weight of their communities and organizations. Yet while the pandemic exacerbated the crisis, the seeds of ministry burnout are generational, and the result is a clergy and ministry force near its breaking point.

As the Hartford Institute recently discovered, more than half of all clergy (53 percent) express burnout to the point of leaving their church and/or ministry entirely.[6] More than just the need for rest, the degree and urgency of this burnout speaks to the flaws in our system that is failing to equip, support, and sustain ministry leaders. As this gets worse with the impending 'Great Retirement' of Boomers beginning in 2030, North American churches and ministry leaders face a complex and urgent challenge.[7]

This crisis of burnout ushers in two new opportunities for the Great Commission as we look to the future. First, leaders can finally begin to rethink our vision of the sustainable pastorate, challenging long-held assumptions about what constitutes healthy ministries, organizations, and communities. Through investing in sustainable models for ministry in the short-term, opportunities exist for long-term effectiveness. Already churches are finding pathways for this practice through investing in pastor treatment centers to restore and equip pastors with counseling and rest.

Second, through both dismantling abusive systems and modeling healthy systems and communities, churches and ministries can offer a prophetic word to a North American culture predicated on burnout. Reshaping our cultural and church-based conversations of burnout around spiritual, mental, and physical health empowers the church to lead a critical conversation in North American society. By embracing our shortcomings, the church can better learn to empathize with hurting people, especially those dealing with trauma. As church leaders in North America put on a trauma-informed lens when it comes to leadership development, congregational care, and outreach, those suffering with ministry burnout can have hope.

These investments not only secure a pastoral and ministry force equipped to fulfill the Great Commission but testify the truth that it is only by God's power that we can build his kingdom.

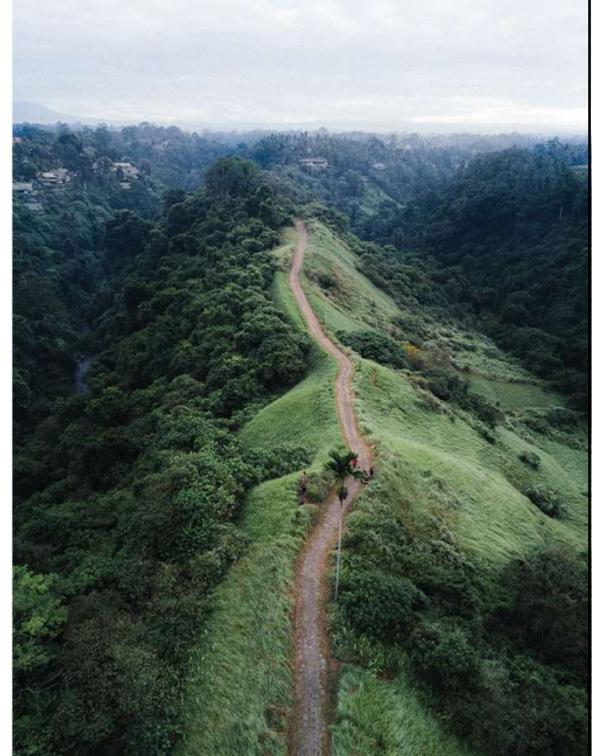
Question 2:

How developed is your organization's plan for supporting leader health?

- 1) Not on our radar yet
- 2) Thinking about it – an active conversation
- 3) Early Development of policy/plan
- 4) Fully implemented

“When we speak of the human soul, we are speaking of the deepest level of life and power in the human being.”

Dallas Willard, Renovation of the Heart



Your soul drives everything
that matters to you.

“I’d Rather Burn Out than Rust Out...”

Our Current Leadership Reality:

Burn Out | Flame Out | Drop Out

It starts to look like this:

Ezekiel 37

A global army saying, “Our hope is gone; we are cut off...”

Complete loss of life.



December 30,
2021

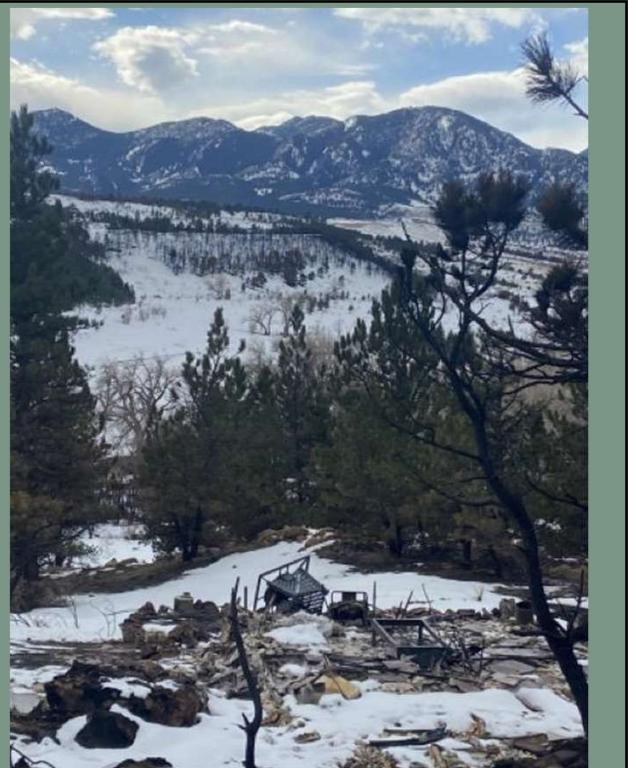
... a new
perspective on
burnout.







Before & After



So, what is burnout?

Severe depletion – even exhaustion – of our personal reserves.

It is literally burned, like fuel, and now gone.

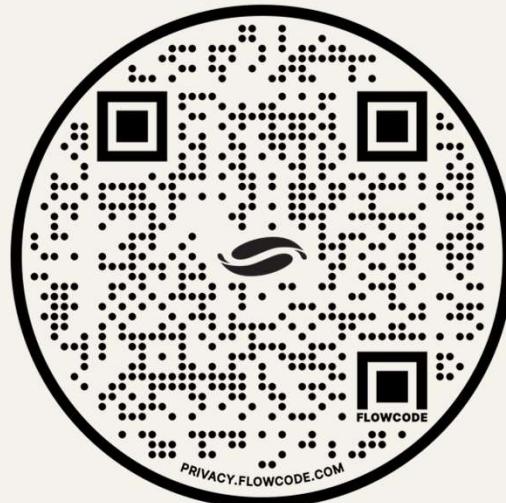
Trees. Cars. Neighborhoods... and yes, people.

People's energy.

Dictionary definition: Exhaustion of physical strength, or emotional strength, or motivation... usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration.



What's true for you today?
Scan for Soul Health Assessment



Question 3:

What was your Soul Health Assessment
score range?

- 1) Healing
- 2) Strengthening
- 3) Flourishing
- 4) Prefer not to say

What if our isolation, exhaustion, and burnout
could actually light a path to flourishing?

Matthew 11:28-30 MSG

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion?
Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life.
I’ll show you how to take a real rest.
Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it.
Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.
I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you.
Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Characteristics of those who lead from soul health...

- They are peace-filled in crises as well as in calm times. And during crises, they do not revert to authoritarian or avoidance behaviors
- They know intimately what it means to be part of or create community
- They do not depend on themselves for the vision of the organization
- They can give power away without feeling a loss of self
- They are connected intimately to God
- They do not project their pain or addiction on others
- They do not burn out or succumb to stress
- They practice integrity, reflection, and collaboration
- They have a strong sense of humor and creativity
- They are courageous
- **Above all, they are life-giving**

Janet Hagberg, Real Power

Practices to Ignite Your Soul

Attention
Participation
Delight
Humility
Silence
Rest

PRACTICING ATTENTION

PAGE | *Reflection*: Keep in touch with what is going on inside. Journal. Ask. Listen

PERSON | *Connection*: A safe space to process the stuff of life and Momhood

PLAN | *Intention*: For holistic flourishing

PAGE: *Reflection*

Make Space to Journal

- Slow your mind down to the pace of writing
- Consider your interior world
- Ask yourself and God the bigger questions
- Get “above” the doing
- Explore past hurts and create space for healing

PERSON: *Connection*

Create a Safe 3rd Space to process life & leadership

- Bring outside energy into a closed system
- Anticipate how God shows up in a trusted relationship
- Receive and learn “unanxious presence”
- Grow in Discernment... what is God inviting you into, right now?
- Spiritual Director, Coach, Therapist, ministry peer

PLAN: *Intention*

Create a “Rule of Life” :

- A “Trellis” to support optimal life
- Do a Soul Health check-in – How is your soul?
- Understand current state and desired future state
- Set (no more than) 3 goals to set for next 90 days

Question 4:

Which of **Page | Person | Plan** is strongest for you personally?

- 1) Page
- 2) Person
- 3) Plan

PRACTICING DELIGHT

- **What gives you joy?**

- What would it be like to be intentional with building more of that into your life?

Soul Care Resources Specific for Teams



We offer pathways, practices, and guides to help leaders personally flourish and achieve Missional Impact

NEW BOOK: Ignite Your Soul

LeadWell Year-Round Executive Leader Support

Free Burnout Course

Organizational Soul Health Assessment

Strengthening Our Souls Online Course Cohorts



LeadWell - A pathway toward soul health



**A sequenced series of steps that builds
formational soul health rhythms into the lives of leaders**



Foundational teaching in the theology and practice of soul health



Safe third space through Spiritual Direction



Assessment of current and progressing state of soul health



Monthly retreat rhythm of silence and solitude



Community connection through cohort model

LeadWell Year-round Journey



Confronting Burnout



Leaders everywhere are feeling the weight of burnout—in themselves, their peers, and their organizations.

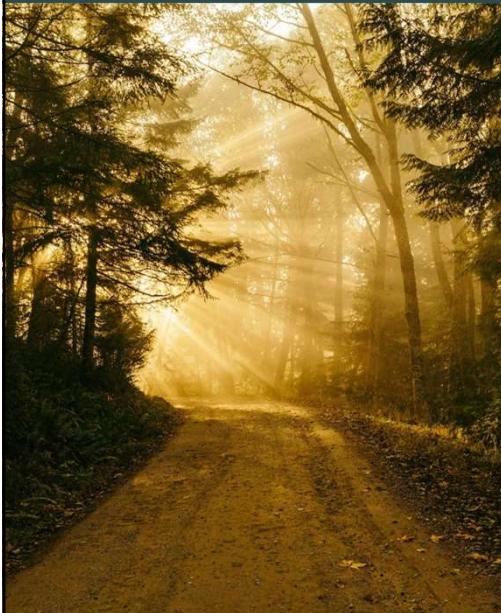
soulcare.com/confronting-burnout

We've created an online course to help unpack the underlying realities of burnout and to identify the symptoms.

Confronting Burnout offers guidance, reflection, and spiritual practices to help rekindle natural motivation and restore balance to the lives of leaders.

Available in Spanish & English

What's Next: Vocational Discernment



Seasons of vocational restlessness are not uncommon for missionaries and can bring on feelings like confusion, concern, stress, and even frustration.

What's Next is a pathway for leaders to explore narratives and healthy frameworks around Christ-centered, vocational identity

- Foundational theological frameworks around the intersection of God, work, and identity - shared through 5 easy-to-read lessons in Soul Care's online platform
- Contemplative exercises paired with each lesson to help deepen your processing and prayerful engagement with God
- A 2-hour session with a Soul Care Vocation Guide for space and support to process where you are in your vocational journey, gifting, calling, and vision for the future
- Customized recommendations and practical next steps based on your session with your Vocation Guide

Soul Care Guides



Connecting leaders with safe, supportive relationships that lead to healing, growth and restoration

Soul Care has curated a team of trusted Spiritual Directors and Leadership Coaches across different backgrounds and training.

Both practices involve caring for the soul, but from different areas of focus.

Soul Care Spiritual Directors and Leadership Coaches are available for scheduling through our website. Leaders and missionaries can transact directly with our Guides or Soul Care can invoice the sponsoring organization.



About Us

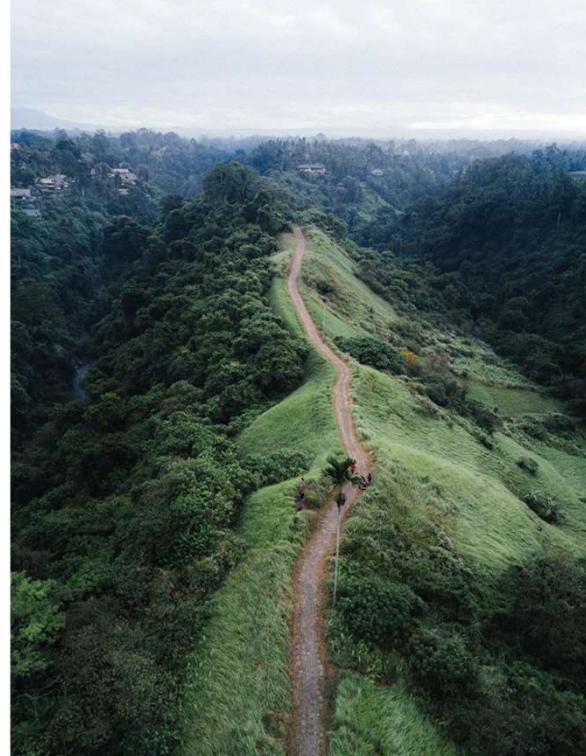


Some of our clients



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Dallas Willard, Renovation of the Heart



Thank you!



SOULCARE