

Chapter 2

What Do Others Say?

This chapter recognizes that a number of topics and categories, related to church and Christian ministry, converge and interconnect with this subject matter. Deviant theologies and questionable ministry practices create varied yet predictable affects in individual Christians.

In order for scholars, church consultants, church leaders, or concerned Christians to have a comprehensive understanding of this church ministry issue, they will need to be familiar with its nature and the types of literature that are available for study and reflection. Select books which deal with the topic of spiritual abuse and recovery, along with books which deal with biblical leadership and theological issues are reviewed. This information gives the reader a good grasp of what others are saying.

This chapter provides helpful insights into how people can cope after facing these circumstances. Recovery, for most people, includes four main steps: 1. Allow sufficient time to grieve. 2. Forgive and release the situation to God. 3. Find a suitable faith community. 4. Move forward in Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the need to help rebuild a solid theological foundation in hurting people becomes the task of caring helpers in healthy spiritual communities.

Excerpt from Chapter 2

What Do Others Say?

Church Leadership and Spiritual Abuse

People have always left churches—a fact well documented in Church history—but the reasons why many Christians have recently left institutional churches has caught the attention of scholars and researchers who have made it their goal to understand current leaving patterns. Their aim is to bring these observations to the attention of those who teach and train future church leaders.

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Current literature describes the many reasons why Christians are leaving the Church but there has been no clear description of the process that brings them a measure of resolution and spiritual healing. Different works provide prescriptions for recovery but there has been little testing whether such prescriptions work for individuals who have experienced wounding in their local church. This research seeks to fill this gap, and will provide an understanding of the processes by which people discovered a positive path through their spiritual difficulty.