



Greater Sydney SDA Conference

Mad Church Disease & Leaders Who Last

Anne Jackson
Mad Church Disease
Zondervan 2010

- The disease lies dormant for a given amount of time, going unnoticed. It can be a period of months to a few years before the disease is found.
- Twin concerns: Burnout and Complacency

Risk Factors:

Neglect of Physical Health

- Our physical health impacts our day-to-day living more than we may realize. From our sleep habits to the way we eat or even exercise, our health can influence our susceptibility to burn out.
- It's easy to neglect our physical health when we're faced with the demands of ministry.
- 71% of all ministers admitted to being overweight (1/3 of all ministers overweight by 11.3 kilograms, 15% by 25kilograms or more)
- Two-thirds of all pastors skip a meal at least one day a week and 39% skip meals three or more days a week.
- 33% eat fast food three or more days per week
- 87% don't get enough sleep at least once a week. Only 16% get the recommended eight hours or more per night.
- 52% experience physical symptoms of stress at least once a week.
- The youngest ministers are the heaviest, the most likely to skip meals, the most likely to eat unhealthy foods, the least likely to get exercise, the most likely to go without sufficient sleep, the most likely to eat fast food and the most likely to report sleeping problems.

Neglect of Family

- 6 out of ten say that being a pastor prevents them from spending sufficient time with family.

Spiritual Emptiness

- 21% of pastors pray less than 15 minutes a day

Personality

- Managing Type A and B personalities – both burn out, just in different ways.

Being 'in Contact'

- "Men have become the tools of their tools"

Lack of Control

- 'Someone else is controlling me' 'If I don't do it – who will.'

Pressure to be the Best

- Numbers have become an addiction
- Competitive leaders often create unhealthy environments.
- A healthy environment is formed in the spirit of humility.

Unclear Expectations

Conflicts in Personality or Values

Mismatch of Job Skills/Passions

Old-School Church Politics

New-School Church Politics

Recovery

- **Accept Responsibility for Your Decisions**
- **Change Your Purpose**
- If you're chasing after the wrong things, you will burn out.
- **Make a Plan**
- **Create Boundaries**
- **Find Accountability**

www.madchurchdisease.com

David Kraft
Leaders Who Last
Crossway 2010

- It's a marathon – not a hundred meter dash

Finishing well includes:

- Maintaining a vibrant and rich walk with Jesus
- Having a solid relational network that includes at least one good friend with whom you can bare your soul
- Making a lasting contribution and God-honouring contribution in your areas of passion and gifting.

Foundations:

- Jesus Christ in the centre as your power
 - Spiritual Disciplines
 - Purpose
 - Passion
 - Priorities
 - Pacing
-
- Rubber Band – how much and for how long

Calling

Gifts

Character

Growth

Book Review: Mad Church Disease - Anne Jackson on Burnout

by Joe Gomez

First time authors like [Anne Jackson](#) are few and far in between. Her [blog FlowerDust.net](#) is one of the top-ranked blogs for Christian leadership. In a recent list of the top 60, she is #18, and one of only three women on the entire list. She has an amazing heart for God's people and unity within his Church, both topics she regularly writes and blogs about, which makes the fact that her first book is about church burnout no surprise.

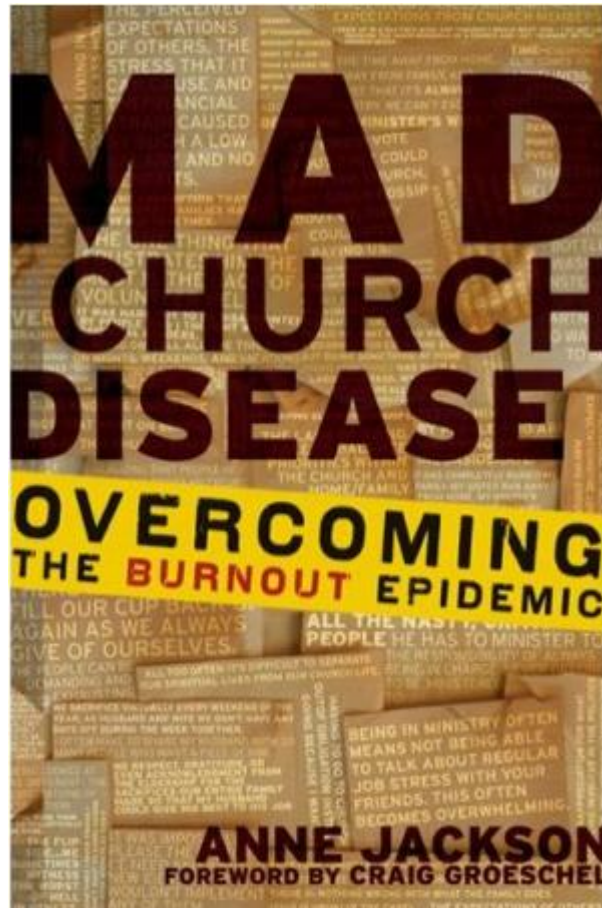
As unique as Anne may be, she is not alone in her journey. Her newly-released book [Mad Church Disease: Overcoming the Burnout Epidemic](#) is both a refreshing confession and hard look at the struggles of ministry burnout, its symptoms, and the dangers it can bring into the church and in the lives of its leaders.

This book isn't just for pastors. The symptoms of burnout affect everyone from the senior pastor to the worship team to the greeters at the door. If everyone should have a ministry, then everyone, in some way, can be affected by Mad Church Disease.

Jackson starts the book by opening up emotionally and sharing her story in order to introduce herself and allow the reader to be able to better relate with her story. Anne is a pastor's daughter, and her family has been hurt by the church continually in the past.

When she was just sixteen, she prayed a bold prayer, telling God that she would leave the church entirely, unless he gave her a way to bring unity back into it. Lucky for both her and us, after years of silence, God answered Anne's prayer.

Anne dives right into the issue of burnout, or, as she puts it, "Mad Church Disease." She shares the correlation between mad cow disease's traits and the symptoms of burnout within the church. Explaining that between attacking via hidden and internal methods or laying dormant until it is too late in a person's life, Anne expresses the



gravity and real dangers of ministry burnout. "Cows don't have much hope when they are infected with mad cow disease," she elaborates. "Even though the process can take years, they die. There's no vaccine. We're a bit more fortunate. Satan's sole purpose in life is to ruin us -- but God's sole purpose in life is to redeem us. Cows don't get a second chance -- but we are promised a second chance, and more."

Through in-depth examination and reflection on the concept of "Mad Church Disease," Anne guides the reader through the different ways that we can all be attacked. Our physical, mental, social, and spiritual health suffer when burnout is raging inside us. At the end of each chapter, she provides a place for serious reflection on the risks of burnout and a second opinion in the form of an interview with an "expert in the field," such as Willow Creek's Bill Hybels.

Thankfully, unlike most books on the dangers of ministry, *Mad Church Disease* does more than suggest the symptoms. There is much healing to be found within these pages of Jackson's first book. Between finding that you're not alone on the battlefield and the redemption that God has had for us all along, you have the potential to see some of your deepest wounds healed through Anne's compassionate words. Jackson devotes a large portion of the book to finding remedies for and preventing burnout and its attacks on our bodies, minds, relationships, and souls. Towards the end of the book, Anne dives into a practical pursuit of spiritual restoration, forgiveness of those who have wronged you, and living life to the fullest.

I really don't have enough good things to say about both the author and her first book, but I will leave it at this: There are so many factors holding back Christians, especially leaders, from doing and being something great. *Mad Church Disease* is a wonderfully-written book that I believe anyone could benefit from by discovering the healing and redemption on each page.

You can find more information about *Mad Church Disease: Overcoming the Burnout Epidemic* at www.madchurchdisease.com (where you can read a [free sample chapter of MCD](#)). Anne Jackson currently serves on staff at [Cross Point Church](#) and lives with her husband in Nashville, TN. You can find her at FlowerDust.net.

Switch off, tune out, power down

September 5, 2011

William Powers thinks he's found the solution to being overwhelmed by the cyber world, writes Judith Ireland.

US journalist William Powers is not what you'd call technology shy. He was the first among his family and friends to get an email account. In 1986.

In his previous role as a media writer for *The Washington Post* he was up on all the latest gadgets and tech developments. As well as an avid user of the stuff himself. On holidays he would drive around with his laptop, trying desperately to pick up a wi-fi signal.

Indeed, by Powers' own admission, he was hyper-connected. Through his digital devices he was always reachable. Always receiving information. Always interacting with friends, colleagues and the rest of the world.



Connected ... William Powers has been talking about the survival skills needed in the age of the smartphone. *Photo: Andrew Sheargold*

On the face of it, this level of connection was ideal. As he writes in his best-selling book *Hamlet's Blackberry*, "For the last decade, we've worked hard to bring digital connectedness into every available corner of existence and, once it's there, to make it ever faster and more seamless." We have, in short, become "digital maximalists" - living by the unspoken philosophy: "It's good to be connected, and it's bad to be disconnected." But as Powers surfed the net at all hours, checked the endless flow of emails and carried his phone everywhere he went, he began to feel that something was wrong.

In Australia as part of a three-week tour, Powers says he was overconnected. "I just felt like I was skimming the surface of life more and more. It was like my brain was becoming a hamster wheel. Never stopping spinning." So several years ago, Powers and his family instituted what they call an internet sabbath. From bedtime on Friday to sun-up on Monday they turned off the modem in their Cape Cod house.

"It was hard in the beginning," he recalls. Both Powers and his writer wife, Martha Sherrill, couldn't Google on a whim or use email. And their young son couldn't use the internet to for last-minute research on school assignments.

But now, some five years on, the internet sabbath is still going strong in their household. So strong, that the family actually craves the opportunity to get away from the buzz of digital activity and either spend time with each other or their own thoughts.

"It's different in the beginning, it's strange, it's scary. And then it's not," Powers says.

In *Hamlet's Blackberry*, Powers draws on these experiences to set out a new philosophy for living in the digital age. He doesn't necessarily advocate an internet sabbath for everyone - this just happens to be what worked for his family. But he does advocate a rethink about our relationship with modern technology - and more genuine space to relax, create and think (as well as connect, connect and connect). In search of answers to our modern-day dilemma, *Hamlet's Blackberry* looks to seven periods in history that also experienced great technological change. In each, Powers hones in on a contemporary thinker who was grappling with the tools of their day.

In ancient Greece, Socrates struggles with the advent of writing - largely because he doesn't understand it. To Socrates, writing is a dangerous invention because it doesn't allow ideas to flow back and forth as they do in conversation. He worries, it will also make people stupid, as they will not have to remember things of their own accord. At the same time, it will make people seem smarter than they really are, because they can give the impression of knowing something when they really don't. (What does that remind you of?) In the bustling world of ancient Rome, Nero's adviser Seneca found peace (or "inner distance") by focussing on one idea or person and forgetting everything else. It's the classical antidote to multitasking. Instead of having 20 web pages open while you talk to someone on Skype, as you text someone else and update your Twitter feed, maybe we would be more productive and less frazzled if we did one thing at a time. In overcrowded Elizabethan times, when people were overwhelmed by the influx of printed material, Londoners carried small "tables" - pocket-sized calendars with blank pages of coated paper that you wrote on with a metal stylus and then wiped clean.

People used them for lists and thoughts that popped into their heads during a hectic day. They were such an organisational hit and so much a part of life that they even got a reference in *Hamlet*. Importantly, the tables show that old technologies (handwriting) can manage the new (printed information). And as a hand-held obsession that helped people cope with the busyness of life, Powers figured they were also the equivalent of *Hamlet's Blackberry*. What these thinkers (and the other four in the book, Gutenberg, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Thoreau and Marshall McLuhan) tell us is that humans have been overwhelmed by technological change before. But with some thinking, experimentation and adaptation, they have survived with their intelligence and sanity intact.

Indeed, in *Hamlet's Blackberry*, Powers is not arguing that digital technology is innately wrong or harmful. Or that we shouldn't be excited about the latest gadget. Rather, he is arguing for a more critical approach to the way we use it. "My book is the classic case of having two thoughts at once," he explains. Technology can bring us great social, professional and lifestyle benefits. But like all good things, we need to exercise some moderation. "It is like sitting and eating 10 bowls of ice-cream because you like ice-cream," Powers says of our current approach to digital technology. But while we have heard the "balance" argument when it comes to food, exercise and work, we haven't yet heard (or heeded) the message when it comes to technology. It is telling that in the 14 months since *Hamlet's Blackberry* was published in the United States (it was published in Australia last October), Powers hasn't stopped talking about the book.

It has reached best-seller lists, been translated into languages around the world and Powers has been invited to speaking events at companies like Facebook and Google. He has just finished speaking at the Melbourne Writers Festival and will be appearing at the Brisbane Writers Festival this week.

But he is not sick of talking about *Hamlet's Blackberry*, despite other authors' warnings that he'd soon want to get on and write the next book.

"I haven't grown tired of talking about it, partly because I step outside everyday and I see people walking around with a smartphone in their face," he says. "I think we're still looking for a balanced way to live with digital." Nevertheless, Powers is still surprised that his book has become such a talking point. As a contrarian read that draws upon a bunch of "dead white guys", Powers thought that only his friends and family would buy the book that took him two years to write.

But clearly he isn't the only one who thinks we need a smarter, more self-disciplined approach to digital technology. "I do believe that unwittingly, in many ways, that I tapped into something that's just beginning," he says. "Balance can seem boring. But it really is the radical place to go."

+ *Hamlet's Blackberry: A practical philosophy for building a good life in the digital age*, William Powers, Scribe, \$28.95, 288pp.