

## An Epidemic on Our Hands: Already Gone *Already Gone* by Ken Ham & Britt Beemer

Usually we think of an epidemic as the spread of disease; but in the application, the word refers to “anything which takes possession of the minds of people...” If the minds of people occupy the notion that church is of no import or value and, more importantly, that there is no God (or God does not matter), than there minds could be possessed with such a sense or belief.

The authors of the book open this initial chapter with scripture from the first book of Timothy chapter 6

*...guard the treasure you were given! Guard it with your life. Avoid the talk-show religion and the practiced confusion of the so-called experts. People caught up in a lot of talk can miss the whole point of faith. Overwhelming grace keep you!*

The chapter waste no time is identifying the epidemic of church involvement; from Ken & Britt:

**A mass exodus is underway. Most youth of today will not be coming to church tomorrow.**



On this claim is some statistics however:

Nationwide polls and denominational reports are showing that the next generation is calling it quits on the traditional church.

The early signs of this trend were the among the age group from ages 20 to 30; and as the poll (conducted by *George Barn*) has quantified, 6 out of 10 raised or steeped in church are no longer participating...

Compare this figure with the participation of teens (on a national level), and the dramatic drop quickly materializes. In the details of this observation (or study) is that “most of them pulling away from church, are spending less time studying the Bible on a personal level among other practices of the faith. Combine this 60% with the 20% that are never churched (as children and/or teens), **and you but 20% that stay the course or remain faithful to service.**

**In the bigger picture of these statistics is the grave possibility of a church that “is headed toward the morgue and will continue to do...”**

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With this condition (of the American church) established, the first of two authors, Ken, introduces his role as a missionary to America: to call it back to the authority of the word of God...

With his role described in brief, the co-author is introduced in his broad studies of human behavior. Using the combined talents and skills, the two established the goal (of this book):

**We wanted to know who was leaving, why they were leaving, and what (if anything) could be done about it.**

To begin in the quest for understanding, the two noted that only 5 to 6% of the church-going age groups are categorically evangelical – which means that they share (and practice) the a similar doctrinal faith. A sample of 1,000 surveyed in this doctrinal faith – half being from ages 20-24; the other from 25-29.

Among the findings is the following regarding the causes or reasons for leaving the church:

- 12% noted boring services or programs
- 12% noted legalism or human-imposed doctrine, etc.
- 11% noted the hypocrisy of leadership
- 10% noted too much politics
- 9% noted that some people were too self-righteous
- 7% noted the travel or commute (to church) was too far
- 6% noted no relevance to personal growth
- 6% noted that God would not condemn them to Hell if they didn't go...
- 5% noted that the Bible is not relevant...
- 5% noted that the preferred domination was not available in the area

In the survey or research came more statistics on the basic cause for church withdrawal or discontinuation: 27% wanted to break from the church for no reason in particular; 25% broke from church during the transition to college; 23% indicated that work responsibilities interfered; and 22% indicated that relocation prevented them from attending their traditional church.

In this bevy of statistics – as to who was leaving – was the desire to dig deeper into the “why?” or causes. Of the 20 to 29 olds who no longer attend church, 95% attended as children, 55% as teens, and only 11% in college or after high school. **This drastic reduction in attendance – from child to teen – indicates that much of the loss occurs before college – or the age 20.**

This finding (or observation) is the inspiration behind the title, *Already Gone* – to mean that by college, many are “already gone”...

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The “Beemer Study” has enlightened the authors so as to enable further investigation, analysis and reporting; the book is the outcome or result.

On the cardinal axiom that “when numbers and statistics are interpreted correctly they mean something”, the two authors set-out on this venture and, with a book in publication, have much to add through the findings of the American Research Group (ARG) and the Answers in Genesis (AIG).

Let’s continue...