

3 Unseen Hooks Dragging Your Church Down— And How to Pull Back Up

Insight from Church Expert Sam Rainer

Church leaders are more on guard right now. It's understandable. Decision fatigue is a real issue with many pastors. People seem to gravitate to the extremes more easily. Hypersensitivity is pervasive. As a result, you might find your defenses up and your fuse shorter than normal.

Three hooks could be dragging you down. These hooks are often unrecognized even by the healthiest of leaders. Through our work at Church Answers, we've seen how churches and leaders can get snagged. The reason is that hooks are enticing. It's easy to get pulled down by cynicism, nostalgia, and fantasy.

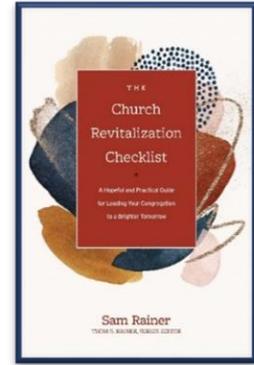
- 1. Cynicism drags you down with a lack of love for people right now.** The cynic believes people are driven by self-interest and little can be done to improve the future. When a leader becomes cynical, people *feel it* even if they don't *recognize it*. It's easy to be cynical right now, especially as a church leader, because most do not know how much you are working to keep the church afloat.

The problem is that cynics tend to stop loving people in the moment. The hook of cynicism becomes a drag because strong leaders who exhibit contempt will often win the war with strategy and lose the peace with their people.

The solution to cynicism is intentional compassion. Make a list of people you know who are in a rut and create a kindness campaign. Reach out to every person on the list and encourage them in some way. The drag of cynicism lessens with each act of compassion.



2. **Nostalgia drags you down with a misguided love of the past.** In the book of Ezra, a group of people complained during the rebuilding of the Temple. They lamented that it was nothing compared with Solomon's Temple. At the time they complained, the foundation was just finished. That's it. They complained from the beginning of the project!



Show me a church that loves the past more than the future, and I will show you a church that is disobedient. Here's why: God does not save anyone in the past, but He will save people in the future. Nostalgia is not always bad. Fond memories can prompt people to act today. Nostalgia becomes a major problem when people long for the past more than they anticipate God's work in the future. Nostalgia produces paralysis. Overly nostalgic churches become apathetic to Kingdom work.

The solution to nostalgia is community involvement and evangelism. Start by taking a deep dive into your community demographics. [Church Answers has a great tool to help any church.](#) You can better reach your community if you know your community. Sharing Christ with others today will stomp out a misguided love of the past.

3. **Fantasy drags you down with a misguided love of the future.** Pastors are notorious for loving the church of the future more than the church of the present. If you don't love your church where she is today, then you do not deserve to lead your church tomorrow. There is nothing wrong with an occasional daydream of what could be, but you cannot live in an unrealistic fantasy of the future. The hook of fantasy is enticing because the bait is often vision. An unattainable vision is just as problematic as misguided nostalgia.

The solution to fantasy is an investment in relationships. Stay in the moment by taking people out to lunch, writing letters, making phone calls, and sending texts letting people know you are praying for them.

Cynicism, nostalgia, and fantasy are hooks that drag. Pull back up with intentional compassion, community involvement, and investment in relationships!

*To learn more about Sam Rainer,
please visit SamRainer.com*