

# Commentary: Your pastor isn't as unhealthy as you might think

April 25, 2018

Have you heard that 71 percent of pastors are burned out? That 80 percent believe the profession has been harmful to their families? That pastors are leaving the field at the rate of 1,700 a month?

If so, don't believe it. Although those statistics have circulated widely and have often been used to tout a book about the psychological state of ministers or spark interest in a conference on ministry, they are almost certainly inaccurate. They aren't backed up by any reputable study.

Some of these alarming statistics were generated over a decade ago by church consultant Richard Krejcir on the basis of clergy conferences that he held in California in 2005 and 2006 for Reformed and evangelical clergy. He surveyed participants in those two years and received results from some 1,050 pastors. In other words, he was working with a small, narrow, and self-selected group of pastors. That was the group in which 71 percent reported they were "constantly fighting depression."

This portrait of ministry is so striking and has circulated so widely that it has come to shape many people's sense of the state of clergy. When the Barna Group recently presented its own, very different data, it proclaimed that its findings were "contrary to conventional wisdom."

**Read this article on [The Christian Century](#).**