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# SUCCESSFUL CHALLENGE

by Daniel A. Brown, PhD

*This is a short article taken from one of “Daniel’s Travel Journal” entries he made while traveling, sharing relationship and ministry with friends and churches in various parts of our country and overseas.*

Churches can sometimes be challenged by their very successes. For instance, let’s say a person gets spiritually healed at a church whose mission is like that of a spiritual hospital. That healed person might then feel a desire to enlist, and mobilize others in a ministry that is more outreach-oriented. The church’s mission was successful in bringing healing to a broken soul, but that healed one who no longer needs healing, can look down on a church that only offers healing and doesn’t offer something for the *already-healed*. Without the church, the person would never have been able to envision ministry that goes beyond the opportunity for healing.

That’s why the body of Christ has so many members—each with a different function. Within a local church, we need the variety of gifting and function provided by every member; within a denomination, we need the same—many different churches and ministries that together enable us to meet the needs of an entire region. I believe that a healthy and mature church will produce many dynamic tensions in its members as they mature and grow into all God has for them.

Just as households are supposed to produce and nurture children through the years until they reach the point when they launch out to establish households of their own, so, too, should churches mend and train believers to the point where those believers launch into new ministry that may be beyond the walls of the church that grew them up.

Through the years, many people left our church. Some moved out of town; some fell away from the Lord; some found other churches in the area that matched their needs better than the Coastlands did; some pioneered other churches; and, some left because of a disagreement or disappointment with me. Fortunately, I went into pastoring with the perspective that most people would eventually leave, so I was saddened at the loss of each person—but never devastated. I had a calling to which I had to be true; I just assumed they did, too!

Two cannot walk together without agreement. Every son and daughter of God must lead his or her own life in Jesus. I almost never lost respect for people who felt led to “move on” and away from the Coastlands. The only ones for whom I lost all respect were the people who forgot what had been done for them, and who could only speak ill of us. There is a godly—and an ungodly—way to leave a church home as you follow Jesus. Choose carefully which way you leave because your departure usually sets the tone for what you receive from your destination.