Stealing Sheep: The Church's Hidden Problems of Transfer Growth

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When people join one church after leaving another, experts call it transfer growth. People in the pew call it church hopping. William Chadwick calls it one of the most dangerous trends to face the body of Christ in decades. He calls it sheep stealing. All around us churches are seeking better and more creative ways to attract people - more dynamic preaching, better worship, more of the Spirit, better drama. While the intent is often to bring in those who are not Christians, this increasingly common strategy has, Chadwick contends, largely resulted in Christians merely shifting congregations. While many churches don't deliberately plan to steal sheep, that is often just what happens. And those churches never question their growth. How widespread is this trend? Can the causes be pinpointed? How has the prevalence of sheep stealing actually hurt the growth of churches overall? What are the ethical issues that pastors need to face head on? Are there any practical ways that church transfers can be discouraged and a focus on true evangelism increased? Can a better understanding of what the church is really about help us move forward biblically? These are just a few of the many challenging questions that are boldly considered in this book that is must reading for every church that wants to grow.

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