

Review of *'Who Stole My Church'*

by Gordon MacDonald

Change in church can sometimes be hard to handle – especially if you have been a long-term and involved member of a particular congregation. And then maybe a new leader comes in, who 'dumps programs, trashes traditional music, revolutionizes preaching styles and topics and thrusts aside symbols of reverence.'

Gordon starts with Acts 20:28 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.* The church is so precious to God because He bought it with his own blood: it is His, not ours – and the Church *must* give away what it has and knows! The underlying theme of this book, therefore, is to unpack the question: 'whose church is it?' A club for Christians? Or an outward looking evangelistic group with a heart for others?

Gordon gathers together a whole raft of common grievances that people express and addresses them one by one. He calls on his years of experience pastoring several churches and creates a fictional group of people who meet with him and his wife to discuss the issues. The book documents the journey this group make over a period of time, and how their understanding and compassion grow as they take time to communicate honestly and appreciate why certain things are particularly important to them.

This is not a book about forcing older faithful people to make changes for the sake of it, but it does encourage sensitive and generous communication between different generations with the common goal of bringing people into a deeper and more secure relationship with God. As the back cover claims, the book aims 'to discover how to meet the needs of all believers without abandoning the dreams and desires of any.'