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A LOOMING CRISIS IN THE AMERICAN CHURCH

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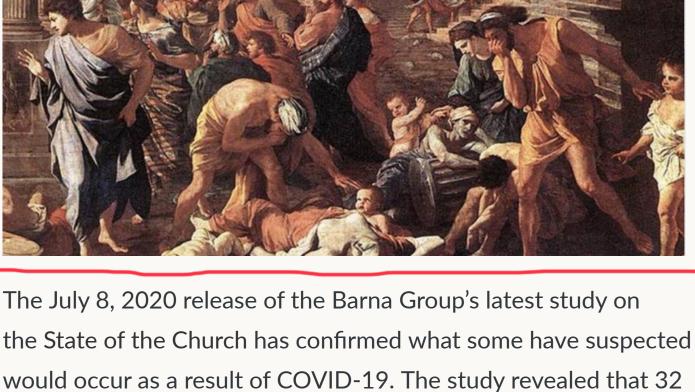
Books

By WCP Team by Michael T. Cooper, author of Ephesiology

on July 16, 2020 **Tags**

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percent of practicing Christians stopped attending church, whether in

person or online, since the outbreak of the virus. While the national

public opinion survey of 1,000 US adults had a +/- 2.2% rate of error,

when extrapolated to the general Christian population, there could be as many as 43 million people who decided to no longer attend church. Whether or not their minds will change once gathering restrictions are loosened, the study does corroborate a growing trend in the rapid decline of church attendance over the past two decades. Just five years ago, for example, University of Northern Colorado sociology professor Joshua Packard (2015) found that 65 million US adults were "done" with church. Similar to the Barna study, "done" did not mean that they left the faith, although Packard indicated that nearly 30 million adults actually did. "Done" simply meant that US adults no longer felt a need to attend church as it did not satisfy their expectations. If these two studies are correct, we have just witnessed nearly 100 million people leaving the church in the past decade. Christianity in general and evangelicalism specifically have been trending downward since the 1990s when nearly 90 percent of the

true among certain segments. Black evangelical growth has remained stagnate over time, while Hispanic growth has increased yet not at a rate to sustain evangelicalism's overall decline. White evangelicals in 2019 made up 15 percent of the US Christian population whereas in 2010 it was 21 percent (Jones 2019). There is a trifecta for a perfect storm that has formed above the US religious landscape: 1) the perceived irrelevance of the legacy church (Packard 2015, Barna 2020); 2) the indicated heretical beliefs of a majority of evangelicals (State of Theology, 2018); 3) increasing distrust of pastors (Brenan 2017). If things do not change, the exponential rate of decline of the legacy church will

Even more disheartening, the impact will have global ramifications. As

the church continues to decline, we might anticipate a concomitant

reduction in the size of the missionary force coming from the United

States as well as a reduction of financial resources. Economists and

in giving as we go into 2021 (Holcombe and Kuntz 2020).

non-profit CFOs are already predicting as much as a 50 percent drop

What will it take for American evangelicalism to recover? That is the

result in a church-less America.

US adult population identified as Christian. Today, that number is

only 65 percent of the approximate 209 million US adults. While

there have been some who argue that in spite of the decrease of the

general Christian population, evangelicalism is growing, this is only

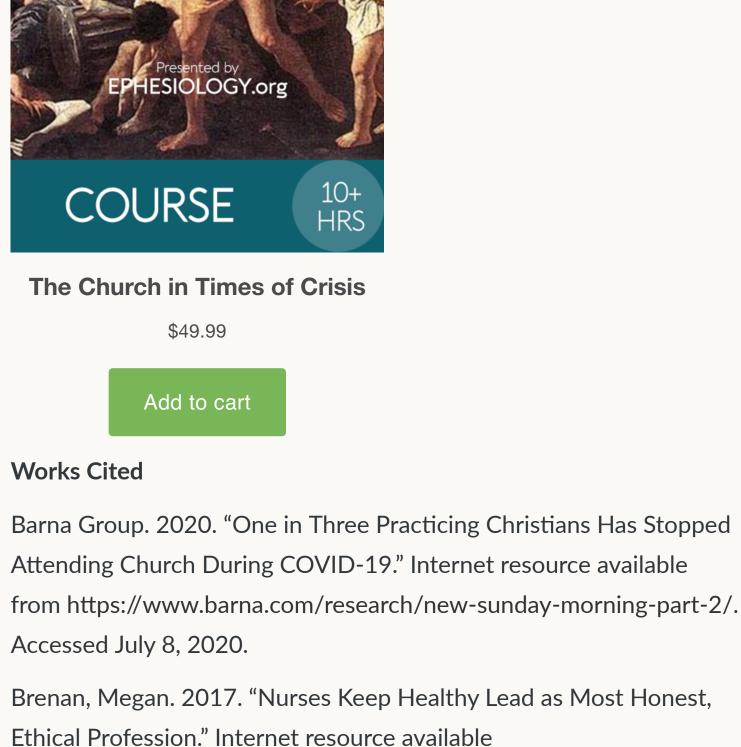
focus of a new master class entitled The Church in Times of Crisis. Ephesiology Master Classes and William Carey Education are partnering to bring you an online experience focused on addressing issues confronting Christianity in North America. You'll hear leading experts, like Jeff Christopherson, co-director of the Send Institute at Wheaton College, and Alan Hirsch, founder of Forge and best-selling author, focus on what the future of evangelicalism and its leadership. You'll also hear from church planters like Devlin Scott

diversity, global pandemic, and pastoral leadership. The Church in Times of Crisis

of NewCity Church, Russel Cravens of Neartown Church, and Heath

21st century church must adapt to the new cultural realities of racial

Haynes of The Bridge Montrose as they wrestle with how the



Holcombe, Lee and Ray Kuntz. 2020. "COVID-19: The Effects on Ministry Giving." Internet resource available from https://deovolente.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-The-Effects-

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the Size, Make-Up, and Motivations of the Formerly Churched Population.

from https://news.gallup.com/poll/224639/nurses-keep-healthy-

lead-honest-ethical-profession.aspx. Accessed July 9, 2020.

on-Ministry-Giving-.pdf. Accessed July 8, 2020.

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Great Reviews Are Still Coming in for 2020 Releases

Accessed July 8, 2020.

EMQ's VOLUME 57 ISSUE 1 has just come out, featuring reviews of two of our 2020 releases, Practicing

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