



The Autopsy of a Deceased Church

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November 28, 2017

“It is the church’s behavior, not just its beliefs that determine if a church is fulfilling its mission.”

- Reginald W. Sharpe Jr.

5 Reasons Churches Die:

1. **Slow Erosion** - “Growth may come rapidly, but decline is usually slow, imperceptibly slow” (Rainer, p.13). [Haggai 1:4-9](#)
2. **The Past is the Hero** - “Yes, we respect the past. At times we revere the past. But we can’t live in the past” (Rainer, p.21). [Philippians 3:14](#)
3. **The Church Refused to Look Like the Community** - “When a church ceases to have a heart and ministry for its community, it is on the path toward death” (Rainer, p.28). [Matthew 25:34-40](#)
4. **The Budget Moved Inwardly** - “When you conduct the autopsy of a church, you must follow the money. For where the money of the church goes, so goes its heart” (Rainer, p.31). [Matthew 6:21](#)

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5. The Great Commission Becomes the Great Omission - “Thriving churches have the Great Commission as the center-piece of their vision, while dying churches have forgotten the clear command of Christ” (Rainer, p.40). [Matthew 28:19-20](#)