* Neglect and Abuse:
  + Every day in America 2,175 children are confirmed as abused or neglected, (Children’s Defense Fund, 2012 report).
* Issues at school
  + One half of all children report being bullied at school and it is cited for number one reason for non-attendance and teen drop out, (Bullying Statistics.org).
* School shootings have taken a dramatic rise with 366 deaths during the past seven years, (FBI 2014 report).
* Each day in America: 2,222 children drop out of school,4,435 children are arrested and 18,493 public school students are suspended, (Children’s Defense Fund, 2012 report).
* Divorce and Poverty
  + Since 1972, one million children in America have seen the breakup of their parents’ marriage, (Children’s Defense Fund, 2012 report).
  + 1 out of 5 children live in poverty, (Children’s Defense Fund, 2012 report).
  + 69% of children in America live in low income homes, (NCCP, 2014).
* Death
  + 1.2 million children will lose a parent to death before age 15, *(Dr. Elizabeth Weller, Dir. Ohio State University Hospitals, 1991).*
  + 20% of children will experience a death of someone close to them by the age of 18. That equals 20 million children, (Mentalhealthscreening.org).
  + One in twenty children will experience a death of one or both parents by age 15, (Mentalhealthscreening.org).
* Children as Targets of Media and Advertising
  + Advertising directed at children is estimated at over $15 billion annually – about 2.5 times more than what it was in 1992, (American Psychological Association).
  + In 1983, they spent $100 million on television advertising to kids. Today, they pour roughly 150 times that amount into a variety of mediums that seek to infiltrate every corner of children’s worlds, (American Psychological Association).
  + Children influence their parents to spend $340 Billion dollars each year, (The Economist).
  + The average American child today is exposed to an estimated 40,000 television commercials a year — over 100 a day, (Globalissues.org).
* Increase in Need for Pastoral Care for Children
* Over four million children in the United States are in some type of therapy, and one third of them have been diagnosed with two or more psychiatric disorders, (National Alliance for Mental Illness).
* In one year nearly $15 billion dollars is spent on psychiatric medications for children ages birth-12 years, (US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality).
* The Effects of War on Military Children
  + Over 2 million U.S. children are [at risk for mental health problems](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2013/05/22/peds.2013-0940.full.pdf) related to a loved one being deployed for active duty warfare in the past decade, (American Academy of Pediatrics).
  + For these children access to mental health services remains scarce, underscoring a major lack of care in the American medical system, (American Academy of Pediatrics).
* Internet Danger
  + 42% of children aged 7 – 14 admit to seeing pornography on the web; 1 in 2 have sent sexual information online and 1 in 4 have sent sexual pictures of themselves online or texting, (Share Hope Institute, 2013).

**The Problem for Churches**

*Meeting the spiritual needs of children and families as they try to navigate an*

*increasingly complex world is more difficult than ever.*

* The Church is declining in membership each year.
  + Loyalty of families to any specific denomination has ended.
  + After having children, young parents are no longer returning to the church as they traditionally had done in the past.
  + People raised in the church are leaving citing “Church is not compatible with my scientific view of the world,” or “Church is not relevant to my life.” It is increasingly difficult to reach our young families.
* Lack of Training
  + Most seminaries have stopped offering Christian Education Degrees and Certifications are highly expensive.
  + Only the largest congregations can afford to hire paid ministry directors to work with children. Many of those paid have no or little theological education.
* Lack of Direct Supervision, Mentoring and Intentional Development of

Effective Ministries to Children and Families by Pastors.

* + Most Ordained Pastors have taken 1 class about Christian Education in seminary and most have not taken any courses specifically about Child and family Ministry.
  + As a result, most pastors cannot provide the needed supervision, visioning and accountability the staff and volunteers need to build an effective and stable ministry to children and families.
  + The increasing demand of ministry provides less and less time for pastors to do the supervision needed.
* Lack of Continuity of Ministry to Children and Families
  + The average children’s minister serves 2 years in their job. The average volunteer serves 1 year. This creates a lack of the continuity needed to minister to children and their families, who need the stability of the church to guide and support them during these ever-changing times.
* New Curriculum is Not the Answer
  + Curriculum has been written and rewritten in an effort to attract more children and families to church. However, changing curriculum is not the answer. The challenge is much more complex.
* Inscription dedicated by parents of deceased 7 year old girl, Apuleia Crysopolis; Good Shepherd and bush (Catacomb of St. Callisto, Rome).[Another](http://www.trinitylight.net/4images/details.php?image_id=305).