

Written by Dr. Melvin

ESSAY MONOGRAPH LETTER



He (Christ) is the one who gave...pastors and teachers to equip God's people to ...build up the church..."

(Ephesians 4:11-12 NLT)

ESSAY, MONOGRAPH, LETTER

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PREFACE

As you know, Dr. Melvin has written many TRAINING MANUALS, and these three are for re-equipping for lay people and pastors as well.

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ESSAYS ON LAY PASTORAL CARE

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- * ALL LAY PEOPLE - Building Up Your Church

1

YOUR ARE A BONA-FIDE MINISTER

Bona-fide means genuine, without fraud, Roget's 21" Century Thesaurus lists these synonyms: authentic, real, actual certain, factual, honest-to goodness, kosher, legitimate, official, true, and valid.

Try any of these synonyms for the above title: You are a real minister. You are an authentic minister. You are a honest-to goodness minister. You are an **official** minister. Every lay person should be required to write on the chalkboard 100 times, **I AM A MINISTER**. I have a cartoon of a man with chalk in hand doing just that.

Jerry B. Jenkins, co-author of best seller, *left Behind*, should have to write 100 times, **LAY PEOPLE ARE MINISTERS TOO**. He wrote in the July/August, 2001 issue of *Moody Monthly* about Chuck Cilano, whose life focus was money, partying and fun.... that is, until he found something much better: Jesus Christ.

And this is why Jenkins needs to get to the chalkboard: He tells how chuck cilano left his lucrative car salesman job which financed his wanton life style to, along with his wife, begin to "Prepare for a life of ministry." The two are now missionaries in Italy. In writing that Chuck left his livelihood to "prepare f ora life of ministry," Jenkins repeats the traditional Christian myth that if you want to really serve your Lord you need to be a minister (missionary or pastor), and to be a minister you have to go to seminary.

The Church of Jesus Christ is in a mega transition. Church culture is being turned upside down as it grasps the biblical teaching about the following terms:

MINISTER - Every Christian is a minister, most are volunteer ministers, a few are vocational.

MINISTRY- every Christian is given spiritual gifts with which to do their ministry.

CALLING - 99% of the Christians in every church are not called to leave their occupation to become ministers, but are to use their ministry gifts where they work and live.

EQUIPPING - The 99% are to be equipped for their ministries by those whose ministry is to "prepare God's people for ministry." According to Eph. 4:11-12 the preparers are pastors and teachers. The church is to be a training center (seminary) for the 99%.

You may find yourself in the roster of ministers listed in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12, or perhaps the list of ministries added to the church since 75 A.D. You are sure to find yourself in Romans 12:3, *everyone of you*, and in I Corinthians 12:27, *each one of you*, and in I Peter 4:10, *each one*.

Lay Pastors, you are bona-fide ministers. I find you in Romans 12 as people given the gifts of encouragement and mercy, and in I Peter 5:1-4 as people assigned the task of being "shepherds of God's flock." You have been called, gifted, and equipped. Though not as prominent and not as "full-time," you are just as authentic and kosher as those who go off to seminary, You will share equally "in the glory that is to be revealed," and shall also "receive the crown of life which will never fade away" (I Peter 5:4)

There are no second class Christians, only first class specialists. Lay Pastors are specialists in pastoral care - bona fide ministers.

2

There's no one to hold his hand

"...whoever you may be, take my trembling hand
and warm it with care and sympathy."

These are the last words of a poem carried for the past 20 years by one of the world's top neurosurgeons, Dr. Fred Epstein. The poem was written by a teenage boy named Chris who died from a cancerous brain tumor.*

Dr. Epstein said of the poem and the boy, "I kept thinking of his line about sitting alone in a cold room and there's no one to hold his hand. And I thought: We in the West, especially doctors, have been so focused on technology that we have not paid attention to what the living person is going through."

God would have someone focusing on "what the living person is going through." This is the privileged role of Lay Pastors. Warmth, caring, compassion, love... that's what the teenager needed and that's what every living person needs. And that's exactly what Jesus had in mind when He assigned the ministry of care to Peter: "Take care of my sheep." Jesus, Himself, was a warm, caring, compassionate, loving person.

Doctors provide diagnoses and treatment, teachers provide education; lawyers and politicians, representation; farmers, food; pilots, transportation; preachers, sermons. Lay Pastors provide warmth, care, compassion and love to people in Jesus' Name.

Dr. Epstein feels so strongly that technology has to be blended with warmth and caring that he gives his home phone number to patients and meets with them immediately if they're frightened even if it's midnight. He goes to their weddings, bar mitzvahs, and funerals. After Chris died in 1979 he wanted to do more. He probably never thought of himself having pastoral gifts, but he did.

He dreamed of building a hospital where the family's emotional needs were as urgently important as the patient's physical symptoms. In 1996, he helped found The Hymen-Newman Institute for Neurology and Neurosurgery at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York. Here they offer state-of-the-art technology to remove brain tumors as well as care for the wounded soul.

This world-famous neurosurgeon is a rare doctor, giving his home phone to patients and caring for their wounded souls. All other patients need this same personal attention, but they don't have Dr. Epstein. The fact is that 100% of all people need "love with skin on it" in both bad times and good, and there are so few to be there for them.

"There's no one to hold his hand." If people are going to get the kind of care Jesus plans for them to have, laypeople will have to give it. What a day for the Lay Pastors Ministry!

* From "Thank You Doctor, For Fixing My Brain" in the July/August (2001) issue of *Modern Maturity*, p.64

3

TAKE YOUR MINISTRY UP ANOTHER NOTCH

Emeril, the chef-humorist on the TV Food Channel, regularly says, "Let's take it up another notch!" And he does. Likewise, Paul and Barnabas, apostles of Jesus Christ, according to Acts 14:1, took their ministry "up another notch"-from just speaking, to speaking so *effectively*. "There (in Iconium) they spoke so *effectively* that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed."

The following four key words of the Acts report suggest four key ideas to lay pastors who want to take their pastoring "up another notch."

SPOKE: Your verbal initiatives, articulating words of care.

EFFECTIVELY: Passionately, clearly, truthfully, with love.

GREAT NUMBER: "So effectively" does more than "Just do it."

BELIEVED: "Mission Accomplished."

Through the years I have championed the Nike slogan, "Just Do It," citing God's promise from Psalm 1:3 - "*Whatever he does prospers.*" This is true! God is prospering all you do! However, God will prosper you even more when you take your ministry up another notch.

You find this higher notch in Romans 12:6-8. (*So effectively* is an ellipse in three of the seven spiritual gifts.)

If your gift is serving, serve so *effectively!*

If your gift is teaching, teach so *effectively!*

If your gift is encouraging, encourage so *effectively!*

Three other gifts include adverbs synonymous for so *effectively*.*

If your gift is contributing; give *generously*.

If your gift is leadership, lead *diligently***

If your gift is showing mercy, do it *cheerfully*.

Lay pastor, God has give you gifts for shepherding a small but significant part of His great flock.

Don't "Just Do It," **DO IT SO EFFECTIVELY.**

here are TOW: (1) Engage your mind-body tie-in; (2) Release your spirit.

First, engage your mind-body tie-in:

- Make sure of your gift and call.
- Spend time with God
- Spend time *with* and *for* your people.
- Listen, get on your people's agenda, focus on them
- Show respect by being thoughtful, polite and courteous.
- Seek ongoing training so as to grow in effectiveness

Second, release your spirit: (Romans 12:9-13):

- Love (agape, fileo and godly eros)
- Sincerity (love must be real, not feigned)
- Hate evil (cling to Christian standards for living)
- Devoted (in brotherly and sisterly love)
- Humble (honor others above yourself)
- Zealous' fervent (with passion and commitment)
- Serving (with a servant spirit)
- Joyful (an inner happiness, delight, excitement)
- Patient (don's rush to judgment)
- Faithful (dependable, consistent, steady)

- Sharing (generous, outgoing, self denying)
- Hospitable (welcoming, open, warm hearted)

Do you wish to take your pastoral care ministry up another notch? I know you do. I know you want to serve your God and your people well. I know you desire to *really* make a difference in their lives. By taking your ministry up another notch, your Chief Shepherd may say at His appearing (I Peter 5:4), not just, "*Well done*, good and faithful servant," but "*Very well done*, good and faithful servant."

*Another way to say it: *really* serve...*really* teach... *really* encourage. *Really* is a synonym for *effectively*.

**Someone said of the gift of leadership. "If leadership is your gift, then for God's sake, lead!" In other words, lead effectively! Lay pastors, whose gifts are encouraging and mercy: "If caring for others is your gift, then for God's sake, care for others...effectively!"

4

Alphabet Soup For The Soul

Basic training equips lay pastors with enough principles and skills to get started. Ongoing training builds on the basics. But there's nothing like on-the-job experience to open our ears, eyes, heart and mind to advance learning. The task of tending a mini flock of brother and sister church members is more complex than we think at the beginning. This is because life situations fluxuate, emotions are roller coaster-like, and spirituality zig zags... for both lay pastors and their people. Hence the need for the following ministry-enriching alphabet soup for lay pastors.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A- Accept persons equally | N- Notice body language |
| B- Bond with your people | O- Offer your true self |
| C- Communicate meaningfully | P- Pray fervently |
| D- Depend on God | Q- Quit? Never! |
| E- Encourage always | R- Raise spirits |
| F- Fulfill commitments | S- Stay in touch |
| G- Grow daily | T- Take responsibility |
| H- Hear feelings | U- Understand pastoring |
| I- Identify spirituality | V- Value relationships |
| J- "Just do it" | W- Work hard |
| K- Keep confidences | X- X-ray people's faith |
| L- Love (verb and noun) | Y- Yearn compassionately |
| M- Manager difficulties | Z- Zip the lip |

Some things we learn best by ourselves because much of what we need to know is unique to us, our pastoral relationships, and people's circumstances. I

invite you-"in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 4:1)- to imaginatively and creatively expand each letter to its outer limits. You might need 26 weeks to get from A to Z ... and the rest of your life to put your learning into practice.

5

THINGS.....AT HOME

The baseball population idolized Kirby Puckett, a Minnesota Twins icon and role model for America's youth. He sponsored baseball clinics for aspiring boys, contributed to charities and participated in local and national good-will projects. But, his wife (as write) is suing him for divorce because of adultery and threatened bodily harm.*

A close friend of mine for thirty-plus years, a creative and gifted leader in the field of marriage and family life, is (as I write) going through divorce for reasons quite different from the baseball idol, but just as disappointing and damaging.

So much for the favorable role-model and ministry-impact of these two lives. Probably every one of you has been bruised by similar shattering disillusionments-the failure of societal and church front-runners to have things right at home.

The powerful principle is: *If we are going to influence others for the right, things have to be right at home.* This goes for men and women whose lay pastoral care ministry influences five or ten households as well as for public figures who influence thousands. Home is the laboratory where our mettle is tested, validating or invalidating our Christian witness and ministry.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about this principle: If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5:8)

This powerful principle surfaces very early in the Church. In Acts, the New Testament record of the Church's beginnings, three eventful life-dramas accentuate the necessity of having things right at home.

Acts 4:23-31-The importance of missional unanimity. A solid support base was essential to the success of the counter-cultural mission of the Church. This support was the love, trust, unity, and prayers of the Spirit-filled body of believers. When Peter and John got out of jail they had a welcoming place to go where things were right.

Acts 5:1-11-The importance of personal and family integrity. Behavior has to match profession. These two members of the Jerusalem church, husband and wife, lied about their contribution. The reality shocked them: "You have not lied to men but to God." Read the severe penalty God imposed on Ananias and Sapphira so, at its beginnings, His Church would have things right at home.

Acts 6:17-The importance of treating one another unselfishly and without discrimination. Again, behavior has to match profession. There could not be corporate disunity. The Grecian Jews had a complaint against the Hebraic Jews. The Apostles solved this at-home problem immediately so their public ministry would not be discredited. If the Church was to succeed in its witness for Christ, things had to be right in the church family.

How do you keep things right at home, whether "home" is a marriage, a church, or a ministry within a church? When things have gone wrong, how are they righted, short of the severe penalty imposed on Ananias and Sapphira? The answer is God:

God the Father-He is ever active in the lives of His people to make things right within us and around us. (Acts 4:10,19,24)

God the Son-You will become like Him by being *with* Him. Those who were

trying to kill Peter and John, "took note that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13)

God the Holy Spirit Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with us and in us to teach us "all things," part of which is to have things right at home. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit..." (Acts 4:8)

Lay Pastors, the next time you get alone with God, the two of you review your life and relationships. Affirm yourself for the things that are right "at home" and identify and things you and He need to work at together. The powerful principle is: *If we are going to influence others for the right, things have to be right at home.*

* Information from the St. Paul Pioneer Press, 02/24/02

6

Not Just The Loud Ones

"She only has time to talk to the loud ones." answered the first-grader when his mother asked if his teacher ever talks to him.

Only time for the loud ones - this is a child's version of the pastoral attention in most churches. The loud ones need to be heard but what about the silent ones?

To correct this serious imbalance, conscientious Lay Pastoral Care Ministry Leaders feel compelled to assess the state of their ministry and take action to do *one* of the following:

- Strengthen their already effective ministry.
- Persevere until their struggling ministry is successful
- Re-start their failed ministry
- Start a Lay Pastors Ministry if there is none.

Lay Pastoral Care Leaders are accountable, first to God and second to the congregation, to provide every-member care - "Be shepherds of God's flock which is under care." (I Peter 5:1-4) Many of God's flock get lost in churches of 150 members or more.

Those who are not *the loud ones* are not speaking up about their physical, spiritual, emotional, financial, social, Marital, personal, relational, inward or outward struggles. They bear their burdens alone. They either suffer in silence, drop out of church, or attend elsewhere. In any case they are not being loved

(cared for, pastored, tended, shepherd)as God intends. His love "with skin on it" is to be passed along to "even the least of these."

The mother who asked her first grade son, "Does your teacher ever talk to you?" wrote:

Imagine you have corn plants...You notice small differences;
one doesn't grow as fast, one is tall but sparse, one looks blighted.

You tend them carefully, each according to its needs.....Now imagine you have a whole field of corn. You still provide care but you do it on a much larger scale. Every plant receives the same mechanized dose of water and fertilizer. Some have been poorly planted, some don't get enough sun, some never tassel. But you cannot see this. To you they are just long rows of green."**

We learn a great lesson about caring for God's people from this mother. If each and every church member is to be adequately pastored, *can the pastor do it alone?* Never! Ever-member care will happen only when a sufficient number of laypeople are called forth and equipped to pastorally connect with five or more households each.

Then all of God's people, not only the loud ones, will have someone there for them: A Lay Pastor who will **Pray** for them regularly, be **Available** to them, **Contact** them faithfully and provide an **Example**. Then not only the loud ones will receive attention. Then not only the squeaking wheels will get greased.

While Lay Pastors are giving specialized care to individual members of the church, the Clergy Pastors will be giving specialized care to the church as a whole by preaching, teaching, equipping, supporting and vision casting. It is only when Clergy Pastors fulfill their God-given assignment and Lay Pastors fulfill their God-given assignment that God's kind of care will be given to all of His people, **not just the loud ones**.

* Joyce Sidman, columnist, St. Paul Press, 5/31/99

7

Pastoring is like Parenting

Pastoring and parenting have at least one thing in common: the idea that if we do a good job we will get good results. This comes across as absolute truth but it is a *myth*.

Parents, according to Dr. John Rosemond, a family psychologist practicing in Gastonia, North Carolina, suffer from a clinical condition known as ***delusions of parenting omnipotence (DOPO)***.

This "self defeatist disorder," Rosemond says, takes two forms:

1. **Pride:** "My child is problem free; therefore, I must be doing something right."
2. **Guilt :** "My child has such-and-such a problem; therefore, I must be doing something wrong,"

Many lay pastors suffer from another form of **DOPO** - *delusions of pastoring omnipotence*. The delusion is that we believe we have the power of God to compel people to respond favorably to treatment.

For lay pastors, let's paraphrase Dr. Rosemond's two forms of this disorder:

1. **Pride:** "Mary Jones is responding to me very well. She is such a joy to contact. I must be doing something right."
2. **Guilt:** "John Smith doesn't respond to me at all. In spite of all my contacts and prayer he hasn't warmed up one bit. I must be doing something wrong."

God gave Adam and Eve life, loved them and spent time with them. And yet as soon as his back was turned they defied the one rule he gave them. Would we say that God failed as a Father?

Jesus called Judas into a special relationship, took him into his heart and spent quality time with him. And yet he turned against his Friend and betrayed Him. Peter denied that he ever knew Jesus. The rest of the disciples deserted him. Would we say that Jesus failed as a pastor?

Dr. Rosemond writes of parenting, "Parenting's Great Paradox is that in raising a child, there are no guarantees." Lay pastoring paraphrase: "Pastoring's Great Paradox is that in caring for people, there are no guarantees."

Dr. Rosemond writes to parents, "It's your job to provide good directions; it's your child's job to follow them." Lay pastoring paraphrase: "It's your job to provide love and care. It's your people's job to accept them." There are no guarantees. Don't be prideful over being accepted; be humbled by how God used you to make a difference in a life. Don't feel guilty over *not* being accepted; be grateful for the privilege of serving God.

Dr. Rosemond writes, "If you're looking to your child to reward' you for good parenting, you may be sorely disappointed because the reward may never come or be considerably smaller than expected. You'd do well to figure out how to reward yourself for a job well done - not one done perfectly, mind you, but done well enough - because when all is said and done, the most meaningful rewards are those that come from within."

Knowing what this psychologist has just said about a *job well done* and *rewards*, you can guess how the paraphrase will read: "If you're looking to your people to reward' you for good pastoring, you may be sorely disappointed

because the reward may never come or be considerably smaller than expected. You'd do well to figure out how to reward yourself for a job well done - not one done perfectly, mind you, but done well enough-because when all is said and done, the most meaningful rewards are these that come from within *and from above.*"

Please read the following three Biblical lay pastoral car principles twice;

1. I am not required to get results, I am required to be faithful,
2. Hearing my Lord's commendation, "Well done....." is not dependent on gratifying responses from my people, but on how well I did my task;
3. My goal is not to get results from my efforts, but to give myself in love, prayer and care. Sooner or later, results follow efforts.

Lay pastors who suffer from **DOPO**, take heart from Jesus' example: In spite of being betrayed, denied and deserted by the 12 people to whom he gave himself, He was able to say to his Father, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." His commitment was to do what the Father gave him to do, not to feel good about people's response.

Lay pastors who suffer from **DOPO**, take heart from Jesus' parable; "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ' We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'." (Luke 17:10) The servants' expectation was to serve their master to their master's satisfaction, not to feel good about the results of their serving.

Lay pastors, let's get it straight. It's a myth that if we do a good job we will get good results, the truth is that if we do a good job we will have done what God sent us to do. The "Crown of Glory" promised in I Peter 5:4 is not for results but for shepherding God's flock willingly, eagerly, and exemplary. Don't

err in feeling either proud or guilty; feel right for using the gifts God gave you to do his ministry of pastoral care and feel privileged to be able to serve.

8

One A Day...Every Day...For Spiritual Vitality

(Twelve Christian "Mantras")

For optimum spiritual health, take one word a day for 12 days. Each one-a-day word (underlined) connects with one of Jesus' unique identities (**bold type**) and calls for a specific action related to that identity. Directions:

1. Use your imagination to "see" Jesus as "Bread," etc.
2. Read the verse and context to get the full picture.
3. Meditate on the underlined word for as long as you have.
4. Journal your main thoughts.
5. Practice "Recruiting Meditation" throughout the day.
6. In 12 days you have acquired a new skill for building your spiritual health.

1st DAY: "I am the **Bread of Life.**" John 6:35

Eat and you will never go hungry.

2nd DAY: "I am the **Light of the World.**" John 8:12

Follow Me and you will never walk in darkness.

3rd DAY: "I am the **Gate.**" John 10:9

Enter through Me and you will be saved.

4th DAY: "I am the **Good Shepherd.**" John 10:14

Know your Shepherd. for your Shepherd knows you.

5th DAY: "I am the **Resurrection and the Life.**" John 11:25

Believe in Me and you will never die.

- 6th DAY: "I am your **Teacher.**" John 13:13
Wash one another's feet as I washed yours.
- 7th DAY: "I am you **Lord.**" John 13:13
Love one another is My new command to you.
- 8th DAY: "I am the **Way.**" John 14:6
Come to the Father through Me.
- 9th DAY: "I am the **Truth.**" John 14:6
Trust Me...I will do whatever you ask in my name.
- 10th DAY: "I am the **Life.**" John 14:6
Live life to the full for My Spirit lives in you.
- 11th DAY: "I am the **True Vine.**" John 15:1
Remain in Me and you will bear much fruit.
- 12th DAY: "I am the **King.**" John 18:27
Listen to Me and you will be on the side of truth.

9

Some Things Take Time

It takes time to grow the relationship between lay pastors and the people in their flocks. Examples from nature help to understand this:

Mushrooms grow overnight. Oak trees take years.

Dolls are made in an hour. Babies take nine months.

Senator Daniel Moynihan, chairman of the president's commission on modifying the Social Security system, gave the following reason for the commission not being ready to report: "Some things take time."

One of those things take time to grow is a relationship. Do you remember that pastoral care take place in a relationship? A personal connection between the lay pastor and the members of his or her flock is what makes caring initiatives effective. The more mutual the connection, the more effective the caring. And it is the mutuality of the connection that takes time. Social agencies and church clothing centers can care *for* a person without caring *about* them. Lay pastors cannot care *about* a person without also caring *for* them. Caring *for* them flows out of caring *about* them.

Caring *for* people can be very impersonal. Programs, even church programs, can be carried out without caring *about* people. It is the personal relationship that makes lay pastors "ministers." Paraphrasing a hackneyed political charge sharply focuses the personal connections within which pastoral care take place: "It's the relationship, stupid."

And bona fide relationships take time. Relationships are like oaks and babies; not like mushrooms and dolls. God provides the beginning of life in the seed for the oak, in the embryo for the baby, and in the first contact a lay pastor makes with his or her people. Think of that acquaintance contact being the embryo of the relationship. All three growths (oak, babies, relationships) result from a day-by-day infusion of critical elements.

Oaks require a dependable infusion of water, air, sunlight and more. Babies require a

dependable infusion of nutrients from the mothers. Relationships require a dependable infusion of a least eight elements:

- CHARACTER You are what you really are, not your persona.

- INTEGRITY You do what your brochure says you will do: P. A. C. E.
- PRESENCE 90% of pastoral care is just showing up.

- FRIENDSHIP After a contact: "I really like my lay pastor."

- ACCEPTING No reservations about loving people God loves.

- EMPATHY "My lay pastor understands what I'm going through."

- ENCOURAGEMENT An affirming hug, prayer, compliment, and more.

- REALISM Patience, prayer and perseverance are required.

Mutuality in relationships take place at different speeds. Each relationship is

unique. Each quality, endurance and timing is one-of-a-kind. Accept the uniqueness with love and without partiality. Peter, James and John were closer to Jesus than the other nine, but he loved all twelve equally. One relationship turned sour (Judas) but Jesus continued His side of the relationship anyway. Accept people where they are, who they are, and however they respond to your caring initiatives. To the degree you accept people, sooner or later they will accept you. And a relationship will develop. Give it time because "some things take time."

10

Pastoring or Pestering

You may have seen the anti-drug ad showing a social girl walking toward home in the twilight. The caption reads: "My kid will be home at _____ today. Then, in small print: If you can't fill in the blank you need to start asking. It's a proven way to steer kids clear of drugs. Its not *prestering*. It's a *parenting*."

When I read that ad I thought, "The *prestering-parenting* antipode surely sounds like *pestering-pastoring*." Just as it's the parent's responsibility - not an invasion of privacy - to have personal information about their children, it's the lay pastor's responsibility - not an invasion of privacy - to have personal information about their people. Such information is essential to pastoral care. Let me explain.

First, we need to define pastor. Used as a verb pastor means to care for, tend, nourish and supply what the soul needs. Used as a noun it means shepherd, or protector. The Greek work *poimane* is translated both *pastor* (Eph. 4:11) and *shepherd* (I Peter 5:2). Take your pick. When Jesus assigned Peter the shepherding-pastoring work (Jn 21: 16), He was not concerned about the right metaphor to *name* the task, He was concerned about the right person to *do* the task.

Lay pastors need personal information to care *about* and *for* their people.* It's when this information is crudely or prematurely sought, and when it is used for judging, criticizing, condemning, gossiping envying or gloating, that they are pestering, not pastoring. Such shepherds "steal, kill and destroy" (Jn 10:10)

rather than love, feed, nurture and protect.

If lay pastors are to be shepherds they need to know some things about their people's faith, marriage, family, behavior, church life, finances, relationships, job, leisure, traditions, values, moral and more.

How does one obtain this essential personal information? The answer is simple - *listen*. When you have built trust, people will just naturally tell you some things. When you have their confidence, cautiously venture this question after they tell just a little: "Do you feel like telling me more about that?" Do not hurry to offer advice; people normally are neither wanting nor looking for it. Just *be* there and listen. The time to offer your insights will come in due time. II Tim 4:1-2 cautions us to "correct, rebuke and encourage - *with great patience and careful instruction*."

If lay pastors are hesitant to enter another person's inner sanctum, they should remember that God, who appointed them to this ministry (Jn 15:16; I Pet 5:2), holds them responsible for obtaining this information, holding it non-judgmentally, keeping it confidential, and using it only for prayer and care.

God is very clear about the use and misuse of privileged information: 1) "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment" (Rom. 14:1); 2) "There is only one Lawgiver and Judge....who are you to judge your neighbor?" (James 4:12); 3) Jesus taught that we are to get the plank out of our own eye before we try to remove the speck out of our brother's (or sister's) eye (Mat 7:3-5). He wants us who think we are standing firm to be careful that we don't fall (I Cor 10:12).

What do these Scriptures say to the lay pastor who discover that one of his or her people, well respected in church, is an alcoholic; or that a young mother of

three was arrested for shoplifting; or that a husband and father of two boys is having an affair with a Sunday School teacher? Judge, accuse, castigate, betray with slander...or love, understand, draw close, pray with and for, be empathic, keep it confidential?

Jesus, our model, lived the answer. He loved, accepted and respected the adulterous woman - truly protecting and restoring her without countenancing her behavior. How he treated her earned Him the right to counsel, "God now and leave your life of sin" (Jn 8:1-11). That's not being a pest! That's being a pastor!

* I say "their people" because these people were assigned to them.

11

We are Servant of Jesus Christ

Assignment communicates the action God takes to move us into ministry much better than the word, *call*.

The following words aptly describe God's initiative regarding us and our ministry:

- He *assigned us (to a designated role)*
- He *appointed us (to fill a position)*
- He *chose or selected us (for a task)*
- He *commanded us (to certain job)*
- He *sent us (on a special mission)*
- He *ordained us (to a divinely determined function)*

Paul's initiation into Christian ministry defines the distinction between *call* and *assignment*.

a. Paul's call was Jesus' summons to submit to His Lordship. Acts 9:3-5 records Paul dramatic conversion. The Greek word, *proskaleomai*, translated call, is the act of Jesus, through His Spirit, calling a person to Himself: *the call toward oneself*, or *the summons to eternal salvation* (Thayer's Lexicon).

b. Paul's *assignment* was to preach the gospel as a "chosen instrument" (Acts 9:15). Following his *call* to submit to the Lordship of Jesus (Acts 9:1-5), he was commanded: "Now get up and go into city, and you will be *told* what you must do."

c. In relating his radical conversion later (Acts 22:2-16), Paul told how he responded to the blinding light and heavenly voice, "Who are you, Lord?" and "What shall I do, Lord?" Then he reports his Lord's answer "get up and for th Damascus. There you will be *told* all that you have been assigned to do. Later, when he told his conversion story again, he added, "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven" (Acts 26:19).

d. Only twice in Paul's history does the word *call* relate to his ministry. Both times the weight of the word is more on his conversion than his ministry.

Acts 13:2: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I called them."

Acts 16:10: "...concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them" (the Macedonians).

The proper understanding in both passages is that Jesus *called* Paul to Himself as a prerequisite for assigning him the task of preaching the gospel. In defining *proskaleomai*, translated *call*, Thayer writes, "The Holy Spirit and Christ are said to call upon themselves those to whom they have decided to entrust a service." My friend, that's you!

Conclusion: Our response to Jesus' *call* to come to Him determines whether we are saved or lost. Our response to Jesus' *assignment* to do a ministry determines whether we are obedient or disobedient.

Q: Who are we?

A. We are servants of Jesus Christ on special assignment.

Q: What do we do?

A: We take care of Jesus' sheep.

He has called us to Himself for the purpose of assigning us this task. Let's serve well.

12

A little Means A lot

A new study published in *Circulation*, the American Heart Association Journal, indicates that a nutrient *lutein* prevents clogged arteries and wards off macular degeneration, an eye disease which causes blindness. Egg yolks and spinach contain lutein.

A LITTLE LUTEIN MEANS A LOT OF TO ONES' BODY!

While a pastor in Cincinnati, Ohio, I was called to the hospital emergency room one evening by a frantic mother. Her high school son had just been kicked in the head during a hotly contested soccer game. He was in serious condition. I immediately left home, went to the hospital and waited with the anxious parents, Bob came out of it okay and was released after a few days.

What did I do? Mostly, I was just *there*. I stood with the parents, said almost nothing, and tried not to get in the way of the very busy doctors and nurses. What I was doing is known as the *ministry of presence*. What seemed to me to have the importance of an observer's presence at a NASA rocket launch, was of inestimable importance to the parents. How do I know? Five years later, even after many post hospital thank-you's, the boy's mother sent me a Hallmark card to tell how much my presence meant to her and husband that night.

A LITTLE PASTORAL ATTENTION MEANS A LOT TO TROUBLED PEOPLE!

"I did first half in 2:02," as she tells it. "Then around mile 19, hit the wall. My legs felt heavier than I ever dreamed possible. I willed them to walk. A friend

was there cheering me at mile 20. It was the most uplifting gesture I have ever had." This recharged this energy and he finished the 25-mile race in 4:48.

A LITTLE SUPPORTING CHEER MEANS A LOT TO A TIRED RUNNER!

Lay pastors, don't ever underestimate the value of an encouraging word, a hand on the shoulder, a card in the mail, and e-mail , a visit, a 30-second prayer with a person, "even a cup of cold water" in Jesus' Name.

A LITTLE "LOVE WITH SKIN ON IT" MEANS A LOT!

13

Lay Pastors Are Connectors

LAY PASTORS PROVIDE CONNECTION Kelvin Miller, Editor of *Leadership Journal*, responding to the question, "What's next for the culture and the church?" said in a recent forum:

In the culture, I see an intense desire for connection.

What do people look for when they go to Starbucks:

it's not coffee, but connection.

The cliché, "high-touch for a high-tech society," is more true by the day. People have become attachments to their computers. The closest companion is an electronic machine. Their internet relationships have insulated them from the warmth of personal touch, the chemistry of eye contact and the nourishing sounds of pleasant conversation. After all, *virtual reality* is not reality.

The lay pastoral care ministry leadership team of one church captured the moment by calling their lay pastors, "Connectors." The ministry of lay pastoral care is known in their church as, "Fist Connections: Members Caring for Members." A caption in their publicity brochure reads:

EVERYONE NEEDS TO FEEL CONNECTED

The church is right on target, assuming the Kevin Miller's observation is valid. And I believe it is. The following parts of their brochure fleshed out their response to our culture's "intense desire for connections":

First Connection is a system of providing care and communication to

all members of First Reformed church by assigning each member family a trained lay care giver called a "Connector."

Connectors agree to for areas of responsibility to their assigned families...

P--Pray

A--Available

C--Contact

E--Example

By providing a number of trained "Connections," members of the church have a better opportunity to receive the love and care they might expect as member of the church.

Their ministry is loaded with "high touch" lay pastoral care, making it a great day for the Lay Pastors Ministry in their church...and in yours!

14

Love: The Mystique of Life and Ministry

Two separate but related commands of Jesus converge to produce the "living water" of lay pastoral care.

- ★ LOVE ONE ANOTHER
- ★ TAKE CARE OF MY SHEEP

"Love one another" (Jn 13:34) is an every-Christian command. "Take care of my sheep" (Jn. 21:16) is a specific-Christian command. The first, which was originally given to all the disciples, is universal; the second, which was originally given only to Peter, is individual. Loving one another is mystical and is to be practiced by all Christians. Taking care of Jesus' sheep is functional and is to be practiced by those Christians to whom Jesus assigns the task of pastoral care.

To understand and properly fulfil Jesus' command to love one another, we need to know that love is the hallmark of every Christian's life. Jesus calls all of us to love all others at all times under all circumstances.

To understand and properly fulfill Jesus' command to take care of his sheep, we need to know that, whereas "love one another" is for all Christians, "take care of my sheep" is for specifically chosen Christians. Jesus appoints certain person to be shepherds of His people.

This means on the one hand, every one of us will be held accountable by our Lord for loving one another. On the other hand, only some of us will be held

accountable for taking care of his people.

Along with all of Jesus' followers, lay pastors are to be people of love and are to practice this love universally. However, love is not the ministry. Love is the mystique of the ministry - that awesome aura of enfleshed agape and Spirit-generated energy which makes a lay pastors ministry productive.

Loving one another is, in fact, the mystique of all ministries, not just the Lay Pastors Ministry. This mystique appears in each of the four New Testament writings which teach about the variety of gifts required for the variety of ministries. For example, Romans 12 lists seven different gifts required for seven different ministries. While each of these ministries has its distinctive identity and purpose, each is to be permeated with the same mystique—love.

Let's look at some of the ministries the Lord assigns to people. The person who has received the gift of *prophecy* is to use that gift to preach and/or teach God's word. The one who has received the gift of *servicing* is to serve. The one gift with *leadership* is to lead. Two of the seven gifts are for the ministry of pastoral care - encouraging and showing mercy. The people receiving these gifts are to use them to fulfill Jesus' command, "Take care of my sheep." The commodity all the ministries have in common is love.

Some people assume that the command to love one another is the mandate for the Lay Pastors Ministry. They do not realize that mandate for the Lay Pastors Ministry is not the every-Christian command, "Love one another," but is the specific-Christian command, "Take care of my sheep." Lay Pastors are involved far more in the lives of their people than is expected of other Christians. God has given them special gifts for this special involvement.

Lay pastors, always be inspired and humbled that God chose you to do the

ministry of pastoral care! And be a little fearful, knowing that you are accountable to Him for not only doing your ministry, but doing it in love. Love is the mystique of your life and ministry.

15

The "Good Enough Lay Pastor"

Some lay pastors become discouraged in their ministry of caring because they feel they are not capable, not qualified, nor perfect, and not doing it well enough. I have an encouraging message for you. It is the promise the prophet Azariah gave to Asa, king of Judah: "But as for you, take courage and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." (II Chron. 15:7)

Let me bare my soul. Aware of my many inadequacies, I have often needed to place my name in Azariah's promise: "But as for you, Mel, take courage and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." I think I get the point: *Mel, just do it what you can; do it the best you know how; what you do will be rewarded.* I understand reward to be success in ministry, making difference in people's lives.

It's not on lay pastoral care-givers who become discouraged because of feeling they are not doing their ministry well, many mother care-givers are also discouraged because they feel they are not doing their mothering well. They feel this way for the same perceived reasons: they do not feel qualified, they think they are not doing well enough, they know they are not perfect mothers. They err in equating capable with perfect ("I'm not perfect, therefore I am not capable). However, knowing we are not perfect drives us to grow toward perfection.

Just as Azariah had an encouraging word for Asa, a famous child psychologist, Dr. D.W. Winnicott, has an encouraging word for mothers. He coined the

phrase, "the good enough mother," meaning a mother who is capable and caring does not have to be perfect in order to raise a child successfully. Note that Winnicott does not equate *capable* with *perfect*.

Neither mothers nor lay pastors should be discouraged by feelings of inadequacies. Being aware of imperfections drives both conscientious mothers and conscientious lay pastors to grow *toward* perfection. Growing toward perfection is like a sunflower growing toward the sun. The sunflower will never reach the sun, but growing that direction makes it taller and stronger, more capable to stand the storms and to be the most beautiful and productive it can be.

God, who called you to be a lay pastor, will use your caring initiative to make a difference in the lives of those He assigned to you. Believe God! He assures you of success: In all that you do you will prosper (Psalm 1:3c). Just do it! He will use what you do as you care for His people; He cannot use what you do not do. "Take courage and do not give up. Your work will be rewarded." You are a "good enough lay pastor."

16

A Full or Limited Partnership

Jesus gives himself totally to me. To "become a partner with Christ" (Heb. 3:14) presumes giving myself totally to him, i.e. deny myself take up my cross and follow him.

Individuals determine for themselves whether their partnership with Jesus will be a full partnership or a limited partnership. The following monologue indicates a potential full partnership reduced to a limited partnership by the "ifs" and "buts." (Of course, whether a limited partnership is a partnership at all is a big question)

"Jesus, save me from my sin...but not all of it.

Jesus, love me...but don't get too close all the time.

Jesus, be Lord of my life...but not all the time.

Jesus, fill me with your Spirit...but not to the top.

Jesus, help me be like you...but not in every way.

Jesus, I accept your values...but I'll also hold on to mine.

Jesus, I'll do things your way...if it's politically correct.

Jesus, we want to be as one...but let's not take this too far.

Jesus, we'll share the money...but I'll let you know how much.

Jesus, I'll be all you want me to be...with one condition.

Jesus, I'll will do all you want to do...but not yet.

Jesus, I'll go where you want you want me to go...if its fits my plans.

Jesus, we'll share life together...but not all.

Jesus, we'll partners...but not in everything."

(your name)

(date)

17

Roadblocks or Paving Stones?

You want to be a successful lay pastor. God provides the paving stones which lead to success as he did for Joshua. "...then you shall have success." (Joshua 1:8) Our problem is that the paving stones look like roadblocks.

First there is **fear**. A new lay pastor may be fearful of making the first contact. Is fear a roadblock which will shut down movement or is it a paving stone to use in reaching success. It can be either.

Fear provides the energy to do your best in a new venture. When you're afraid, you are ready to trust God. (Ps. 56:3-4) **Fear** becomes the "trust God" paving stone. When you're afraid, your sense sharpens; you have more adrenaline, more precious focus and more energy. These are psychosomatic paving stones. Never forget that God wired you psychosomatically. His intent is for fear to produce paving stones, not roadblocks.

Granted, fear is uncomfortable. As much as you want to move directly from fear to success, you have to deal with feeling uncomfortable. Accept the feeling but do not let it block your action. Instead, use it as a paving stone. You will be more adequately compensated by the success of your visit. It does not take long for you to discover that fear-induced discomfort gives way to joy when you move ahead to make the contact.

There there is **guilt**. Every lay pastor has felt guilt at times for procrastinating, neglecting, doing something wrong or leaving something unfinished. Unless we use guilt as a paving stone, it will be a massive roadblock. Guilt is anger at

ourselves. However, guilt provides the energy to confess our omissions and to change. It makes us face up to our faults. By confession to God we transform the roadblock to a paving stone.

Guilt is the catalyst for resetting our priorities, for positioning our ministry where our Lord puts it, so we will get it done. The change guilt produces is renewed commitment to P.A.C.E. our people regularly with enthusiasm and in the power of the Spirit. Miraculously, instead of guilt being a roadblock, guilt become a paving stone on our road to success.

Next is **discouragement**. Who of us has not been discouraged? The middle letters of discourage, *cour*, means heart in French. Encouragement is courage, strength from the heart. To be discouraged means that our courage, our heart, has been taken away.

The causes of discouragement are both subjective and objective. You may feel discouraged. It seems people are not responding, that your caring initiatives are not appreciated, that your attempted contacts are useless. "It seems..." It's subjective; your self-assessment. Or it may be that you really are being rejected, that a person really is not changing, that a relationship is really not developing. It's objective; it's the way it really is.

There are two ways discouragements can be paving stones rather than roadblocks. First, talk with God about your discouragement and its subjective or objective causes. He will encourage you. He will remove the "dis" from discourage and replace it with "en." He is the great *encourager*! Second, be with other lay pastors. Meet with them at the monthly or quarterly meetings. Share your true feelings, tell it like it is. As you do this, the I Thessalonians 4:11 principle will be at work, "Encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

God gave you gifts for your caring ministry. He called you to do it. By turning what looks like roadblocks into paving stones you have discovered the way to be a successful lay pastor, "...then you (too) will have success."

18

Too much/Not Enough of Jesus

"Jesus, Jesus, Jesus: Why's it always about Jesus?" This headliner for *Bulletin Board*, a daily feature in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, introduced the "Cute kid stories" section. Four-years-old Jennifer was starting to attend Sunday school in Marquette, Michigan. When class ended the first day, Jennifer's mom asked her what she did in class, and what the story was about. She replied that the story was about Jesus. The next week her mom asked what the story was about. Jennifer replied: "it was about Jesus ---AGAIN!"

When I was in seminary, I overheard another student grumble through tightened lips to a small group of friends, "If I hear the word *Jesus* one more time I'll go crazy!"

Fourteen years ago, just getting started in a part-time staff position at Hope Presbyterian church in Richfield, Minnesota, I was having a get-acquainted lunch with another new part-time staff person. Between bites, I became aware of how she persistently steered the conversation to Jesus. Her galvanizing words, her spirited voice, her speaking eyes - all surrounded by her sunny countenance -- communicated to me that Jesus was her very close friend, that she loved Him devotedly. My first impression has been confirmed over and over through the years. She still can't get enough of Jesus.

The Pharisees, teachers of the law and others had too much of Jesus and sought ways to get rid of Him. Judas had had enough of Him and found a way to get out of his "gang." Pilate didn't really care what happened to Him (though Pilate's wife did).

On the other hand, "a woman who had lived a sinful life...brought an alabaster jar or perfume...wet his feet with her tears...wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them (Luke 7:37-38). She couldn't get enough of Him. On-again, off-again Peter finally got his life together by confessing to Jesus, "Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you (John 21:17). After this, Peter couldn't do enough for Jesus.

Some get too much of Jesus; some others can't get enough.

19

Discovery! What Ministry is and who can do it.

In the traditional church, clergy are the providers of professional services for church members. The "consumer" (church member) has spiritual needs, the "provider" (clergy) is trained to look after those spiritual needs.

Consumers come to church needing inspiration, encouragement and direction, and clergy provide a sermon. Consumers need to learn....clergy offer instruction. Consumers need support or guidance...clergy dispense insight and counsel.

There are three problems with this consumer-provider model:

1. The proliferation of needs become too heavy, leading to clergy burnout and/or leadership patterns which stunt congregational growth.
2. The congregation is energized largely by the energies of the clergy, leaving the vast reserves of the people's energies untapped.
3. The people's embryonic spiritual gifts remain undeveloped while an unhealthy dependence (a.k.a co-dependency) on the clergy infects the congregation.

In his book, *Letting Go: Transforming Congregations for Ministry* (Publish by Alban Institute), Roy Phillips tells how that early in his ministry an older minister told him that people would not be happy if anyone other than the minister came to visit when they were in the hospital. Read Phillip's analysis of this counsel:

"It was to the detriment of my ministry and the congregation's ministry that for too long I believed what he told me. It meant that the load I carried wore me out and that I always felt guilty because of all the people I missed. It meant also, that too many patients waited in vain for a visit."

The young clergyperson unwittingly communicated to the congregation the far too narrow understanding about who had the gifts to carry out its ministry. His proprietary acts suggested that clergy hold in their possession a magic other Christians are denied.

But...the Lay Pastors Ministry is challenging this centuries-old error. Formerly both clergy and laity perceived the Church as a hierarchical institution; now they see it as a living organism, a Body of whose Head is Jesus Christ. The consumer-provider church is giving away (howbeit, stubbornly) to a partners-in-ministry Church where clergy ministers and lay ministers are the partners. We are rediscovering what ministry is and who can do it.

20

My Role Model is Jesus

Jesus is my Savior, my Lord, my Friend, my Hero. Recently. I have been reading one or the other of the four gospel, just to get to know Him better. Not aware of what this goal was doing in me, I was surprised to discover that Jesus is a also my Role Model - a very influential Role Model!

I am driven by an escalating desire not only to follow Him, but also to emulate Him. I want my spirit to be increasingly leavened by His Spirit. I have found the pearl of great price: Jesus' life and ministry qualities! They are of far greater practicable value than those I acquired from psychology, sociology, post graduate studies in college and seminary and 50 years of Christian ministry.

In a 15-minute reflection time this morning, the following life and ministry qualities of Jesus rose to the surface of my mind — undoubtedly those which are presently shaping my life and ministry. I wrote them down as they surfaced. They are quite private, but I am eager to share them with *you*, my brother and sisters in Christ and in ministry.

Stand for truth.... **Be Assertive....** KEEP CLOSE TO THE FATHER.... *Serve those nearest me....* **PRAY A LOT....** LISTEN TO PEOPLE CAREFULLY.... *love and help society's outcasts...* **FREELY GIVE YOURSELF TO AND FOR OTHERS...** PRIORITY #1 IS GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE...*Share my deeper self with a few selected people....* **ENDURE CRITICISM AND BEING MISUNDERSTOOD....** GO PUBLIC BUT SHUN THE LIMELIGHT...*love and respect people of other religions without endorsing their religion...* **MAJOR IN GODLINESS....** RESIST ALL TEMPTATION....*do not be blindsided by Satan (be alert to his presence, power and craftiness)...* **RESPECT**

AUTHORITY...CALL A SPADE A SPADE....*equip people by example, experience and teaching...*EFFECTIVE TEACHING SKILLS ARE SIMPLE, ENGAGING AND CLEAR.****

Now that Jesus' qualities and their impact on my life and ministry has surfaced. I am intentionally setting them as goals. I invite you to the same experience. As your Role Model, Jesus, by His Spirit, will also leaven your spirit with the qualities listed above and others you will discover on your own.

21

What a Day For The Lay Pastors Ministry!

The April 2000 issue of *Psychology Today* ran an article titled, "Mind over Cancer." A reader, Kip Little, Burlington, Ontario, Canada wrote a letter to the editor for the July/August 2000 issue, affirming the premise suggested by the title:

"When my cancer returned in 1990, a mass under collarbone caused swelling in my arm and hand while damaging nerves and blood vessels. Over four months of tests and consultations, many treatment options were put forth both by conventional and alternative medicine. I ultimately found doctors who gave me Tamoxifen and radiation — not a cure, but a relief of my physical symptoms. But I chose *people*, places and *sounds of healing* for my mind and spirit. Today I am without cancer."

Kip Little ends her letter, "When are we going to recognize that illness doesn't happen just to our body?"

Three supremely imperative principles surface in Kip Little's experience which underscore the strategic importance of the Lay Pastors Ministry: 1) a powerful non-medical healing choice is people; 2) illness doesn't happen just to the body; and 3) *sounds of healing...heal*.

These principles strongly endorse the ministry of thousands of Lay Pastors, people who are legitimately involved in the lives of other church members, some of whom are physically afflicted. Lay Pastors "treat" these members' minds

and spirits with sounds of healing: words of encouragement, words from the Bible, words of prayer, and even sounds of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." (Eph. 5:19).

What a day for the Lay Pastors Ministry!

22

"Love With Skin On It" — That's What Lay Pastors Are!

It doesn't cost money....but there is a price to pay.

It doesn't require training...but it has to be practiced.

It doesn't make demands...but it inspires one to self-sacrifice.

It doesn't restrict...but it rules out self-destructive conductive.

Q: What is "IT?"

A: "It" is LOVE!*

"IF I pray for people, am AVAILABLE to them, CONTACT them to the point of pestering, and deny self so I can be a great EXAMPLE, but do not have love, I gain nothing; I am an empty shell; I am only an echo of what I could be."

(paraphrase of I Cor. 13:1-13)

Love is patient — It insists that I wait for those members of my "flock" who do not yet accept me, by accepting people and loving them.

Love is kind — It finds ways for me to be creativity thoughtful, generous, hospitable and respectful of the people in my "flock."

Love is does not envy — It turns envy inside out so I can use people's goof fortune to affirm, praise and congratulate them.

Love does not boast — It reminds me to stay on their agenda, to not upstage

them by flaunting my "greater" events.

Love is not boast — It is humble, making a distinction between self-affirming servanthood and self-aggrandizing arrogance.

Love is not rude — It respects another's feeling, life situation, convictions, traditions, privacy and rights.

Love is not self seeking — It is self-giving, not out to get what it wants, but out to give what another needs.

Love is not easily angered — It is angered, but not easily. It reins in anger with Eph. 4:26: "In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry."

Love never fails — It is not turned off by rejection, indifference, misunderstanding, insult, neglect, abuse, or anything else.

Love is the greatest — Faith is quintessential: hope is imperative; love leavens faith and hope and everything else with the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate, and every lay pastor's archetype of "love with skin on it."

* See 1 Corinthians 13

MONOGRAHY

1

The Lay Pastors Ministry LEADERSHIP GROUP

THE MINISTRY LEADERSHIP GROUP IS INDISPENSABLE TO A SUCCESSFUL LAY PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY IF YOU PLAN TO PROVIDE GRASS-ROOTS, ONE-ON-ONE, CONTINUING CARE OF GOD'S PEOPLE THIS GROUP WILL CONSIST OF 4 TO 12 PEOPLE WHO SHARE THE VISION FOR THE LAY PASTORS MINISTRY AND ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING, IMPLEMENTING AND MANAGING THE MINISTRY THEY HAVE 'OWNERSHIP' OF THE LAY PASTORS MINISTRY. IF IS CALLED "GROUP" BECAUSE IT IS TO OPERATE AS A "SMALL GROUP" ORGANIZED AROUND A MINISTRY; BONDING WITH ONE ANOTHER, CARING FOR EACH OTHER, GROWING TOGETHER IN THE LORD, SHARING LIFE AND PRAYING FOR EACH OTHER, AS LEADERS OF THE LAY PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY OF THEIR CHURCH, THEY PASTOR ONE ANOTHER.

AS A MINISTERING GROUP WITHIN THE CHURCH, IT IS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSON(S) AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, SPIRIT, QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS AND ONGOING SUCCESS OF THE LAY PASTORS MINISTRY. ITS OVERALL CHARGE IS-TO GREATE, IMPLEMENT, OVERSEE, AND MANAGE THE MINISTRY. IT DOES THIS BY;

1. DESIGNING THE ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE;
2. SETTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES,
3. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE START-UP,
4. MONITORING AND GUIDING THE MINISTRY; AND

5. MANAGING ALL PHASES OF THE MINISTRY THROUGH THE YEARS.

FORMATION; (See pages 56-59 of *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*)

1. Draft Qualifications. (Note that Moses, the apostles, and Paul had qualifications for people they chose-Ex. 18:14-27, Acts 6: 1-6, I Tim 3: 1-13).

a. Committed.....to Christ and the church, also their readiness to commit themselves to the group.

b. Mature.....having proved themselves in faith, relationships and ministry

c. Available..... not overly committed to other ministries or activities. Their lifesituation must permit time, energy and sustained attention to this ministry.

d. Creative... able to combine traditional methods and forms with emerging principles to create a new ministry. Able to release their hold on how things have been done before and how others are doing it. It helps to be imaginative.

e. Communicative....ready and willing to talk, can express themselves bravely and clearly. Neither aggressive nor passive, but assertive in handling competing ideas and proposal. Can comprehend and verbalize abstractions and concepts.

2. Select the people.

a. Pray, expecting God to guide you to people who are to participate,

remembering that Jesus prayed all night over his list (Luke 6:12-16).

b. As you share your vision with individuals, log the names of those who are likely possibilities for the group. Consult other staff members, church leaders or others who are in sync with your vision about whom they might suggest

c. As far as possible select people with differing gifts, personalities, and experiences.

3. Contact the people

a. Communicate by letter or other means to tell them they have been selected to be a member of the Lay Pastors Ministry Leadership Group. Share the vision. Ask them to pray about it. Tell them you will phone to arrange a time when you can meet to talk about their acceptance.

b. As you meet;

- 1) Share your vision. Tell what you believe the ministry will mean to the members of your church.
- 2) Explain the purpose of the Ministry Leadership Group.
- 3) Clarify goals, expectations and commitments.
- 4) Pray together about their response.

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP GROUP TASKS (Position accountability write-ups)

1. Group Leader

- a. Leads and guides the Ministry Leadership Group in its life together, the

"smallgroup" feature of the MLG. The chief concerns are encouragement, support, relationships, attendance, participation, focus, and nurture of the group.

b. Plans for the time and location of the meetings, and in consultation with the Ministry Leader, establishes the agenda for the meetings.

c. Leads the worship, nurture, personal sharing, and fellowship portion of the meeting, (The Ministry Leader leads the ministry business portion.)

2. Ministry Leader

a. Leads and coordinates the Lay Pastors Ministry in all phases. Phases include:

- 1) Developing and implementing the ministry.
- 2) Calling forth, equipping, commissioning lay pastors.
- 3) Communications to Lay Pastors and congregation.
- 4) Ongoing equipping of Lay Pastors.
- 5) Periodic evaluation of the Lay Pastors Ministry.

b. Works with the Group Leader to establish the agendas for the meetings

c. Provides ongoing liaison with the pastor and/or official board, church staff, church, and the Regional and National Lay Pastors Ministry network.

d. Leads and guides in the administrative and organizational functions of the ministry such as manuals, minutes, records, lists, correspondence, budgets, etc.

3. Secretary

- a. Records the actions of each meeting and promptly provides copies to all members and others who should be kept abreast of actions.
- b. Prepares and distributes meeting notices and other information.
- c. Processes incoming and outgoing correspondence.
- d. Establishes, maintains, and retrieves records, lists and other materials essential to the ministry.

4. Communications Coordinator

a. Edits and publishes a newsletter for the lay pastors and others who are to be informed of the activities.

b. Writes or arranges for articles, notices and other items for the Sunday bulletin and church newsletter which will inform the congregation, create a favorable image of the ministry and promote its interests.

c. Coordinates the communications interface and exchange of ideas with lay pastoral care ministries in other churches, the Regional organization, and the National Network(LPM).

5. Calling Forth Coordinator (Recruiter)

a. Provides information to the congregation regarding the need for lay pastors and the way people can enter the ministry.

b. Organizes special meetings, or portions of existing meetings, for the purpose of identifying, informing and recruiting lay pastors.

c. Coordinate the plans to preregister people for the equipping seminars.

d. In general, be responsible for a regular flow of people into the Lay Pastors Ministry.

6. Equipping Coordinator

a. In consultation with the pastor, ministry leader and others, determine the content, agenda, and time span of the seminars and secure the teachers.

b. Arrange for facilities, location, equipments, materials, meals, schedules, etc. for the equipping seminars.

c. Work with the Calling Forth Coordinator to preregister people. Arrange for greeting registration, name tags, and distribution of materials at the seminar.

d. Develop plans for ongoing equipping.

7. Koinonia Coordinator

a. Recognizes the need for affirmation, celebration, motivation, and the bonding of people doing ministry.

b. Provides for interacting fellowship and social experiences for the Ministry Leadership Group and the Lay Pastors at the regular meeting and other times.

8. Evaluation Coordinator

a. Design or discover evaluation instruments and use them to periodically evaluate the Lay Pastors Ministry in terms of goals, objectives, purpose and expected results.

b. Leads in interpreting the evaluation and making decisions for ministry enrichment or corrections indicated by the evaluations.

NOTE: Two or three of these roles can be combined when there is not a sufficient member of group members to each take one.

2

Motivating Lay Pastors

MOTIVATION IS NOT MANIPULATION. JESUS MOTIVATED HIS MEN. WE CAN THINK OF MOTIVATION AS 'INSPIRING A PERSON', 'STIMULATING ONE'S SPIRIT', 'RENEWING COMMITMENT', "MOVING ONE TO ACTION", 'RESTORING VISION' OR, TO USE PAUL'S WORDS TO TIMOTHY, 'FAN INTO FLAME THE GIFT OF GOD. "WITHOUT MOTIVATION, MINISTRY ATROPHIES. ONE OF THE DUTIES OF LEADERS IS TO MOTIVATE THOSE DOING MINISTRY. THIS MONOGRAPH CITES THE NEED FOR MOTIVATION, MOVES THROUGH THE PRINCIPLES AND ON TO HOW TO DO IT.

I. MOTIVATION IS ESSENTIAL

No one can really motivate another. However, we can stimulate that inner engine we call motivation. We who lead must learn to motivate.

What motivates you? Turns you on? Gets you going? Keeps you at it? Think of an occasion or time you were highly motivated. Then ponder:

1. What brought it on?
2. What did it feel like?
3. What did you do?
4. How long did it last?

Your answers to these pondering should uncover principles you can use in motivating others. My four answers:

1. Jerry Kirk, when he was senior pastor of College Hill Presbyterian Church, asked me about my ministry. He offered to help. He verbally affirmed me, prayed with me and followed up with a phone call a few days later to inquire further.

2. There was an emotional high because I knew that an important person whom I knew to be a man of integrity, a man whom I admired and respected, was genuinely interested in what I was doing.

3. Because of his genuine interest, I determined within myself that I would do the very best I was capable of. Therefore it was no effort to think creatively about my ministry and to spend extra energy on making it work.

4. The motivation continued because what was triggered within me by Jerry's interest corresponded with my gifts for ministry and call. Besides this, Jerry continued to show interest by inquiring about later developments.

My specific experience can be legitimately generalized. People need to be recognized for what they are doing. They need to be affirmed in doing it. They need to know that what they are doing is important and they need to get some idea of whether what they are doing is okay.

II. EXTRINSIC AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

There are two kinds of motivation: Extrinsic and Intrinsic. The following five examples of extrinsic motivation indicate that the extrinsic kind comes from an external source, that which is outside of the person to be motivated.

1. Verbal affirmation

2. Recognition at worship service, in church publications, and at group meetings.
3. Awards such as dinners, pins, gifts, certificates, a trip.
4. Reports
5. Pastoral supervision. This one-one-one contact begins extrinsically and soon moves to intrinsic because it reaches the conscience, reminds of the call of God to pastor, affirms, corrects, encourages, and results in renewed commitment. ("pastoral supervision" is developed in pages 71-78 of my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*).

Intrinsic motivation comes from within a person. Again, we can do some things that will stimulate it, but only if what we do "clicks" within that person.

Dr. Frederick Herzberg believes that it is the ministry itself that motivates people. He has identified five intrinsic motivational factors:

1. A sense of achievement,
2. Recognition for work done,
3. A feeling of importance and interest in the work itself,
4. An opportunity to take responsibility, and
5. An experience of growth and development.

Marlene Wilson gives eight reasons why people "volunteer." We can assume that if these reasons are being adequately fulfilled people will be adequately motivated. Our role is to do what we can to fulfill them.

1. They want to be needed.
2. They want to help others and make a difference.
3. They want to learn new skills or use skills they already have.
4. They want to belong to a caring community and feel accepted as members.

5. They want self-esteem and affirmation.
6. They want to grow in their faith and share their God-given gifts.
7. They want to support causes they believe in.
8. They want to keep from being lonely.

Commitment to Jesus Christ is the ultimate motivation. As we help to deepen that commitment we are helping to motivate the person. Again, this is intrinsic.

Offering opportunities to grow in ministry expertise will motivate people. Such offerings say that the ministry is important and the person is important. Growth in caring skills effectively feeds the ego from within in a healthy way.

Since ministry itself is a gift and not a work looking for a reward, the chief intrinsic motivation may be gratitude for being redeemed and given the privilege of ministering. When the only reward sought is the acceptance of the ministry by God as an offering of praise and thanksgiving, true intrinsic motivation is taking place. Ministry to a Christian is like a true lover buying a ring for a loved one. His only concern is the unworthiness of the gift. Acceptance thrills the giver.

Ministering with the knowledge of Christ's imminent return is a strong intrinsic motivation. Jesus' parable in Matthew 25: 14-30 teaches this. All three servants had these four things in common:

1. The charge to care for "his property."
 - They were given the talents with which to work.
 - The talents were given according to their ability.

NOTE: Our charge is found in I Peter 5:2, "Tend the flock of God."

2. They were to determine how they cared.

-The quality, intensity, and variety was determined by them.

They could give it their all or do nothing.

NOTE; Whatever our method, we are to do it willingly, eagerly, and exemplary, (I Peter 5:1-4). we make the decision to either give it all we've got, do just enough to get by, or do nothing.

3. The fact of his return was known

-He would be gone for an unknown length of time.

-The day of "settling" was inevitable.

-Diligence in activity was stimulated by keeping his return in mind.

-Giving account provided motivation.

* "Well done"

* "You should have"

NOTE: "When the chief shepherd appears....."(I Peter 5:4). We will give account of the ministry He gave us.

4. They were actively engaged/ Two in "trading." one in "hiding."

a. Those "trading,"being faithful in caring for the master's property, had the joy of seeing increase. They traded in anticipation of the Master's return.

b. The one "hiding" his talent was afraid. The responsibility was too awesome. By "hiding" rather than "trading" he got busy doing other things of his own choosing, forgetting that the Master would return to "settle accounts" with them.

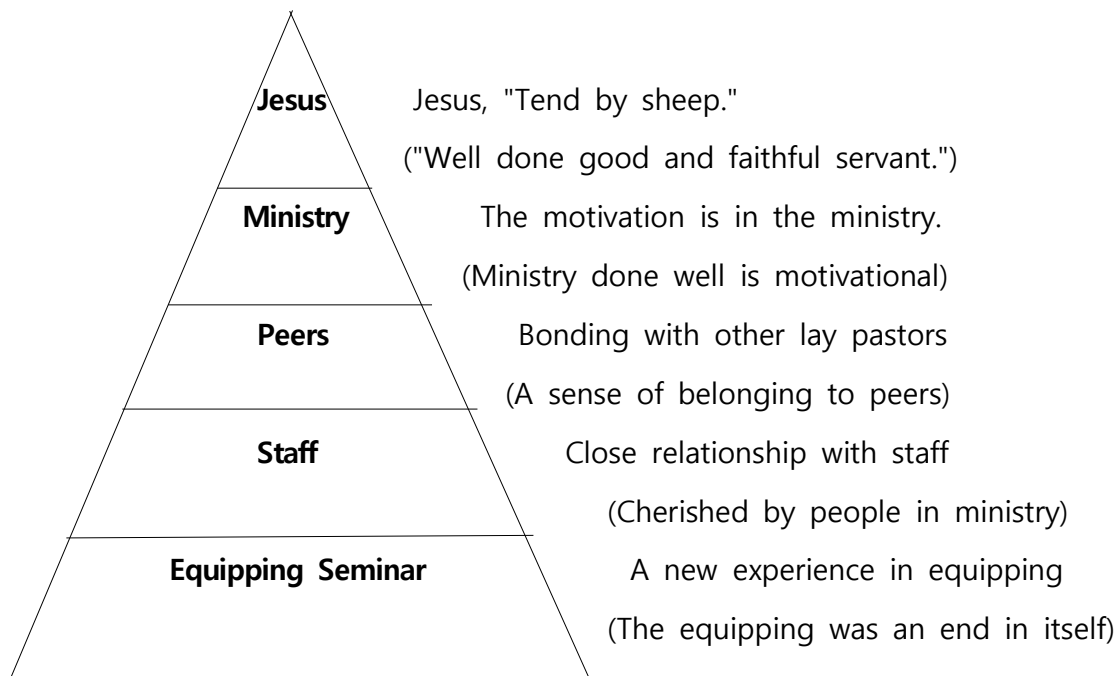
NOTE: While pastoring, have fun, get together, enjoy the results, remain faithful, the accountable, endure the hardships.

Our conclusion is that the most effective motivation for the mature christian is intrinsic. He or she does it for the joy of doing it, knowing that it is an assignment from the Master. He or she rightfully anticipates the words, "Well done good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Master." Anything we

can do to generate this consciousness will be motivational.

III. SOME PRINCIPLES OF MOTIVATION

1. It takes one kind of motivation to bring one into a ministry and another kind for them to continue in the ministry.
2. Motivation is like bodily energy. It must be fueled regularly and renewed frequently.
3. Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" has people moving through four levels of human need to get to the fifth and highest, self actualization. In a similar way Lay Pastors have a "Hierarchy of motivations. " They move through four levels to get to the fifth and highest, Jesus. Each level holds its own motivational magnetism, but once it has motivated, it loses some of its magnetism. The ultimate motivation is Jesus. When a Lay Pastor is motivated by him, he or she is motivated for life, or at least as long as the Lay Pastor keeps close to him. see diagram on the next page.



NOTE; To the extent these needs are fulfilled the person will be strongly or weakly motivated.

4. Nothing can motivate the person who is doing something he or she is not gifted for or not interested in doing.

5. Marlene Wilson identifies three distinct motives that affect people's ministry in her book, *How to Mobilize church Volunteers*.

a. The Need for Achievement - More goal oriented than task oriented. Good at organizing new programs and solving interest, unless they establish new goals.

b. The Need for Affiliation - These are the nurturing and caring people. They will most enjoy those tasks they can do with other people. They are fulfilled by calling on others, greeting and listening.

c. The Need for power - They are the movers and shakers of a group. They are able to influence others. We must, however, distinguish between "personal power people" and "social power people."

(1) "Personal power people" - Those who want positions of influence for their own personal gain and status and who often diminish others in the process. There is no place for this kind of power in Christian ministry

(2) "Social power people" - Those who use their power on behalf of others and in the process build the confidence and self worth of those they lead. This is the good kind of power.

IV. PEOPLE TELL THAT WILL MOTIVATE THEM

After teaching this unit on motivation at one of our Lay Pastors Equipping seminars at Hope Presbyterian Church, the teacher had the people write their responses to this question: "What Do I Need to Keep Me In The Ministry?" We discovered eight motivational categories in their answers. You can read some of their choice answers that we classified under these eight headings:

1. RESPONSE

"I need to get response from people, not necessarily positive."

"I need to experience a bonding of my life with theirs."

"To have a positive experiences with those I pastor, seeing a friendship between me and them growing."

"To be needed by my people."

"Evidence that marginal believers are responding to Jesus through my efforts."

"Seeing acceptance from most of the people I pastor."

"I need at least some of the flock to say or act as if I had made a difference in their lives."

"I need to feel that I am accomplishing something when I meet with the people so that all is not wasted or so that I am not a bother to them."

"Some positive feedback that my calls are important in some way."

"Evidence of meaningful results and sense of accomplishment."

2. SUPPORT

"I will need support and encouragement from other Lay Pastors."

"Someone with whom I can share how it is going - to share ideas on on a monthly basis."

"Someone praying for me on a regular basis as I minister."

"Support and affirmation from others; my family, other lay pastors and Christian friends."

"Finely tuned understanding with Mel, Debbie(our ministry leader) and other leaders about my role, style of pastoring, etc."

"Support of the pastors and staff."

"I would like a superior to make an assessment of the work I do."

3. CALL

"I need to know that I am in God's will, doing His work."

"That I feel called by God."

"Direction from God in selecting this ministry."

"Feeling of God's presence in stepping out in faith to do this ministry."

"Inner peace and power - led by the spirit."

"A feeling of satisfaction instilled in me by the Holy Spirit."

"A feeling that I am where God wants me to be."

"Re-assurance from the Lord that I am doing His will."

"A feeling that the gifts the Lord has given me are being used for Him in this ministry."

4. SIGNIFICANCE

"I need to feel that I am doing something worthwhile - that it is making a difference."

"I would like to share my caring with a few people from the church."

"Affirmation that I'm doing what the Lord wants me to do - that I can make a difference."

"Remember that only what is done in love for Christ and others gives a lasting glow to life."

"The assurance that I can make a difference in someone's life - be it a smile, phone call or visit."

"I may not be able to judge success but I have to feel good about it for

myself."

"A feeling of contributing."

5. HEALTH AND TIME

"More time. Prayer that I am capable of doing this."

"Good health so that I have the time to give to it."

"Finding time to effectively lay pastor."

"Health (mine)."

6. FURTHER EQUIPPING

"Further equipping reinforcement is very essential to keep abreast of people's changing needs."

"Continued training as needed."

"Continuing to grow."

7. COMMITMENT

"A willing spirit."

"A commitment to the Lord and dependence on the Holy Spirit."

"Continued awareness of my commitment."

8. ADMINISTRATION

"No 'busy work' or unnecessary administrative - minimum of written reports."

Hearing what people wrote, telling what it will take to keep them in the ministry, makes it possible for us to program our quarterly Lay Pastors meetings in a way that will freshen their vision, renew their commitment and be authentically re-motivated. Remember, it takes one kind of motivation to get

people into the ministry and another to keep them alive to it.

Also, when monthly reports or the "grapevine" indicate that a lay pastor's ministry activity is declining or interest is sagging, reading through these statements and the categories will help us know what action to take or what to say that will trigger something within them that in turn will generate intrinsic motivation.

A good use of these statements would be to give them to your Ministry Leadership Group, or whoever it is that has ownership of the ministry. After familiarizing themselves with them, have a brain-storming session on "What we can do to motivate our lay pastors?" Sort out the usable ones and go to work.

V. JESUS' MOTIVATION

1. His call. He had a deep sense of fulfilling the call of his Father.

"I came to do my Father's will." Because of this he was able to stand alone when necessary, when all his men forsook him. (Matt. 26:56).

2. His contact. He spent time with his father in prayer. (Matt.14: 23, Mark 6: 46, 47; Luke 6: 12; John 6: 15).

3. His gift. He had the gift of mercy. His feelings of compassion and love for people compelled him to minister to them. Their needs did something to him that released his love and energy. His compassion for them prompted him to heal them and to feed them.

VI. HOW JESUS MOTIVATED HIS MEN

1. He spent time with them.....on the lake, fishing, traveling, etc. He shared his life with them. He told them they were special.

2. He led them. He was a true leader. A leader is in an initiating role.

Matt. 4: 9, "Follow me and I will make you....."

3. He loved them. They knew it. (John 13: 34)

4. He modeled integrity. People will be motivated by such a leader giving personal attention to them. He lived what he taught. He loved as he said he did. They knew it.

5. He partied with them at Cana. (John 12). His involvement in their lives was not always "religious."

6. He let them know how they stood with him and whether their ministries were okay. He affirmed them and corrected them.

a. To Peter: "Blessed are you....." (Matt. 16: 17).

b. To Peter: "You are not on my side." (Matt. 16: 23).

c. He rebuked those who wanted to call fire down heaven. (Luke 9: 54-55).

7. He modeled commitment and enthusiasm for what he was doing. (Matt. 9: 35-38).

8. He gave them authority (Matt. 10:1ff). This means he "He unleashed them,

and sent them out on their own.

9. He supported them when they were criticized (Matt. 12: 1-8, 15: 1-3). They transgressed a minor law. Jesus did not, but he defended his disciples. He was loyal to them. He was a true friend.

10. He let them fail. He did not control their behavior and faith.

Examples: Peter walking on the water (Matt. 14: 28-31), and Judas betraying him (Matt 26 : 14, 16, 50).

11. He took them with him on great experiences (Matt. 17: 13).

3

TWELVE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL LAY PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

TO START A LAY MINISTRY FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF YOUR CHURCH AND TO TEST ITS STRENGTH LATER, YOU MUST BUILD IT ON THESE FOUNDATION BLOCKS. THEN, PERIODICALLY, USE THEM TO CHECK YOUR MINISTRY FOR POSSIBLE SIGNS OF SHIFTING AND EROSION.

Like a building, a strong ministry is strong because first, it sets on a solid foundation, and second, it is built with quality material, If the foundation is weak at the beginning, or if after starting with a solid foundation we see it beginning to erode, we can fear for the future of the ministry, It is imperative that we use these twelve blocks as the foundation of our ministry at the start and then periodically review them (conduct an evaluation) to see that they are in place.

If you are beginning a Lay Pastoral Care Ministry, ask yourself these questions about each Foundation Block:

- 1. Shall we include this one? Why?**
- 2. How shall we do it ?**
- 3. How well shall we do it?**

If you already have the ministry on line, do not be afraid to ask the following tough questions about each block, Asking them is a productive way to conduct a evaluation of the present state of your ministry.

1. **Are we doing this? Why?**
2. **In what way are we doing it?**
3. **How well are we doing it?**
4. **How can we do it better?**

We shall now proceed to the TWELVE FOUNDATION BLOCKS. Each one is followed with some suggested building material, a few "bricks."

V I S I O N FOUNDATION BLOCK #1

"Where there is no vision the people perish." (Prov. 29:18) A good definition of "vision" is: "Something seen by other than normal sight." I have on the wall in front of my desk one of Bill Gothard's inimitable definitions. This one has a picture of three Giraffes with their long necks stretched as high as they will stretch. Then this definition of "Leadership": "Seeing farther down the road than those around me can." Not many people are leaders, people of vision. This often causes misunderstanding between leaders and followers but such friction is "the cost of doing business."

Somewhere I read, "Vision without a task is but a dream; a task without a vision is drudgery; a vision and a task is the hope of the world." Now, on to the materials to place on this part of the foundation.

A BIBLICAL BASE AND CALL I refer to I Peter 5:1-4 as the Magna Charta of our Lay Pastors Ministry. The operational part of this passage is,

"Tend the flock of God which is your charge." This is both the Biblical base and the call of God to church leaders to see that every Taste one of their people is loved and cared for. The Biblical model is in Exodus is where Moses divided God's flock into thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens and set "able men" over each segment. He got pastoral care down to bite-size so it could actually be done. See pages 25-44 in *Can The Pastor Do it Alone?* where this "brick" is developed more fully.

□ NEEDS OF THE CONGREGATION Reviewing the membership list by either the pastor or envisioned lay person is all it takes to document the need for pastoral care. I did a survey of 50 of our 2500 members at Hope Church, a cross section which ranged from active to inactive. Those to whom I reported the results were shocked at the critical need. The reality is that many members of every church, both small and large, are not being cared for, God would have every one of his people prayed for regularly, known well enough so struggles and pains are not suffered alone, and close enough to another so they are assured that someone cares. What has led many churches another so they are assured that someone cares. What has led many churches to begin a Lay Pastoral Care Ministry is a study of their needs and priorities.

□ PRAYER Time spent with God in prayer will keep the vision bright. it fixes the focus on God and what he has called you to do. A weakening ministry is usually preceded by a dimming vision and a dimming vision is the result of failure to pray. Conversely, a strong ministry is sustained by a vision which is regularly renewed and even enlarged in prayer. We don't wonder why Jesus was so strong in ministry when we see him so often at prayer. It's this simple: the clarity and energy of our vision is in proportion to time spent in prayer.

□ SHARED WITH LEADERS Vision must be shared. I know of churches

which now have a strong Lay Pastoral Care Ministry because of a lay person, who had a vision for it, shared it with the pastor, I know of churches which have a strong Lay Pastoral Ministry because the pastor, who had the vision, shared it with a few lay people, It, then, spread to others, The circle of people sharing the same vision grew larger. I know churches where a lay person or two who had the vision proceeded to launch the ministry alone, It failed, I know of churches whose pastor had the vision and proceeded to launch the ministry alone. It failed. This leads us to the next foundation block.

O W N E R S H I P FOUNDATION BLOCK #2

"God want this ministry in our church so we have to make it work." Someone has to "own" the ministry. That is, someone must be responsible for it, manage it and be accountable for it's state.

A SMALL GROUP WHO SHARE THE VISION AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Moses was told by Jethro what he must have already known, that it was foolish to try to do the job alone. This is true for caring for the congregation and it is true for managing the ministry which cares for the congregation in our church of 2500 members we have a Ministry Leadership Group of eight people who where the vision and give leadership to our Lay Pastors Ministry. What are the signs of ownership? There are at least five:

1. Attending meetings regularly.
2. Thinking about it at times other than at meetings.
3. Talking about it at home, with friends and others.
4. Agonizing over the problems. Even lose sleep over them.
5. Feeling the joy of success.

THE PRIORITY MINISTRY FOR EACH IN THE GROUP This is not a ministry people can add to what they are already doing in the church. for some

it will require that they drop other commitments so they can focus on this in prayer and consultation they will need to discover what God has gifted them for and what he is calling them to do. Our zeal often carries us into more-commitments than our Lord calls us to make. He was focused. No matter how much there was to do in the world Jesus established a limit to what his disciples were to do: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel." He even limited their message. Read it in Matthew 10, Each member of the Leadership Group must set this as his or her priority ministry in the church.

COMMISSIONED BY THE PASTOR AND OFFICIAL BOARD Since this ministry is basic to all ministries of the church, it needs to be treated as such publicly. Setting aside by prayer those who are responsible for this ministry establishes the members of the Leadership Group as partners with the vocational pastor in fulfilling the charge in I Peter 5, "Tend the flock."

SCHEDULED MEETINGS No one likes meetings for meetings sake but meetings for ministry's sake is palatable. Our Ministry Leadership Group (called "Ministry Group" in *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*) at Hope Church meets twice a month, the second and fourth Thursday evenings. The meetings include four parts: worship, koinonia (sharing what is going on in our lives), nurture and ministry. The ideal is to do all four each meeting, and at times we have. But, more often we will expand one or two of the parts at the expense of the others. Sometimes a personal problem in the life of one or two members will take priority over nurture and even ministry as we listen, counsel and pray. Other times the ministry business will be so pressing that a meeting or two is spent on only that. If a balance cannot be achieved in each meeting, it should be sought over a period of time. It is the worship (usually very simple - a song, Scripture of devotional thought to focus us on God, and prayer) and sharing our lives which bonds a group together and makes ministry business

both pleasant and productive.

D E S I G N FOUNDATION BLOCK #3

"Wherever the grace of Christ is present, it is in search of a form that will adequately express what it is." Avery Dulles in *Models Of The Church*.

Organization is not a necessary evil but the part of ministry the Lord has left up to us. He charges us to "Tend the flock." We are to try to understand what that means and create the strategy for doing it. He gave the great commission but left it up to us to develop plans and mobilize people to do it. If our people are to be adequately and effectively cared for we need to have a way of doing it. Hundreds of churches have adopted or adapted our Lay Pastors model, even though they call it something different. This model is set forth in my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*

□ DETERMINE PURPOSE, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES Our stated purpose is to provide pastoral care for every household in the church family. Or, in your situation, your purpose may be tailored differently or stated differently, One of the goals might be to "call forth" a certain number of people by a certain date to pastorally care for a stated number of households. The objectives would be the actions you would take to accomplish your goal. One objective might be to send letters to the members of your congregation who seem to have a pastoral heart, inviting them to consider and to pray about coming Ministry Leadership Group would develop clear statements of purpose, etc. The acronym "SAM" tells us one, imperative about goals, they must be Specific, Achievable and Measurable.

□ CREATE AN ADEQUATE STRUCTURE The Mosaic model in Exodus 18 gives the basic principles for a lay pastoral care ministry structure. Chapter 10 in

my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* "In Search of a Form" is helpful, Whatever your organizational structure, it must be seen to be as important to your ministry as the skeleton is to the body. And it performs the same functions, giving it shape and enabling it to move.

□ **DEVELOP JOB DESCRIPTIONS** We call them "Position Accountability Write-ups," You must determine who is to do what and the "what" needs to be written. It is interesting to see how getting an idea down on paper harmonizes different perceptions, clarifies the ambiguous, defines expectation and significantly reduces future misunderstanding. The Lay Pastor's job description is very clear - P.A.C.E. The tasks of the individual member of the Ministry Leadership Group need to be clearly written, as well as the tasks of every person involved in the ministry in any way.

□ **BUILD ON ALL TWELVE FOUNDATION BLOCKS** Each one is so very important that to overlook any one will weaken the total structure. Taken all together they make one strong foundation for a strong ministry. Consider them one at a time and ask the questions suggested above. It may take several months to get your ministry on line this way, but when you get it on line it will be there to stay.

C A L L FOUNDATION BLOCK #4

"You have not chosen me but I have chosen you...(John 15:16) I have found that lay people seldom think of themselves as being called by God to a ministry. They have no problem believing that we vocational ministers are called. But they are cheating themselves out of something tremendously significant by not believing they also are called by God. There is need for some Biblical teaching on this.

□ ACCEPT SPIRITUAL GIFTEDNESS AND DIVINE CALL AS ESSENTIALS FOR THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE

The call to ministry is included in our call to salvation. Some denominations other than mine put it this way: "The call to ministry is in the baptism." Elton Trueblood puts it very strong: "To be a Christian and not to be in ministry is a contradiction of terms. To be a Christian is to be in ministry." He, of course, being a layman, can get by being that blunt. The refrain in Romans 12:4, "Just as each of us..." is repeated in a similar way in I Corinthians 11:7 & 27, and again in I Peter 4:10, These passages each deal with the spiritual gift and make it clear that every one in the Body, every Christian, is given gifts for ministry. The Holy Spirit, then, enables each of us to know whether we are an ear, an arm or an eye-a pastor, an administrator or a teacher It makes a great difference in a Lay Pastor's, an administrator or a teacher ability to know he or she is called by God to pastorally care for people.

□ CONFIRM THE CALL OF EACH PARTICIPANT Not every person wanting to be a Lay Pastor is gifted or suited for this ministry. We have had to turn people down even after they have been through an equipping seminar This is difficult and requires some pastoral work with those refused. I know one church which limits the equipping seminar to only those whom the elders give prior approval to be Lay Pastors, Qualifications are essential and have Biblical precedence. It is very important that a Lay Pastor's the church leadership. It is good to hear, "We, too, believe you are called by God to be a Lay Pastor." That affirmation, given privately and publicly will help one persevere when the going gets though.

□ PROVIDE FOR PUBLIC RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE We call this "Commissioning." John Wesley's formula for Lay Preachers fits Lay Pastors as well: (1) The gift; (2) The call; (3) The training; and (4) The sending. The "sending" was to correspond in some way with the ordination of vocational

ministers. At a Sunday morning worship service we have a special time for the laying on of hands by the elders during a time of prayer, setting them aside for this ministry.

E Q U I P P I N G FOUNDATION BLOCK #5

"Equip the saints for the work of the ministry." (Ephesians 4:12) The New International Version says it another way, "Prepare God's people for works of service."

ADOPT THE BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EQUIPPING The call to equip the people who are going to be ministers is given in the passage above. Equipping enables one to minister with confidence and competence. God must know our need for being equipped for he has given us three equippers: (1) people-Ephesians 4:11 & 12; (2) Holy Spirit-Acts 1:8; and (3) Scriptures - II Timothy 3:16 & 17. Some churches have tried to establish this ministry without this foundation block because of a false belief that their people either did not need it or that they would not take it. Those who sense the call of God want to be equipped so as to do the best job possible for their Lord.

DESIGN A COURSE You will need to determine in what subjects you want your lay pastoral caregivers to be equipped. What will they need to do the ministry you have in mind? There are two areas to lead them through: (1) Equipping them to be; and (2) Equipping them to do. Since what they are is more important than what they do, a fair amount of time needs to be given to growing as a person of faith, a servant of Jesus Christ. They need to know the place of prayer and the power of the, Holy Spirit in their personal lives. Their personal relationship with Jesus Christ cannot be taken for granted. It is imperative that they understand the principle of "Being with the Lord before

doing for the Lord." Isaiah Muita, an African Christian leader says, "We cannot reach out to people unless we reach up to God." Another leader wrote, "God is more concerned about your relationship with him than your ministry for him."

Pastoral principles and skills are not unimportant just because they are second in priority. Because what we are is more important than what we do does not mean we can slight the practical hands-on skills. The fact is that if one truly loves the Lord he or she will do all that can be done to excel in the skills. In addition to pastoral skills they will need to know the organizational structure, rationale for reporting, the reasons for coming together frequently to share their experiences, plans for further equipping and what to do when they get in over their heads with people's problems. *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* was written to be a text for equipping people to give pastoral care. I still use the 12 units of equipping in the book for equipping our people at Hope Church and in seminars I conduct around the country.

One important equipping principle is stated by John Ed Mathison, senior pastor of the rapidly growing Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, in his little book, *Every Member In Ministry*; "The training gives people direction, but allows them to make their own decisions about the best way to outstanding lay pastoral care ministries in North America.

□ **IDENTIFY THE EQUIPPERS** According to Ephesians, pastors and teachers are to equip God's people for ministry. In II Timothy 2:2 we encounter another practice: pastors equipping other people to be equippers, "And the things you have heard me say . . . entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." There are not only people in our churches gifted with pastoral gifts, there are people gifted by the Spirit of God with equipping (teaching) gifts. We have at least two people who do not feel called to pastor but who feel called to equip those who are called professionals to give units on

listening, pastoring the sick, confidentiality, family life, problem ownership, etc. One final thought on equippers, we found it extremely helpful to our trainees to invite seasoned lay pastors to share their experiences and to field questions.

PROVIDE ONGOING EQUIPPING This can be formal or informal. It can be done in hour-long, half-day, whole-day workshops or week-end retreats. The forms can range from special classes to providing resources such as books, audio and video tapes, magazine articles and such for individual use in their homes. They can be given information on community opportunities for classes, workshops, seminars or meetings on subjects which will enrich their pastoral skills or spirit. You can instill an awareness that worship services, organized Bible studies, preaching missions and other special events in your church, though not designed as equipping events, will enrich their pastoring heart.

A C C O U N T A B I L I T Y FOUNDATION BLOCK #6

"It's not what is expected that gets done, it is what is inspected." Dr. Gary Sweeten, Founder and Director of Equipping Ministries International. Ronald H. Sunderland, creator of ELM(Equipping Laypeople for Ministry), writes, "Oversight or supervision is essential to the health of any lay ministry. Experience has shown conclusively that when oversight lapses, the active commitment of lay people to their ministry fades." Accountability has to be built into the ministry. We do this in three major ways: monthly reports, "pastoral supervision" and ministry-sharing times.

PROVIDE REPORTS AND POLICY REGARDING REPORTS The ministry Leadership Group needs to determine what they will do regarding reports, set the policy implement it. Not everybody likes to make out reports. This will

always be a sticky, albeit important, part of the ministry. Giving the people the rationale for reports helps them to be faithful in making them. The rationale is admittedly accountability, but it is also to keep those responsible for the ministry in touch with how the ministry is going. It is important to respond to the reports in some fashion. If people turn in reports and never get any feedback, they will never know whether they were received or if anybody reads them. No response results in no reports.

□ **PASTORAL SUPERVISION** Each lay pastor has a lay pastor, The first responsibility of this person is to pastor the lay pastor. The first interest is in him or her as a person. The second interest is supervision. The term, "pastoral supervision" was coined by Dr. Kenneth Poholy at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. The role is explained on pages 71-78 in *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* In its simple form, this person makes an appointment with the lay pastor for the purpose of getting to the question, "Tell me, how is your ministry going?" This is a moment of accountability. But instead of the supervising person having to "supervise", the lay pastors. in telling how their ministry is going, are supervising themselves. They know what they have done or not done. They know how well they have done it. By the time they have finished telling their story they have supervised themselves. This is a comfortable time for both shepherd and lay pastor and will usually end in affirmation and a time for prayer.

A F F I R M A T I O N FOUNDATION BLOCK #7

"Words of encouragement and appreciation with a pat on the back ignite the spirit."

Affirmation, the act of giving credit, praise, honor and recognition to another greatly helps establish the worth of. another in his or her mind and, if done

publicly, in the minds of others. Affirming a Lay Pastor for excellence is always in order, Affirming one for ministry well done, for a compassionate spirit, for a generous act, for growth in the use of their gifts, for handling a difficult situation with sensitivity and skill is a way of declaring the truth about a brother or sister in Christ. And it can be done in private or in public.

Affirming a person or group is Biblical. Romans 13:7 calls us to "Give everyone what you owe him... if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." The ultimate affirmation will be given by Jesus in that future day, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful ... "(Matt. 25:23). Affirmation can even include a gift if we take I Peter 5:4 literally, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." That is, of course, conditioned on our fulfilling the previous charge in verse two, "Tend the flock of God." We should withhold neither private nor public affirmation but rather try to be creative in affirming people with appropriate words, gifts and acts.

□ **GIVE PUBLIC RECOGNITION** This is to be done for both the ministry and the individuals doing the ministry. Some ways it can be done is by articles and pictures in the church paper, by pulpit announcements and by posters. The Ministry Leadership Group can come up with creative ideas to appropriately give honor to whom honor is due.

□ **PLAN AN ANNUAL MINISTRY CELEBRATION AND RECOGNITION EVENT** A ministry may be on line for years before the leaders realize that they need to do more to celebrate the ministry, before they realize what a celebration of the ministry will do for the morale of their people. At Hope Church we have annually what we call a "Ministry Celebration Dinner." This is without cost to the Lay Pastors and their spouses. It is a gala event with an emcee, music, prizes and testimonials from Lay Pastors and from people receiving pastoral

care. It is amazing how affirming it is to a Lay Pastor to be asked to do this. We recognize those who have been pastoring for certain numbers of years and give recognitions for other reasons. We conclude with a "Circle of Love", forming a circle around the room, joining hands for singing and prayer.

PASTORAL SUPERVISION The response to the supervisor's question when doing pastoral supervision, "How is your ministry going?" will include some pastoral activities and attitudes for which the lay pastor can be commended. Affirmation is a natural for the supervisor. He or she must not forget it.

ONE-ON-ONE AFFIRMATION Occasional notes, cards or letters to recognize one's faithful ministry is an excellent means of affirmation. A phone call from a ministry leader, pastor or pastoral staff will bring a lot of joy and a warm glow in one's spirit. This takes a very little time, but it is a case of a little being as lot, a little by the one doing it but a lot to the one receiving it.

S U P P O R T FOUNDATION BLOCK #8

"Many persons can do most of what we pastors do ... The task of pastors is to equip these persons for ministry and support them through administration and example." Samuel Southard in *Comprehensive Pastoral Care*.

We vocational pastors are notorious for getting a person to volunteer for a job and then leave them high and dry. They need support and we need to give it. Lay people doing significant ministry need the security of knowing they have those to whom they can turn for help and/or mentoring. The following "bricks" will give some ideas of how we can give the necessary support.

AVAILABILITY OF STAFF AND LEADERSHIP Lay Pastors are participating in

the pastoral care of the congregation, not solely responsible for it. They are partners in ministry, unsalaried volunteers who share in tending the flock. The pastor, or pastoral staff, needs to understand that since the lay people are participating as partners that they need to commit themselves to being available to deal with problems and answer questions. A research which was conducted among social workers found that they needed support in these three ways: (1) Shared responsibility for cases; (2) support in difficult cases; and (3) Help with problems. What is true for salaried social workers must be as true or more so for unsalaried lay pastors.

PROVIDE FOR CONTINUING EQUIPPING Just knowing that additional equipping opportunities for growing in their ministry are available gives support. They know there is help, that their ministry is taken seriously.

ARRANGE FOR PRAYER PARTNERS The desire and will is there. All that is needed is to provide some plan for them to pray for one another. In my camp directing days I used the "buddy" system for swimming. Every swimmer had a "buddy" who kept track of him or her. The same plan works for prayer support. This makes it possible for them to provide support for one another. I know one church which assigns new prayer partners every two months. This provides new relationships and freshens up the prayer experience.

PASTORAL SUPERVISION We focused on this earlier for other purposes but we can see that, in addition to other uses for pastoral supervision, it gives support to lay pastors. For them to know that they have one who is praying for them, who is interested in them and who will be meeting with them regularly gives strong support. They know they are not alone in bearing the burden of pastoral care. This means that the "supervisors" will need to be

committed to their people and faithful in carrying out their commitment.

F E L L O W S H I P FOUNDATION BLOCK #9

"The community which ministry creates must come together for sharing, growth and renewing."

If people who are involved in the same ministry have an opportunity to come together frequently their lives will bond in an amazing way. The bonding will keep them in the ministry and produce faithfulness. In addition to their faith, they have their ministry in common. It is the responsibility of those who lead the ministry to provide for this. All who minister must be able to move from ministry to community, then from community back into ministry. This essential cycle is more clearly seen in this diagram.

Our lay pastors come together for regular meetings quarterly for two hours,

The evening includes five segments: (1) Worship - a brief time of singing and focusing on the Lord with the help of some scripture, (2) Ministry news - and announcements, policy changes, etc.; (3) Equipping - reviewing basic material from the equipping seminar (Note: the basics need to be repeated often!), videos on pastoring skills and principles, teachings by experts in listening and other skills; (4) Sharing - dividing into small groups to share with one another how their ministry is going (the "agonies and the ecstasies"). This has prove to be the most interesting part of the evening for the lay pastors and the most around the room, joining hands to sing and pray.

PLAN SOCIAL EVENTS Creativity is the key here. An annual picnic Christmas party or other excuses to get together help to make the ministry fun

and bond their lives in Christ and in ministry. know that one reason people offer themselves for ministry is to be together with others. The you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

C O M M U N I C A T I O N FOUNDATION BLOCK #10

The ministry cannot be strong without frequent verbal and printed contact. Did you ever hear this, "Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark; you know what you are doing but nobody else does." The Ministry Leadership Group knows what they are doing but unless the ministry, its purpose, goals, needs and accomplishments are articulated and/or printed the ministry will not flourish.

□ **A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER** Most lay pastoral care ministries I know of publish a newsletter either occasionally or monthly. We title ours KEEPING P.A.C.E. The purpose of a newsletter is to maintain a meaningful printed contract with all who are involved in the ministry. The content should (1) Encourage, (2) Equip and (3) Inform. Our newsletter is one 8 1/2 x 11 sheet, both sides. Some churches produce longer ones. It does not need to be voluminous. Again, it is a case of a little doing a lot. Many people will read a paper if it is brief but lay it aside to read "later" if it is long. Rather than getting read, it gets to the bottom of the "stack."

□ **CHURCH PAPER ARTICLES** Almost every church produces a monthly publication of some kind. Ministry leaders, church staff, lay pastors and others can contribute to a regular section in the paper. It is important to keep the

ministry before the congregation for two reasons: (1) You will need to be calling people from the congregation into the ministry; and (2) it will make it easier for the lay pastors to be accepted by the people because they will know about it and think well of it.

□ **SPECIAL MAILINGS** Occasionally you may want to accentuate some milestone in the ministry or some special event. A letter to the congregation by the pastor or lay leaders would be an effective instrument for this. A critical need for additional lay pastors may warrant the effort and expense of a letter to either specially selected people or to the whole body.

□ **PERSONAL WITNESS AT WORSHIP SERVICES** If your church has lay people sharing either regularly or occasionally as part of the worship service, you have a ready-made opportunity for the lay pastors to share their experience occasionally. If that is not being done in your church, you could introduce it. A good three-point sharing outline can be: (1) What I am doing; (2) Why I am doing it; and (3) How I feel about it, or what this ministry is doing for me.

□ **BE IN TOUCH WITH OTHER CHURCHES AND THE NETWORK** Regular correspondence with other churches which have a lay pastoral care ministry will keep your ministry freshened up and you, in turn, will contribute to their strength. This can be done by exchanging newsletters, speakers, publications, etc. raised up this ministry and we are to get strength from being in touch with one another rather than going it alone.

E V A L U A T I O N FOUNDATION BLOCK #11

"Taking time to see how the ministry is doing will keep it moving ahead."

After the ministry has been on line for a time it is essential to evaluate it so as to see if it is being done the way you planned and it is performing as you expected. Evaluation is monitoring your ministry in the light of your goals for the purpose of making it as effective as it can possibly be. We need to know four things about what we are doing:

1. Are we doing what we set out to do?
2. Are we having the results we projected?
3. Are we using the methods and means we planned to use?
4. Do we need to make some changes? if so, what?

Evaluation, of course, assumes that we have a stated purpose, goals and objectives against which we can measure the current state of the ministry. If these have never been clearly written, that would need to be done before you can do an evaluation.

DESIGN INSTRUMENTS FOR EVALUATING THE MINISTRY This may take some special help from someone experienced in this skill. Or it is possible to adapt evaluation forms from organizations or agencies you are acquainted with. Samples of forms we have used are in *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?* To design your own, determine first what you want to find out and then proceed to the questions which will give you this information. You should do at least one evaluation a year.

UTILIZE THE RESULTS FOR MINISTRY IMPROVEMENT The hard work begins after getting the forms returned. They will need to be interpreted and collated. You will discover where your ministry is strong and where it is weak. Then, formulate plans for making the strong parts of your ministry stronger and the weak parts strong. The first evaluation we ever did indicated that the ministry was about seventy percent effective. The questions revealed that some of the

lay pastors were not fulfilling their commitment regularly, too well, To raise this percentage we provided additional equipping opportunities and gave incentives for them to take advantage of them.

M A I N T E N A N C E FOUNDATION BLOCK #12

This is the nuts and bolts of day-to-day office and administration work. When we would come to this topic in our national seminars on the Lay Pastors Ministry, my ministry assistant, who usually taught this unit, would invariably say, "Goodie, I get to talk about the "yucky stuff" There is nothing glamorous about the smoothly. It is something like the difference between selling a new TV set to a customer and repairing it. The sales person has an up-front position. The repair technician is a behind-the-scenes person, doing what needs to be done to make it work right. Unless the maintenance is done the ministry will come apart sooner or later.

DO ESSENTIAL OFFICE WORK There is essential office work such as keeping records, processing reports, getting out the newsletter, and much more.

REVIEW THE FLOCKS REGULARLY The size of the pastoring groups will diminish because people move away, transfer to other churches or die. Unless the flocks are gone over regularly, the number of people being pastored will decrease. For example, a lay pastor could be down to two households from the original six or eight over a period of time. When one household is gone, another assignment has to be made. Someone has to have this maintenance responsibility.

PROVIDE MATERIALS Another behind-the-scenes task is getting the materials together for a workshop, equipping seminar, fellowship meeting and other events. The supply of report forms, and getting them into the hands of

the lay pastors has to be done by someone. There are so many things!

□ **REVIEW AND UPDATE THE STRUCTURE, POLICY AND PARTICIPANTS** This is the task of the group which has ownership of the ministry. If the ministry is alive, and it better be, it will be changing. This calls for changing how things are done, updating the policy, revising the mission statement, struggling to find solutions for the problems and counseling with those lay pastors who are discouraged or whose life situation has changed to such an extent that their participation needs to be modified or discontinued.

These twelve foundation blocks were discovered over the years rather than devised at the beginning. We created the Lay Pastors Ministry over an 18-month period, conducted a pilot project for the next six months with five lay pastors to see if it would work and, finding that it did, began to implement and maintain it. In looking back over the years it became very clear that these twelve blocks were there, some of them put into place only after irreparable damage had been done. Hopefully, knowing the essential nature of these foundation blocks will help others make their ministry strong from the beginning, that it will save many from the waste of the "trial and error" process.

4

WHEN THE HONEYMOON IS OVER

THE LAY PASTORS MINISTRY AND MARRIAGE HAVE AN EXCITING PHENOMENON IN COMMON, A HONEYMOON. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE HONEYMOON IS OVER?

The start-up of marriage is often idealistic, euphoric and unrealistic. The bride and groom have expectations that no human relationship can fulfill.

The discovery that one's partner is not perfect is painful. The reality of keeping houses, washing clothes and paying the bills hits hard. Undulating moods, not feeling well, heretofore unknown temperaments and habits are shockers. Disillusionment can settle in like a chilling fog at the end of a beautiful day.

At this point, many marriages break up. For such couples, what appeared to be love proved to be an illusion: a transient infatuation, romantic passion and physical attraction. Disillusion destroys the fragile relationship. Such marriages lack underlying substance.

At this point, however, instead of divorcing, other marriages mature. Waking up from the dream, the husband and wife can now see the real person across the table. And they begin to see themselves as they never saw themselves before. Without losing the romance, passion and physical attraction their marriage

matures into an ever-deepening relationship, companionship and endearment. They adjust to their differences and pool their strengths while growing old together. It is evident that their marriage is blessed with underlying substance.

Most Lay Pastors experience three stages in their ministry. Let's name them: **(1) honeymoon (illusion), (2) no-moon (disillusion), and (3) full moon (reality).**

HONEYMOON (illusion)

This is the start-up phase of the Lay Pastors ministry. After they are equipped and commissioned. Lay Pastors start "tending" their assigned number of church members. They begin their ministry wearing rose-colored glasses. Because they are inexperienced. Lay Pastors tend to idealize their caring role: **Praying** for their people faithfully, being **Available** to them, **Contacting** them regularly, and being an **Example (PACE).**

They start with a fresh burst of passion and energy, and enthusiastic thrust of commitment, and an adolescent-like mix of awe and fear. They have high hopes of an endless succession of fulfillment and usefulness. They expect to make a difference in people's lives. They fantasize what being "love with skin on" means.

They anticipate what the seminar lead assured them, personal fulfillment and a sense of significance. They believe what they were taught, that they are servants of God and authentic pastors of their people. But they haven't yet experienced the demands of serving, caring, and the inevitable disappointments.

Happy are the Lay Pastors whose honeymoon exuberance is blessed with an underlying substance such as the following:

1. A sense of being "on assignment" sent by the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ;
2. A compelling desire to serve the God they love;
3. A passion to obey Jesus' command to "take care of my sheep;"
4. A commitment to use their special Spirit-given gifts in serving others;
5. An eagerness to faithfully work in tandem with their leaders in one of the basic ministries of their church.

NO MOON (**disillusion**)

Sooner or later the moon goes under the clouds; the honeymoon is over. Lay Pastors suffer ministry shock similar to the culture shock felt by people visiting another country.

They discovered that the task is neither as easy as they imagined nor as exciting. It becomes clear that getting personally involved with people and being there for them has a price tag. The delightful air of fulfillment, significance and usefulness is diluted by the acrid fumes of frustration and disappointment. Discovering that caring about people requires a personal and emotional investment as well as time and energy is not easy to deal with.

Some of the people assigned to them have problems which break their hearts. Some lives are hopeless life situations which depress a person who truly cares. There are church members who receive them with open arms, but the joy of this is soon neutralized by others' arms that are closed. The pseudo politeness of one of two people thinly masks what eventually proves to be covert resistance.

There are details which were not fully understood: reports, meetings, ongoing

equipping and other expectations. And there is the matter of accountability. You were not aware of the ongoing nature of pastoral care and its ever-escalating demands.

It's at this point that some Lay Pastors quit. Removing the rose-colored glasses reveal either a weak underlying substance or the lack of it. Those who quit are like John Mark who deserted Paul and Barnabas when the going got tough (Acts 15:36-38). Or they are like Demas who deserted the Apostle Paul because "he loved this world" (II Tim. 4:10).

Having said this, I must hurry to add that there *are* legitimate reasons for quitting the ministry: (1) Discovering that he or she does not have the gifts necessary for this ministry, thereby freeing one's self to explore other ministries; (2) Believing that God is leading them to use their pastoral gifts in a different ministry; (3) Over-commitment, too much on one's plate, and it will take some time to divest himself or herself of some of it; and (4) Other reasons unique to the person, sometimes known only to God.

FULL MOON (**reality**)

To borrow from a mountain-climbing scene, there are *quitters*, *campers* and *climbers*. Some who get a realistic dose of the hardship *quit*. Others endure the hardship, climb a distance, look around and are satisfied with this height so they *camp*. Others glance at the top and keep *climbing*.

Most Lay Pastors keep "climbing" when the honeymoon is over. They climb right through the *no-moon* stage to the *full-moon* stage. Quitters perceive climbers to be people with no problems, doubts and disappointments. But climbers are people who go *through* the problems, are willing to deal with

them and not run from them. Without losing the start-up passion, commitment and adolescent mix of awe and fear (which should always be with them), they press on to reach the height of mature ministry.

Instead of quitting as Damas and John Mark did, they follow on the heels of Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7). And, as Jesus told his Father, climbers will be able to tell the same Father, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4).

There are three primary marks of a mature, "full-moon" ministry: know what your ministry is, know your people, and knowing who you are.

FIRST, YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR MINISTRY IS

On the one hand your ministry is neither honeymoon nor no-moon, neither illusion nor disillusion. For example, instead of fantasizing unrealistically about PAC E-ing your people, you are prepared to accept whatever their response gives you, joy or grief.

On the other hand it is *both* honeymoon and no-moon, a *mix* of illusion and disillusion. Your start-up passion and expectations steadily as you are plagued with disappointments and frustrations. There will always be some of the euphoric because some of the euphoric is real (relationships deepen, you are making a difference in people's lives, and some people are visibly blessed by your care). There will always be some of the disappointment because disappointment is real (some people resist, you are not making a visible difference in some lives.)

Your glasses are no longer rose-colored. The ministry is still awesome, euphoric

and indescribable, but it is more than that. It is work! To love others as though your life depends on it requires personal involvement with your people and an exchange of selves regardless of their response. Caring is effective only to the extent you give yourself to your people freely, not counting the price you have to pay. Ego injury, emotional up's and down's, accountability, reports and meetings all go with the territory.

Now, looking through *clear* glasses, you see that it is a ministry with a cross. This doesn't deter you because you know that Jesus also had a ministry with a cross. He found great joy in enduring the cross (Heb. 12:2). You are surprised to discover that just as there is no ministry without a *cross*, there is no ministry without a *crown* (I Pet. 5:4). This all part of your underlying substance which keeps you climbing.

SECOND, YOU KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

They are a cross section of the membership of your church. Some are Christ-centered; some are self-centered. Some are spiritually mature; some are babes in Christ; some are spiritual; some are worldly. Some are active; some are inactive. Some are open to pastoral care; some are not. Some have overwhelming needs; others seem trouble free. Some are happy about their church; some are disgruntled. Some have an adequate support system; some do not.

Regardless of their state, they need you: your ***Praying***, your ***Availability***, your ***Contacts***, and your ***Example***. They are all included in the assignment from the Chief Shepherd, "Be shepherds of God's flock," because they are all members of your church, people who confess Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Saviour.

THIRD, YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE

You Know You are Committed. And your commitment is often tested. You are subject to disillusionment, the no-moon stage of ministry. You savor, doubt, fear and chafe under the burden. At times you are tempted to quit and at other times you are tempted to do only the minimum, just enough to satisfy your conscience. You don't like this side of you. But you are saved from making the unwise choice to quit by drawing renewed commitment and energy from the underlying substance. Your wavering is real, but so is your compelling desire to serve your Lord. To be mature in ministry is to "endure hardship like a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3).

You Know You Are Competent. Along with the Apostle Paul, however, you know that the source of your competent is outside of yourself: "Not that we are competent in ourselves...but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers" (II Cor. 3:5-6). You are learning all the skills, techniques and principles you can but as best they are only useful tools. You want to do all you can possibly do and you want to do it the very best you are capable of doing, but unless God uses what you do to make a difference in someone's life, your doing is noble but unproductive. One person who is only half trained and marginally gifted, but filled with the Spirit of God, will be far more competent than the one who is fully trained and maximally gifted, but not filled with the Spirit of God. God uses what you can do to accomplish what you never could have done. To be mature in ministry is to know that your competence comes, not from your self, but from God.

You Know You Are A Climber. You are not a quitter, not even a camper, but you keep pressing for the summit. At times most people's enthusiasm fades,

vision dims, convictions waver and commitment weakness. In reading the counsel Paul gave to Timothy, we can assume that this young pastor also had those times: "I remind you to *fan* into flame the gift of God which is in you....;" "You then, my son, *be* strong...;" "But as for you, *continue* in the things you have learned;" "*discharge* all the duties of your ministry." The words *fan*, *be*, *continue* and *discharge* are "climbing" words. To be mature in ministry is to resist being either a quitter or camper and to be daily renewed for the climb.

You Know the Substance Underlying Your Ministry. You know that it is your personal relationship with Jesus Christ, your sense of being "on assignment," your compelling desire to serve God, your passion to obey Jesus' command to "take care of my sheep," your commitment to use your Spirit-given gifts in serving others, and your eagerness to faithfully work in tandem with your leaders in one of the basic ministries of your church that constitute the substance underlying your ministry. You are nurtured, nourished, corrected, emboldened and empowered by it. Knowing the value of this substance, you intentionally seek to expand it, enrich it and draw from it. To be mature in ministry is to be daily renewed by this Holy-Spirit-generated underlying substance.

And so, what happens when the honeymoon is over? Rather than quit, you accept the heartbreaks along with the euphoric. You are ever maturing in ministry because the hardships are teaching you new things about yourself, your people and your ministry. You are drawing from the love-giving energy of the substance underlying your ministry.

5

Shall we call them Lay Pastor?

THE QUESTION, "WHAT SHALL WE CALL THEM?" IS INEVITABLE WHEN A CHURCH IS IN THE PLANNING PHASE OF STARTING A LAY PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY. THIS MONOGRAPH WILL HELP A CHURCH FIND THE ANSWER THEY CAN LIVE WITH.

"A rose called by any other name still smells the same." This may be more true of a rose than it is of lay people who share in the pastoral care of God's people. What we call them is important for, as Juan Carlos Ortiz says, "If we don't have the right word it may be that we don't have the right idea." We must have the right idea about these ministering people because there is a direct relationship between how they see themselves and how they perform.

In Hope Presbyterian Church we call them Lay Pastors. Many churches call them Shepherds. Other titles I have come across in my travel and reading are: Caregivers, Lay Ministers, Care Coordinators, In-Touch Leader, Shepherd Helpers, Area Presbyters, Lay Pastoral Visitors, Flock Leaders, Parish Leaders, Care Shepherds.

I want to make a case for calling them Lay Pastors, these people of the pew who share in the care of God's people.

THEIR FUNCTION

If in designing a building, form follows function, in pastoral care the title

follows function. What do we ask these Lay people to do? Better yet, what gifts has God given them and to what kind of ministry does he call them? What is their function?

We need a brief description of what we ask these people to do in caring for God's people. Try this: Caring for God's people is giving oneself in Christian love to a relationship in times of weakness and times of strength. These caring people have two things in common. FIRST-they each relate caringly to a bite-sized segment of the total congregation. SECOND-they are to 1) Pray for their people, 2) be Available in time of need, 3) make regular Contacts, and 4) be an Example (P A C E).

What do we expect the clergy pastors to do when we are talking about the pastoral care of individual members? The same things we expect of the Lay Pastors-the four things just listed. What gifts are required for both clergy and laity? The same: mercy, compassion, love, sensitivity, acceptance, patience.

Do all clergy have these pastoral gifts? No. I heard one church officer say of his pastor, "He loves the Lord but he doesn't seem to love people," Do all lay people have these gifts? No. Those who do have them received them from God and should be the ones who share in caring for His people.

Since by pastoring we mean caring for God's people, lay people who share in caring for God's people should be called pastors - Lay Pastors.

In my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*, in the section titled, "Lay People are Pastoring", I wrote,"... if commissioned lay people love like pastors, care like pastors, visit like pastors, have pastoring gifts like pastors and pastor like pastors, they are pastors" (pg. 15) If a pastor called by any other name is still a pastor then why not use the designation "pastor?"

THEIR IDENTITY

QUESTION: What kind of call does it take for lay people to be caring for God's people?

ANSWER: The same kind of call it takes for a clergy pastor, a call from God. Then, an opportunity to test the call.

QUESTION: How does this call reach lay people?

ANSWER: The same way it reaches the clergy, ranging all the way from a vision and a voice, to a suggestion by some interested person who has spotted the gifts in him or her, to a faint interest becoming a calculated decision.

In the early church, people who showed signs of maturity and wisdom were appointed or chosen to be elders. Paul on one occasion called the elders of the Ephesians church together and charged them "to care for God's people" (Acts 20:28). Peter charged the elders addressed in his letter to "tend the flock of God" (1 Peter 5:2). Jesus had previously charged him to "take care of my sheep" (John 21:17).

In other words, people with pastoral gifts were chosen to use those gifts in the pastoral care of the others. The "others" had different gifts such as administration, teaching, helping, etc. These "others" were to use their gifts in appropriate ways. Those with pastoring gifts were to use them in pastoring. The Spirit is the one who determines who gets which fits. We try to discover our gifts and help others discover theirs and mutually encourage one another in using them. I am building a case for calling those who care for God's people *Lay Pastors*. I am not talking about identifying those who should pastor. They are not the apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers of Ephesians 4:11. They are the saints of Ephesians 4:12, the laity who are to be equipped by the apostles

and others. The evangelist of 4:11 are to equip some of the saints of 4:12 to evangelize. The teachers of 4:11 are to equip od the saints of 4:12 to teach. Not get it, the pastors of 4:11 are to equip some of the saints of 4:12 to pastor the saints to whom the Spirit of God has given pastoring gifts.

So far we have seen that the function of these "saints" is to care for God's people -- "tend the flock of God." If clergy who care for God's people are called pastors, then lay people who are gifted, called and set apart to care for God's people most certainly can be called pastors -- Lay Pastors.

THEIR TITLE

Looking at four English words in the Greek will help us decide what we shall call these people of the pew who are gifted, called and apart to pastorally care for God's people. The four words: (1) *Pastor* (Eph. 4:11), (2) *Tend* (John 21:17 and Acts 20:28), (3) *Saints* (Ephesians 4:12), and (4) *Chief Shepherd* (I Peter 5:4).

PASTOR (Poimane') means a herdsman, a shepherd. Although this Greek word appears many times in the New Testament, only in Ephesians 4:11 is it translated "pastor." Please note that Pastor is the most common word used in the American church to designate he clergy, other words being Reverend and Minister. The seven years I was pastor of Haili Church in Hilo, Hawaii, I was called "Kahu," which, literally translated from the Hawaiians, is "Shepherd." I have been referred to as a shepherd in other churches I have pastored, but never called "Shepherd." While pastoring Randolph Heights Presbyterian Church in St. Paul , Minnesota I was called "Pastor Mel" by everyone. I liked it.

TEND (Poimai'no) is the verb form of the noun poimane'. It means to feed, to tend, to keep sheep, to furnish pastorage of food, to nourish. In Acts 20: 28

this one Greek word is translated differently in three translations. "Feed" - KJV; "care for" - RSV, and "be shepherds" - NIV. I I Peter 5:2 Poimai'no is also translated three ways: "feed" - KJV; "tend" - RSV, and "be shepherds" - KJV.

If our definitions of pastor (Poimane) is one who tends or cares for the people of God, the word can be applied to both clergy and laity who are gifted, called and set aside for this ministry. God has done the gifting and calling. The church acknowledges God's work by setting the person aside with the laying on hands or some other meaningful act.

It seems that we will need to downgrade our understanding of what God has gifted and called this person to do by using a term meaning less than pastor, or upgrade the person to match the divine gifting and calling by using the term pastor. Do we dare think of the ministry of this person in terms less than God has intended by using a designation less than pastor? Is it not better to think of the ministry as God thinks of it and bring lay people up to that level. We do this by teaching the Biblical truth about preparing God's people to give pastoral care. Let's demonstrate publicly that we have the right idea by using the right word.

SAINT (Hag'ios) means a person whose services God employs: one set apart to be, as it were, exclusively his. Just as the Israelite knew they were selected by God to be his, Christians are to know they are selected by him to be his. Psalm 4:3 is true of every Christian: "But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself."

This Greek word *hag'ios* in Ephesians 4:12, designated those set apart by God to do his ministry, is translated "saint" in KJV and RSV. The NIV translate it "God's people." The elders referred to in Acts 20:28, who were to "care for the church of God" (RSV), and the elders addressed by Peter in I Peter 5:1 who

were to "tend the flock of God," (RSV) were most certainly saints, hag'ios, who were gifted, called and set apart to give pastoral care

According to Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12, Christians (hag'ios) are given gifts for a variety of ministries. Those given the gift of mercy have the basic pastoral gift. We can believe that there is a sufficient number of people in every church given the necessary pastoral gifts to care for the congregation. The clergy pastor is to equip these lay pastors for their ministry. Let's call them what they are. Lay Pastors.

CHIEF SHEPHERD (Archepoi'mane) means Chief Shepherd (I Peter:5:4). The only Chief Shepherd is Jesus Christ! The local salaried and ordained pastor is neither the Chief Shepherd nor the only person to be doing the pastoring. According to Ephesians 4:11-12 the major pastoral role of the clergy pastor (undershepherd) is to equip the saints for their ministry. So, Let's call those who have been equipped Lay Pastors.

Why "Lay"? Think of it this way, not using the technical language of the Greek but using the terminology we are accustomed to using: There are vocational pastors and volunteer pastors. Period! Both are given pastoral gifts by God. The vocational pastor is to equip the pastorally gifted people. The volunteer pastor is to be equipped so as to do the pastoring.

CONCLUSION

Does a rose called by any other name still smell the same? Of course. Does a person gifted, called and equipped for pastoring still do the same if called by some other name? Maybe. Maybe not. Other terms may be O'K if the persons know what God has called them to be and do. However, if they don't have the right word, it may be they will not have the right idea. If they don't have the right idea it may be they will not do the right thing. Have I made my case? If

not, be sure your "roses" are really "roses" so that if they are called by some other name they will still "smell the same."

6

Do you know what you are doing?

(Do you know who you are?)

SOMETIMES A PERSON IS SERVING THE LORD BUT IS NOT IN TOUCH WITH THE TREMENDOUS DEPTH OF THAT HE OR SHE IS DOING. TO KNOW THE INCARNATIONAL NATURE OF "WORKS OF SERVICE" IS TO BE INWARDLY CHARGED WITH VISION, COMMITMENT, ENTHUSIASM, PERSEVERANCE, AND JOY IN MINISTRY. KNOWING THAT JESUS IS IN YOU AS GOD WAS IN HIM CARRIES YOU FAR BEYOND THE IDEA OF VOLUNTEERING TO DO A TASK. IT EVEN CARRIES YOU BEYOND THE OBEDIENT ACT OF ANSWERING HIS CALL TO USE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN MINISTRY. KNOWING THAT JESUS IS IN YOU HELPS YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE JESUS' ARMS, HANDS, FEET AND HEART FOR OTHER. ACCEPTING THIS BIBLICAL TEACHING HAS TREMENDOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR LAY PASTORS.

TO SEE JESUS IS TO SEE GOD

To look at Jesus is to look at God. Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'show us the Father'? Don't you know that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?" (John 14:9 & 10) Again, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me." (John 12:44 & 45)

TO SEE YOU IS TO SEE JESUS

We believe Jesus. To look at him is to look at God. God became human flesh so he could be seen, heard, touched and known personally. John the disciple testified that he heard, saw and touched the son - God incarnated in human flesh. (I John 1:1) Paul the Apostle wrote, "It was God personally present in christ..." (II Corinthians 5:19 ANT). The dictionary definition of incarnation is "Embodiment, especially in human form."

We can understand, then, when Jesus said, "As the Father sent me, I am sending you," he was referring to his incarnational presence in you. To see you is to see Jesus. You can truly say, "He or she who looks at me sees the one who sent me."

You are Jesus incarnate in human flesh. Your new birth, produced by the Holy spirit, was the occasion of Jesus coming into your life. You are included in his prayer to his Father in John 17, "I have given them the glory you gave me.../ *in them* and you in me." The incarnation of Jesus in you is taught very clearly in Colossians 1:27, ".....The glorious riches of this ministry, which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory." Because he is in us we, "with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory." We are being transformed more and more into his kindness. (II Corinthians 3:18)

Fangpane put it this way in his book, The House of the Lord, "Almighty God, in effect, said to his son, 'I resurrected you, bringing you through all eternity to seat you next to me on my throne. I want you to rest here at my right hand. The Holy Spirit will unite you with those who believe; sespecially, they will actually become your body, and those living on the earth will become as your feet'."

IMPLICATIONS FOR LAY PASTORS

This almost unbelievable truth has tremendous implications for lay pastors! They are:

FIRST - You are being sent by Jesus just as Jesus was sent by the Father.

SECOND - Jesus is in you just as the Father was in him.

THIRD - When people see you, hear you and touch you they are seeing, hearing and touching (or being touched by) your Lord.

FOURTH - As Jesus remained close to the Father you are to remain close to Jesus. He is the source of your spiritual life, your love for and success in ministry. Don't go it alone!

The reality of the continuing incarnation must be learned, i.e., known theologically and experientially. To truly know this requires a paradigm shift, not just taking in the information. "Metanoia" has to take place - a shift of the mind, an awakening, a recreation of the self, a transcendence of the mind's normal comprehensive capacity.

The word metanoia is not found in many modern dictionaries but is a very useful word to help understand what we mean by "learning" or "paradigm shift". the word is Greek, combining meta, which means "above" or "beyond" as in "metaphysics", with noia, which means "mind." Senge writes in **The Fifth Dimension**, "To grasp the meaning of metanoia is to grasp the deeper meaning of learning, for learning also involves a fundamental shift or movement of mind Learning has become synonymous with taking in information Yet, taking in information is only distantly related to real learning." His example makes the point clear, "It would be nonsensical to say, 'I just read a great book about

bicycle riding-I've now learned that'."

Real learning makes it possible to see something in a way we never saw it before. Real learning enables us to do something we were never able to do before. To truly learn the teaching about the incarnational reality, Jesus in us, gives us a brand new perception of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ and to be doing the ministry he called us to do.

To learn this greatly deepens the caring activity and effectiveness of Lay Pastors in these four ways;

1. They keep in close touch with Jesus as Jesus kept in close touch with the Father.
2. They have a servant mind-set, for Jesus was a servant.
3. They realize how greatly important P A C E is;

Prayer - Jesus prayed. "He looked toward heaven and prayed." John 17:1

Available - Jesus was available to people. "A man with leprosy came and knelt before him. . . ." Matthew 8:2

Contact - Jesus took the initiative in contacting his people. "Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore . he called out to them . . ." John 21: 4 & 5

Example - Jesus expected to be an example. After washing his disciples' feet he said, "I have set you an example." John 13:15

4. They feel accountable to Jesus for what they do and how they do it. Vision, motivation, perseverance, faithfulness and excellence flow

from the inner sense of being personally accountable to him

A FINAL THOUGHT

The ultimate expectations nourish the spirits of lay pastors who are learning and living the reality of the continuing incarnation, highly motivating them to press on:

1. Hearing Jesus words, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:23) and,
2. Receiving the future bonus, "When the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away." (1 Peter 5:4)

so, this is what you are doing, who you are and why you are doing what you are doing; being the body, feet, hands and heart of Jesus to your people. "He who receives you receives me." Matthew 10:40

7

People who resist

ONE OF THE MOST FRUSTRATING EXPERIENCES A LAY PASTOR HAS TO DEAL WITH IS A PERSON (OR HOUSEHOLD) WHO RESPONDS TO THE FIRST CONTACT WITH RESISTANCE. THEIR FIRST QUESTION IS, "WHAT DO I DO?" ONE OF THE FIRST THOUGHTS MAY BE, " I MUST BE A FAILURE." ADMITTEDLY, LAY PASTOR FACES. GOD KNOWS ALL ABOUT RESISTANCE. FOR MOST CASES HE WILL HELP A LAY PASTOR BREAK THROUGH IT, TRANSFORMING RESISTANCE INTO RELATIONSHIP.

Why do some people resist lay pastoring initiatives? There are several possible reason, many of which you can only guess at because of the distance the resisting people keep themselves from you. one or more of the following list is probably the reason you are experiencing resistance:

1 Timid Some people are not open to you because they are not open to any new relationships or are at least very cautious about getting involved with another "friend." This is their nature. They are just plain timid so it is much easier for them to say no to you than to risk acquaintance with someone they don't already know or know well.

2. Fear Some people have been "burned" by folks they trusted or church programs they initially liked. They are fearful of trying another. They believe it is safer to say no than to again risk a bad experience. For them, no involvement guarantees no disappointment or problem.

3. Unacquainted They do not know what this new ministry or relationship is. They are not certain of what is expected of them. They have no way of

knowing the benefits of being prayed for regularly and having someone there for them. Their lack of knowledge is not due to not being told, but to their difficulty of "hearing."

4. Spiritual Simplicity Many Christians have to grow spiritually and are like a child who, while growing older, has not matured in other ways. The offer of Christen love and friendship is a threat to their present level of spiritual life. They have not yet accepted the fact that they have been born into a family, that they have become a member of a body; so they resist the approach of a brother or sister who only wants to love them, be in touch with them and pray for them. They find it more comfortable to leave things as they are. The fact is, they don't want their vocational pastor to get too close either.

5. Ego Their feelings and thoughts are that they do not need a lay pastor. They are doing O.K. as they are. They are active in church, growing spiritually and have many Christian friends. "Assign someone who needs a lay pastor," they may say. They come close to resenting the ideas that someone thinks they need a lay pastor.

6. Subconscious Neither you nor they know why they are not open to having a lay pastor. The reasons are beyond the mental horizon. If pressed for a reason they would have no explanation for not wanting someone from church to enter their lives as their lay pastor. That's just the way it is and they are not ready at this time to change. Their lay pastor is at a loss to understand why.

When they encounter resistance, lay pastors often come to one or more of these three false conclusions:

1. These people don't need a lay pastor.
2. They are rejecting me. They would accept someone else.
3. Let's pastor only those who want a lay pastor.

The following three responses correct the three faulty conclusions, number for number:

1. Everybody needs pastoring. Every man, woman, boy and girl needs someone praying for them regularly and in other ways caring about them. The gospel is for all whether all accept it or not. The same is true of pastoral care. God charges us to tend his flock, to care for his people. He knows they need tending even though they don't know it and are not asking for it. If we are to serve God we must commit ourselves to care about his people during the time they are not aware of their need.

2. They are resisting the ministry, not you. I resist sales people coming to my door. It doesn't make any difference who the salesperson is, I resist their efforts. I am not rejecting a particular person. I am resistant to welcoming into my house all salespersons ringing my doorbell. In the same way, you just happen to be the one God has chosen to be "love with skin on it" to this household. They are resisting your caring initiative, not you.

3. The third erroneous conclusion is corrected by the responses just given, but we must add a very important principle: people who do not want a lay pastor in all likelihood need a lay pastor more than those who are open to you. Therefore, the challenge is to find ways to pastor these people in spite of their being closed or partially closed to you.

So, how does one pastor a person who resists? Here is an example which helps to understand how you can pastor a person who is not open to you. Early in my ministry my wife belonged to a group in the church who had "Secret pals." Without being seen, her secret pal would surreptitiously contact her through cards, letters, little favors and even phone calls with a disguised voice on her birthday, anniversary and holidays. She even contacted her at times when there

was no reason except to let her know that she was thinking of her. It was all done out of sight. There was no visible contact. Char did not know who it was until the day of revelation, the annual "Secret pals party." of course, char also was a secret pal to someone and was doing the same kind of creative things for her throughout the year.

Your relationship with your resister is neither secretive nor deceptive but you can do a lot of pastoring without them knowing what is going on. The pastoring commitment you make is to "P A C E" your people;

Pray for them regularly,

Available to them,

Contact them regularly,

Example, be an example to them

You can do all four of these pastoring functions before they accept you and without a person-to-person contact. Let's see how:

PRAY You can pray for your people regularly without either their permission or request. When you make a brief contact by phone or mail, it is good to tell them you are praying for them, that you want things to be going well for them. According to Billy Graham, in a TV interview December 30, 193, even presidents of the United States want to be prayed for. your resisters may not affirm you when you tell them you are praying for them but you can assume their gratitude. The challenges through the days, months and even years of resistance is to be faithful to you commitment to pray regularly for them.

AVAILABLE They already have the information about your availability because they received a letter telling them you are their lay pastor. Your attempted contact reinforces that. The brochure, enclosed with the letter, spells out clearly

your availability to them. The rest is up to you. In your heart you need to be ready to be there for them when a crisis such as being hospitalized hits or when they begin to lessen their resistance. Your faithfulness in praying is the key to being available. It keeps you ready.

CONTACT Birthdays, anniversaries, holidays and other special occasions give good reason to contact them by card, letter, phone or appropriate gift. On Valentine's Day one lay pastor took a large, and I mean large, valentine cookie to each of her households, including the resisting one. Another, a husband and wife, took a poinsettia to their people at Christmas. Creative ideas for contact will come out of your talking with other lay pastors and, even more so, out of your time of prayer. It might help at this point, to re-read my earlier example of secret pals.

EXAMPLE Your backing off, while not backing out, from the resisting person so as to be a blessing rather than an irritant will make you an example of one who is sensitive and respectful of their wishes. Your infrequent and gentle contacts will make you an example of one who is persistent in love. Somehow they will know you are one who loves the Lord, loves your church and loves them. What an instructive example you can be even though you are at the peripheral of their life!

The challenge to you is not to give up, not to get discouraged or disgusted, not to back out, not to fall for one or more of the erroneous conclusions others have made and not to be delinquent in fulfilling the commitment you made to your church and to God to care for his people. Even those who resist. Persistence is the word. Hebrews 10:35 & 36 galvanize me to continue doing what God is calling me to do and it should do the same for you:

"So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised."

combining Hebrews 11:27 with 12:2 the same for me:

"He (Moses) persevered because he saw him who is invisible . . . Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of our faith."

Second to the scriptures through which God speaks to us and prayer whereby God counsels us, there is a startling principle which takes us by surprise and informs us about the dynamics of resistance and supplies the energy for persistence through the months or years of rejection. This is the principle: often people do not know what they need until someone comes along and offers it to them.

After accepting what is offered, they discover that it feels good, that they are comfortable with it and even ask, "How did I get along without this before?" They absorb it like sponges. We all know the principle. For example, I didn't know how comfortable a down-filled coat was and how warm it would keep me in the Minnesota winters until my wife, after a few years of patient and persistent urging, persuaded me to buy one. Now I really wonder how I got along without it before!

People who at first resist accepting a lay pastor, but who eventually break through the resistance find out how good it is to have someone who is praying for them and caring about them. They did not know what they were missing until love began to get through. There are many illustrations and examples of this.

The first is the Gospel. How many people have resisted coming to Christ for years, only to discover at the break-through that they had been missing the best of life. Now, instead of avoiding the people who prayed for them and witnessed to them they are eternally grateful to them for their persistence.

Next, a life-situation illustration. Years ago, an elder in a church I pastored, sympathized with me about my bleak financial future. He knew the church paid only a subsistence salary, that it was impossible to lay much away for retirement. He cared in a helpful way. He told me of a sure investment. I resisted. It seemed impossible for me to get together the minimum requirement of what seemed like a large sum of money. Besides that, I just was cared and he was persistent. Finally the breakthrough. Putting more confidence in him than either in the company or my judgments, my wife and I scraped together every penny we had and invested. After several years it paid off ten-fold, giving us an adequate financial base for the rest of our lives. Stan Johnson had love. He had patience. He persisted in caring about me while I persisted in resistance. You wouldn't believe the creative reasons I gave him for not wanting to follow his recommendation. Now I literally don't know what I would do if he had given up on me. I know the principle well: often people do not know that they need until someone comes along and offers it to them.

Another personal experience underscores that principle. My first response to Ron Rand was "no" when he asked me if I would consider a position on the staff of College Hill Presbyterian Church. This was in 1976. We were both attending a conference at Wheaton College. Ron had been a member of the staff for some time and the church was looking for a Minister of pastoral care. I told him I was satisfied with my ministry as pastor of the Randolph Heights Presbyterian church in St. Paul, Minnesota. The next day at the cafeteria he asked me again. "I don't think so; I'm sufficiently challenged where I am," was my response. He was persistent. The next day, again at lunch, he asked me to pray about it. I

countered by asking him to write me a letter about it.

Ron was the example of what a lay pastor can do with a resister. He was loving. He took the initiative. His persistence was tempered with sensitivity and respect. He followed through. I ended up on the staff of that church. It took only a few days for me to be overwhelmed with what I had been missing and what I would have continued to miss if Ron had not taken the initiative and followed the initiative with persistence. It opened a period of great growth in my life and ministry, part of which was developing the Lay pastors Ministry and writing the book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*, which has carried this model for congregational care to the often people do not know what they need until someone comes along and offers it to them.

The next example is the experience of one of the lay pastors at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. The lay pastor is Young lady. She phoned one of her newly appointed flock, who was also a young lady, to make an appointment to get together for the first visit. She met resistance. "I don't was told. It was flat rejection. But the lay pastor prayed and contacted her resister by phone occasionally to see how she was doing. But she was repeatedly rejected. A long time after the first rejection the girl hit a crisis. Immediately she was open to her lay pastor. She was anxious for her to come and help her past the crisis. Her lay pastor was there for her and saw her through some very difficult months. She did not know what she needed until her lay pastor come along and offered it to her with patience, prayer and perseverance.

The reality of resistance, understanding the reasons, knowing how to lovingly and creatively respond and awareness of the proven principle that often people do not know what they need until someone comes along and offers it to them all lead to four things one must know when caring about one of God's people

who resists your caring initiatives:

1. know that you have something they need - love with skin on it.
2. know that you must persevere in giving them what they need: P. A. C. E.
3. know that you have to find a way to give it to them: -Continue to take the initiative. -Be prayerful, patient, persistent, sensitive and respectful.
4. Know that there will be a breakthrough. know that at that time they will discover how much they needed and wanted what you had to give, "love with skin on it." It's what God wanted them to have. He chose you to give it, no matter what the cost.

8

A New Mind-set

PAPER ON HOW THE ROLES OF BOTH CLERGY AND LAITY ARE CHANGING AND HOW TO "GO WITH THE FLOW." THE WORDS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET ISAIAH NEED TO BE HEARD IN FULL VOLUME FOR THIS NEW DAY IN THE CHURCH: "FORGET THE FORMER THINGS; DO NOT DWELL ON THE PAST. SET. I AM DOING A NEW THING! DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT?" (ISAIAH 43: 18, 19)

GOD IS CREATING A NEW MIND-SET IN HIS PEOPLE FOR THIS NEW THING HE IS DOING IN HIS CHURCH. AN EXAMPLE:

OLD MIND-SET: THE PASTOR HAS ALL OF THE GIFTS REQUIRED TO NURTURE AND CARE FOR A CONGREGATION

NEW MIND-SET: ONLY ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF A CONGREGATION TOGETHER HAVETHE GIFTS REQUIRED TO NURTURE AND CARE FOR A CONGREGATION.

LOREN MEAD, DIRECTOR OF THE ALBAN INSTITUTE IN WASHINGTON, D.C., MAKES THIS OBSERVATION: "MINISTRY IN THE PAST AGE WAS THE TASK FOR THE PROFESSIONAL.....THE NEW MINISTRY IS THE TASK OF THE PEOPLE."

A NEW MIND-SET FOR A NEW DAY

A paper on how the roles of both clergy and laity are changing and how to

"go with the flow."

INTRODUCTIONS

"Christians Finding Help From Spiritual Mentors" was the caption of a feature article in the June 24, 1990 issue of the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Written by staff writer, Martha Sawyer Allen. Here are some quotes:

"Instead of depending only on a minister or priest, more and more Christians are reaching out to each other to deepen their faith journeys."

"Shirley Rowley, director of pastoral ministry at St. Michael's said,there's no way ordained clergy can do all the ministry. I believe this ti the future of the church. Ministry belongs to the people."

"Several experts say the increase in nonordained ministry is the leading trend in American religion. While they recognize the value of an ordained person, many are beginning to understand that it doesn't require a seminary degree to help another person on a spiritual journey."

"Said the Rev. Loren Mead, director of the Alban Institute in Washington, D.C., 'Ministry in the past age was the task for the professional in the pulpit or overseas...The new ministry is the task of the people.....'"

The church is in the midst of a major transition. The roles of both clergy and laity, once cleary defined, are no longer the same. John Stoot of England is calling it the "Second Reformation."

Today's church has inherited a crippling clergy-laity split from the past. It is

now caught up in a revolutionary transition. The church is no longer what it used to be for either clergy or laity. The positive side of this changing landscape is seen when you view it as a new wind of the Spirit blowing through the church.

Today, the church is giving the ministry to the people like it gave the Scriptures to the people in the sixteenth century. Some are resisting what is going on. Some are going to extremes. Others are struggling to understand what God is doing and are working at ways to give, the ministry to the people.

We will need to explore this new terrain in five areas if we are not to only survive this revolution but discover where God is going so we can go with him:

1. The revolutionary change
2. The problems and the struggle
3. The role of the clergy
4. The role of the laity
5. The partnership in ministry

THE REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

For centuries the ministry has been the task of the professional. Instead of singing, "Look what they've done to my song"; it is, "Look what they've done to my role." The clergy are tumbling from the lofty status position which carried authority and privilege. They had built a power system. They controlled the church, the seminaries and the denominational offices. They determined theology and ecclesiastical life. The church leadership was authoritarian and clericalist. Now, they are no longer a privileged class. Both their status and authority is suffering decline.

Loren Mead, president of the Alban Institute titled an article in the May/June, 1990 issue of Action Information, "Reinventing the Congregation." He says that the changes which must take place are so major that instead of tampering with the congregations or polishing them up a bit we need to "reinvent" them. "What is taking place". he says, "falls somewhere between evolution and revolution. And the outcome is not entirely in our hands."

My appeal to the church is to discern where God is leading it and to make whatever minor and massive changes are required to go with God. Somehow we must make a 190-degree turn from where the church was as early as the beginning of the second century. A distinct cleavage began to appear between clergy and laity in spite of the fact that in the first century every Christian had clearly become a separate "order." The church followed the model of Roman magistrates and therefore departed from the way the Spirit of God had energize the church.

Clergy must see that they are not a privileged class, that their ministry is one part of the whole, that other believers are equally parts of the whole, even though not as prominent as the clergy. Laity must see that they are not second-class Christians, but are equally called of God to ministry; that they, along with all other Christians, including clergy, are authentically parts of the whole.

The Scriptures guide us. Paul's example of the body helps us to accept each part as important to the whole, even though, due to their unique function, some are more visible than others.

The tools we have for dealing with this change do not work well for the kind of escalating transition we are experiencing during these times. People are handling the change in four different ways. 1) Some, as they sense that things

are not the same, try harder to make the old way work. 2) Some have swung to the extreme and have become entertainment centers or champions of an acculturated Christianity in trying to find their way. 3) Some others are disillusioned, frustrated, and even devastated as they watch the demise of their church and ministry. 4) Still others are bravely facing the new challenge, doing what needs to be done to go with God in giving the ministry to the people.

There are many outstanding models of the letter, Let's look at some of them:

EASTSIDE FOURSQUARE CHURCH, KIRKLAND WASHINGTON.

This church has grown from a few attenders in 1980 to 4000 today. They are mostly "baby boomers." pastor Doug Murren states his ideology clearly, "We have set about deprofessionalizing our congregation. As vocational leaders in our congregation, we are moving more and more toward not doing the work ourselves; instead, we are recruiting, training and releasing others to do our work. Why? Because I truly believe any position that is presently salaried can probably be done just as well - and perhaps even better - by several volunteers. Remember we are not meant to be mere spectators; we are called to be active participators. I am bold enough to predict at this time that the thirty-something people will laicize the church again. ("The Baby Boomerang, Doug Murren Regal Books, 1990 page 268)

SKYLINE WESLEYAN, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA.

John Maxwell, pastor, describes the senior pastor of the future as a general who directs an army, not a Red Cross worker helping the wounded one at a time. He says too many pastors stop to tend one wounded soldier when leadership so that no hurting person The pastor/general must give effective leadership so that no hurting person in his church is overlooked. But at the same time he must provide leadership for every aspect of the battle. Whereas pastors used to lead people, today's pastor is training leaders (lay and staff) who in turn lead

the church."

WILLOW CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH, SOUTH BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS.

Recruiting lay workers is serious business at Willow Creek. Says, pastor Bill Hybels, "When it comes to recruitment, too many church leaders are 'slot' oriented. They identify a need in their ministry, then look for someone to fill that slot. New members are challenged to discover their spiritual gifts so they can serve where they are most effective and fulfilled." He uses the phrase, "Every member a minister" to describe the goal for lay involvement. The church's Network Ministry offers seminars which lead people through a spiritual gift inventory workbook. Then individual counselors help them determine their three strongest gifts and guide them into appropriate ministry options.

NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH, PORTLAND, OREGON.

They have the most effective cell ministry in America, according to Elmer Towns. These "TLC Groups" are led by lay people who are called "Lay Pastors." Pastor Dale Galloway teaches these lay pastors, who in turn teach the people in these cells. In addition, he channels requests for hospital visitation, prayer for the sick, absentee problems and other problems to the lay pastors. His own description of his job: "My job is, first to preach on Sundays, and second to make 500 lay pastors successful." To do this, he confesses that he had to learn to let go of ministry and to motivate others for ministry.

PERIMETER CHURCH, ATLANTA, GEORGIA.

Pastor Randy Pope explains that in the traditional church model, the pastor does the ministry, and the people receive the ministry. In another model the pastor and his staff recruit, train, deploy and evaluate all lay people in the ministry. Perimeter believes in a model in which God calls each person. The staff member is the equipper. pope refers to the staff as "leader-equipppers." The aim is to use every person in the church in ministry. At the end of each

Inquirer's Class, the prospective members are challenged to more than join the church. They are asked to become part of the ministry. (NOTE: The preceding four churches are written up in 10 of Today's Most Innovative Churches, by Elmer L Towns. Regal Book, 1990.)

A dramatic change is taking place. For some, the stream flows past them, leaving them to wither. For some, it is flowing over them, inundating them with frustration, anger, failure or indifference. These people may look forward to retirement, vocational change or burn out.

The change which is taking place is not the result of planning. It is the working of the Holy Spirit of God in his church. Therefore, we cannot control it. We can only resist it, be swamped by it or go with it. There are at least three ways we can go with it:

1. Be serious about lay ministry. Not going about it like one would play "Trivia" but like those who desperately want something significant to happen. Until that passion is there, nothing of strategic importance will happen. Frustration and decline will continue.

2. Be open to the new. Often we will only be open to the new under press. Usually, in a church, only crises will open the window to crises the church faces today:

- a. Membership loss;
- b. Leadership crisis;
- c. Attendance decline;
- e. Clergy scandals;
- f. Cultural indifference to churches.

These crises provide "learning opportunities", a time of readiness to change.

3. Be informed. Books, seminars, conferences and periodicals by the dozen are alerting church leaders to the lay ministry revolution. However, many are seeing but not perceiving, hearing but not understanding. Hear it! **THIS IS A NEW DAY FOR THE CHURCH. GOD IS LEADING HIS CHURCH TO GIVE THE MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLE.** Just, as Romans 1:17, "The righteous will live by faith" came alive to Martin Luther in 1517, Ephesians 4:11 & 12, "Pastors and teachers...prepare God's people for works of service" is coming alive to the church today. God is calling some folks to a specific "work of service" - pastoral care. I Peter 5:2 is the mandate, "Be shepherds of God's flock." Since the Lay Pastors Ministry was launched in college Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati in 1978, it has become an international movement producing a quarterly newsletter, coordinating a network of churches, sponsoring an annual conference, publishing materials and providing leadership in lay pastoral care. And this is only part of a stream which is drawing an increasing number of churches into its ever-widening flow. It is an exhilarating number Let us now turn to the problems encountered in this time of massive change.

THE PROBLEMS AND THE STRUGGLE

Laity have been engaged in passive participation. They are accustomed to listening to teaching and preaching with a minimum expectation of action. They serve on boards, committees and task forces to carry out the plans of the clergy or denomination. At best they are free to critique and modify a proposal or even given the prerogative of accepting or rejecting it. Now they are being "unleashed" (Frank Tillapaugh's term) from passive participation to active participation.

Energy have been accustomed to running the show. They have been ecclesiastical position with special privileges and prominence. Rarely has their authority and actions been questioned. All is radically different now! The downside of this new day is a diminishing status, erosion of confidence in motivations, damaged public image and loss of ability to impact our culture. The upside is the unmasking of the clergy so we are seen for what we are - human, faulty and in need of ministry partners. Can the downside be God's inimitable way of getting "pastors/teachers" to equip the saints for the work of the ministry? probably!

In this time of transition neither clergy nor laity are sure of their role, both are pioneers, finding their way over uncharted terrain. The uncertainty of their roles are in these areas:

1. **Training.** The clergy do not know how to train laity and they do not know with what to train them. The laity do not know what kind of training is needed, how much is needed, and from whom they should get it. Their wondering range from no training to getting a seminary degree.
2. **Differences.** When there is a difference of opinion about strategy, direction, form, procedure, personnel, emphasis, content, etc., who makes the final decision, and whose responsibility is it to ameliorate the hurt feelings or frayed relationships of the loser?
3. **Authority.** In budget making and spending; in scheduling events; in the relative importance of programs; in selection of curriculum' in evaluating the need, usefulness, or appropriateness of a new program; in the use of facilities or equipment; who has the authority?

Seminaries were created to serve the church by generating professionals who

could lead the laity in their passive participation. They can now serve could lead the laity in their passive participation. They can now were the church best by generating professionals who will equip non-professionals to engage in "active participation". What we are proposing is that seminaries begin to train the church's pastors/teachers to give the ministry to the people. Some few are. Those who are, have rediscovered Ephesians 4:11 & 12 and are gong with the new wind of the Spirit blowing in the church today. It is clear that the struggle in the local church is also the struggle of the seminary and denominational bureaucracy.

One surprise in this transition is that we do not have a vocabulary which communicates the new role of the laity. The most common term is "lay ministry". But this very term contributes to a second class image of the ministry of the laity. It encourages the self image of inferiority and invites the lament, "I'm only a lay person." The need for a term which communicates equality of a call to ministry and which can also be easily understood challenges our creativity.

I have begun to refer to vocational ministers and volunteer ministers. I believe this communicates the parity of ministry but the terms may be more novel than clear. The lay/clergy vocabulary is so widely sued that it makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to change the concept. The wrong word perpetuates the wrong ides. The lay/clergy dichotomy imprisonment is prolonged the vocabulary.

Three problems obstruct the progress of the transition.

First, the professional pastor's reluctance to relinquish control.

It is very difficult for those called by God to do ministry, trained in seminary to do ministry, ordained to do ministry and called by a congregation to do

ministry to give this ministry to the people. Transferring "their ministry" to the laity militates against both their human possessiveness and the traditional protectiveness of the church. Some feel threatened by giving up control. Are they afraid that some laity will outperform them in their areas of call, training and experience? If they are, they have forgotten that the supreme moment for a football coach is when the one he has been training surpasses him.

To give the ministry to the people requires an understanding and acceptance of Ephesians 4:11 & 12. It requires a new congregation to do. It requires what "do ministry" is now perceived as equipping others to do the hand on ministry which they were called by the congregation to do. It requires what they believe Paul was also writing to them when he introduced Timothy, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified, to teach others." All we are talking about is the clergy giving (entrusting) the ministry to others who are also called by God.

Those who do not feel threatened may fear they are being replaced and will therefore lose what is giving them significance in life, i.e. doing the ministry to which they were called and for which they were trained and ordained.

The thrilling resolution of this inner struggle is for them to see that shifting their role from doing ministry to the role of equipping people to do ministry is the grand fulfillment for their call. By fulfilling their call to "equip the saints for the work of ministry", clergy are enabling lay people to fulfill their call from God to do the "work of ministry."

How can this role change take place? The role transition from doer of ministry to equipper of people who will be doers of ministry is a process which can be controlled by intentional cooperation or resistance to the transition momentum generated by the Holy Spirit.

Here are six strategies of transition, six action-steps leading from clergy ownership of the pastoral care ministry to lay ownership of the same.

a. VISION. The pastor has a heart for the pastoral care of his people. He sees himself comforting, encouraging, listening, affirming and caring for his people, all of his people.

b. SHARING. He shares his heart with a few pastoral-type people or his board. Part of his sharing discloses pain, guilt and frustration over not being able to get to all the people.

c. STRUCTURING. He forms a pastoral care leadership group of people who share his vision to being planning how to pastor all the congregation. The equipping begins here. He teaches the Biblical basis for this ministry and leads them in the beginning stages of a plan.

d. PASSING. When the group begins to catch the vision and assume ownership, the leadership is turned over to them and he begins to withdraw.

e. RELEASING, In his heart and in his actions he relinquishes the ownership and management of the group and the pastoral care ministry. The ministry is their's. They 1) accept the responsibility for it. 2) feel the burden and. 3) become accountable for its success.

f. SUPPORTING. The pastor continues to give support to the group by 1) being a resource, 2) affirming, 3) encouraging and retaining the prerogative to become involved when requested or when he sees need. He also, as Moses did, will take care of the more difficult pastoral matters of the church. (Exodus 18)

The second problem obstructing the progress of the transition is that many

clergy are ill-equipped to equip the people. Our solutions have come to the fore:

a. God has raised up many lay-equipping leaders, churches and organizations. Elton Trueblood was a pioneer in this field. The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry Network has been equipping churches to give the pastoral care of the congregation to the people for several years. Stephen Ministries, founded by Dr. Ken Haugk, equips both churches and people for significant pastoral care. And there are more,

b. A growing number of seminaries are now educating the new crop of pastoral leaders to equip their people for ministry.

The third problem obstructing the transition is the reluctance of the people to give and receive authentic lay ministry.

They have been in a clergy- dependent and passive mode too long. It is improbable that both clergy and laity are ready for this transition at the same time. There-in lies the struggle.

THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY

Ministry has been the task of the clergy, supported by the people. Seminaries were created to build a class of clergy, educated for leadership and ministry. They are funded by the laity. Clericalism has been the church's power system.

Without designing it as such, the church has created a caste system. The clergy have the power and the prestige. The people of the pew, as far as church life is concerned, are second class.

But all of this is changing. The wind of the Spirit is blowing through the church. The church, therefore, is breaking with the traditional way of doing things. The clergy has a new role. Three observations fuel this change:

a. The pastor cannot do it alone. If they try to go it alone they either burn out or much ministry is left undone.

b. The traditional system is crumbling. The Second Reformation is in progress. Lay people who became aware of their ministry and leadership gifts will leave the churches which are not changing and go where they gifts will leave the churches which are not changing and go where they have the opportunity to be equipped and use their gifts in ministry.

c. The Bible calls for it. Ministry is included in everybody's salvation package. Ephesians 4:11 & 12 speaks to the issue directly, "prepare God's people for works of service".

The role of the clergy has six components: Spiritual leader: Equip: Provide Vision: Support: Legitimize: Minister.

Let's look at them one at a time.

SPIRITUAL LEADER. The charge God gave to Moses when he was decentralizing his ministry was to represent the people before God, teach them the decrees (the laws), show them the way to live and appoint capable people (Exodus 18). If today's professional pastors accept this assignment and commit to carrying it out, they will find it almost overwhelming. It will be job enough to be a spiritual leader.

EQUIP. The ministry of the pastor/teacher, according to Ephesians 4:11 & 12, is to equip That involves far more than we have time to write about here. It

includes (1) preparing the congregation by preaching and teaching to anticipate being equipped for ministry, (2) orienting new members to the same, and (3) having it taught in the children's youth and adult educational classes. (4) Helping people discover their gifts is part of it. (5) Designing or discovering curriculum for equipping people for specific ministries such as evangelism, pastoral care, leading worship, teaching, counseling, social action, small group leadership, etc., etc. It soon becomes clear that the principle given in II Timothy 2:2 has been used, that of equipping some to equip others.

VISION. Most people are not people of vision. The pastor of a church must be one who is. It is inconceivable that God would call a person into a position of spiritual leadership without following the call with giving a vision of what he wants done. This vision must be shared, implemented and frequently renewed.

SUPPORT. Lay people engaging in significant ministry need support. Research among social workers helps spiritual leaders to believe this. Satisfaction with themselves and what they were doing depend on these four things:

- a. Shared responsibility;
- b. Support in difficult cases;
- c. Help with problems; and
- d. Personal growth.

Good support will motivate, assure, encourage, strengthen, and stimulate a lay person. It will tap their inner resources in such a way that the person will not only continue in ministry but will grow in competence and strive to excel. They will have a sense of achievement, a feeling of importance, and be grateful to God and their church for giving them the privilege of ministry.

Here are five ways of giving support:

- 1) A phone call. "I know you are working at you ministry. I want you to know that I am thinking about you and appreciate what you are doing. How are things going? Any problems? Is there anyway I can be of help to you?"
- 2) A written note. The affirmation, encouragement and assurance or continuing interest and concern for the person and what he is doing is strongly supportive.
- 3) A personal visit. An occasional eyeball-to-eyeball meeting will do wonders in giving support. The one in ministry will feel affirmed. The time together provides the contact for discouragements to surface so they can be dealt with before becoming serious, gives the opportunity for problems to be aired, to affirm the person and to pray together.
- 4) A verbal commitment to be available as far as possible to talk over problems and to hear the joys.
- 5) Attend important meetings of the ministry as far as possible.

LEGITIMIZE. The clergy person is a "Legitimater", to coin a term. The spiritual leader is vied in a distinctive way by the people, and this is in accord with Scripture. Through Hebrews 13, God calls his people to "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith . . . Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account."(v.v.7.)

In Counseling and Values, Miller and Atkinson write, "... in the eyes of many members of the congregation, the role of the clergy person carries with it certain distinctive emotional overtones associated with the member's feelings

about the divine." The pastor is in the unique position to authenticate the people doing ministry and legitimize the ministry they are doing. This is way it is often said that if the pastor is not in favor of it and does not give it his support it will not go.

Ernie O. Codier wrote in Action Information (September/October 1990 issue), "We have a system for accrediting and authorizing clergy; we do not have a system for taking lay ministry equally seriously." The pastor, through preaching, commissioning, personal support and relinquishing ministry in practice and not just theory, gives credibility to the lay ministers and their ministries. People generally view that I call legitimizing as both an ecclesiastical and divine imprimatur. It is imperative that the pastor be the "legitimater" in this new role. Only a person with authority can give convincing permission.

MINISTER. The mosaic model does not lead the clergy out of personal ministry. Moses was to do the larger tasks. We must be careful of the swing of the pendulum from doing all the ministry to doing none of the ministry. The clergy need to do pastoral care too. Sometimes alongside the laity and sometimes in their place. Giving the ministry can be a "cop out" for the clergy. Determining who does what is more of an art than a science of neatly written lists. Differences in people, circumstances and timing will call for changes in the lists. Also, clergy need to do hands-on-ministry to know who to equip effectively.

Is it a surprise that some believe this new movement tends to marginalize the role of the clergy? It seems to some that the importance of their call is undercut and that they may even be replaced. Three Biblical models make it clear that giving the ministry to the people will maximize the role rather than marginalize it.

EXODUS 18. The Mosaic model. Rather than Moses becoming less and less a

central figure, he is more so. He is teacher, selector and His role becomes clearer as you read beyond Exodus 18 to see him struggle with the people's faulty actions. They needed an intercessor and had one who sought God desperately and regularly, The chief difference in Moses' new role was that, with the people doing the ministry, he was how free to do what God called him to do - head the people.

EPHESIANS 4. The clergy as pastor/teacher is to prepare (equip) God's people for works of service (ministry). This is a servant role, assisting people in doing what God has called them to do. What more strategic role could there be in a church!

HEBREWS 13. God makes it clear that, there are to be leaders in the church, not just facilitators. And these leaders are accountable to God for the quality and effectiveness of their leading.

Instead of this new role diminishing the significance of the office of pastor, it heightens it. And it does this without a counter-productive elevation of status. In fact it lets him be a greater servant to his people, releasing them into more complete fulfillment of their Christian lives by giving the ministry to them.

The clergy have to rely more on authority than power in this new role. Their power has already been reduced considerably.

His status via education, ordination and installation granted him a good measure of power. His word was law. People put him on a pedestal and he accepted the esteem of this elevated position. It gave him a feeling of power. With far too many, this went to their heads. Their self esteem was rooted in their status rather than in their service.

Clergy are no longer on the pedestal. For our secularized, humanistic and hedonistic society, what was once a sacred calling is no longer valued. In our contemporary churches pastors are having more to prove themselves because the numerous public scandals have made them all suspect in the minds of many. Clergy are not escaping the sweeping bias against all leaders.

This erosion of power is helping to awaken the church to what it has done to the laity for centuries: assigning them to a second class role, and creating a huge gulf between laity and clergy. Losing power in forcing the clergy to rely on authority rather than power.

Let's look at the difference between authority and power. Power gets things done even if it takes coercion. Authoritarian demands from a position of ecclesiastical superiority is one form of power. Instituting changes, establishing policies or implementing programs by the sheer force of position is power.

Authority, on the other hand, gets things done by persuasion. Its influence is moral, spiritual and intellectual rightness. Its source is not credentials or position but is integrity, rightness and love. Truth is always compelling and demands a serious response.

Dictators, policeman, military generals, I.R.S. agents and gun-wielding robbers are examples of people using power to get things done, Effective teachers and parents are examples of people who use their authority to get things done. Jesus had no power, but he had more authority than the credentialed scribes and pharisees. Mother Teresa has no power of any kind, political, physical or governmental. But she has influence, she is taken more seriously than politicians and other people of power. She is loved, respected and honored. The dictator of Romania, on the other hand, was executed by the people over which he had power as soon as he was out of office, He did not have authority.

It's a new day for the clergy. Those who want to get things done will rely on the authority of rightness and integrity rather than the power of position.

Here is a good illustration of the new clergy role. When we added a room to our house in the summer of 1990, I noticed that I saw very little of the builder. We had spent several hours going over the plan with him earlier in the year. Now he darted in and out infrequently; usually, I observed, at the beginning of the work of a sub contractor.

For example, the morning the electricians started doing the wiring, the builder was there to talk with the crew leader. He spent about five minutes with him before taking off to tend other projects for the day.

What was his role? Planner. Coordinator. Supervisor. Encourager. Inspector. It was evident that his visible presence was indispensable to the project and that his spirit permeated all the activity.

If he did his job well, the building progressed rapidly, was cost effective and was well built. If he shepherded the project well, the workers were fulfilled and doing their best, and the owner felt confident that he was getting his money's worth.

The builder was the leader. He was superior over the others, but only in what he was doing. He was an expert in his role. However, if he had tried doing the whole job by himself much of it would have been inferior and it would have taken forever. The masons, the carpenters, the electricians, the plumbers, the roofers were all superior to the builder in their roles. The builder needed them. They needed the builder. They all needed each other to get the job done and to get it done well.

Was one person more important than another? One was more prominent, but that is not the same as important. They each took turns being more visible than the others. They each had a different role but they were all indispensable. They were interdependent. They all contributed to the common good. They all shared in the joy of a beautiful and usable structure.

This illustration is a parable of the new role of the clergy in the "Second Reformation." In the traditional model, both the clergy and the people believe the professional is superior in all things and has all the gifts required to do the work of the church - preach, teach, administrate, pastor, lead worship, evangelize, disciple, counsel, social action, etc. The reality is that while he is doing a few of these things, those he either likes best or has special gifts for, all the others get short shrift.

On the other hand, if he gives the ministry to the people and fulfills his role as spiritual leader, equipper and encourager, the church will be able to do all that God calls it to do. The diversity of gifts will be utilized for the common good. All will experience what it is to be interdependent and all will share in the joy of a beautiful church.

THE ROLE OF THE LAITY

Lay people are being called from "support service" to "active engagement." This is as different as it is to move from being an annual subscriber to the symphony to realizing that you and your friends have to pick up the oboes, bassoons and violins and make the music. If there is going to be music you are going to have to make it. And maybe we'll have to get used to quitted a different music.

The role of the laity is bound up with the role of the clergy. If the clergy are

to equip, there have to be people who are looking to them for equipping. If laity are to do the work of the ministry there has to be commitment, performance, sacrifice and accountability.

Maverick mentality and adolescent behavior will impede progress which may have been made in giving the ministry to the people. A readiness to be equipped, and openness to counsel and a humble spirit are requirements for progress toward completion of the transition. A colleague of mine in Cincinnati put it this way, "We need "FAT" people: Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

Some people are not overly enthusiastic about the new responsibility that is theirs. And, because they are not clear about what to do and be, they are often afraid to get started. An identification of their spiritual gifts and some kind of "call" from the Lord to ministry will motivate the laity have no corner on a call to ministry"!

According to Ephesians 4, if the "people of God" (saints) are equipped for their ministry and will do their ministry the results will be astounding:

- 1 The body of Christ will be built up;
2. The church will have unity in the faith;
3. People will come into spiritual maturity;
4. There will be stability, not blown about;
5. The truth will be spoken in love; and
6. People will more and more be bonded with Christ, who is the head of the church

PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

Clergy and laity are partners in ministry and can grown in their acceptance of

each other as true partners. This includes their acceptance of diversity if a role while at the same time a parity of a role.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, "As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you," he revealed that true partnership between the spiritual leader and the others was a very natural and accepted relationship. The caste system, protected and perpetuated by credentials, titles, tradition, and the reluctance of both clergy and laity to accept a parity of role makes it extremely difficult if not impossible to be true "partners and fellow workers."

How can clergy and laity both work toward being true partners in the Gospel?

Here are six ways:

1. Consult one another
2. Listen to one another
3. Learn from each other
4. Draw on one another's strengths
5. Be patient with one another
6. Identify your individual roles

Let's look at these closely one by one.

CONSULT ONE ANOTHER

The decision-making and planning process will be punctuated by frequent telephone calls, drop-in visits, or lunches. The shaping of projects or ministries must be done collegially rather than separately. The only way this can be done is frequent contact so both have equal input.

The difficulties of doing this are obvious: time, distance, and will. The latter, of course, is the greatest deterrent. But, "Where there is a will there is a way" is still true. You have to start with a will to true partnership. As you take the time and go the miles you will make two regarding discoveries which are guaranteed to galvanize the will to continue taking the time and going the miles. First; you will experience the truth of the adage, "Two (or more) heads are better than one:" or, to draw on Proverbs 15:22, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." You will wonder why you didn't do it this way long ago.

Second; the load will be shared by others. Moses learned this principle from his father-in-law, "The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone." (Exodus 18:18) He discovered the truth of it by doing it, "If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied." (Exodus 18:23) How good this sounds to an overworked pastor-reduced strain and satisfied people.

Know that this is not the fastest way of doing things, but it is the right way. Try it; you will like it!

LISTEN TO ONE ANOTHER

"Get on his page," is how someone said it. Or, "Get on his agenda." If there is any place for listening it is in developing and sustaining ministry partnership. This, again, will take time. It takes time, effort, and will to hear one another. Until you are both sure of what both are saying, true partnership is impossible.

The listening skills called paraphrasing, active listening, perception check, listening for what is not being said, listening over time, listening for feelings, and others can be learned and used to great advantage.

Without truly hearing and understanding each other we will revert to what we are trying to change, the clergy/laity dichotomy, We will resort to power, "pulling rank." You will go back to bearing the burden alone devoid of the "many advisors."

One of the greatest fulfillments in life will come from hearing one another, You will know you are a valuable person if someone is taking you seriously. When you are taking each other seriously partnership is happening.

LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

Each person has something from his life, learning and training which will be valuable to the other. Mutual respect is the key to being humble enough to learn from one another. As Bruce Bugbee, staff member of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago says, "Everybody is a 10 in something." Everybody is an expert at something.

The clergy have been trained in certain areas which have to do with leadership in the church. the laity have been trained, either informally by experience or formally be school. It is humbling to admit that the clergy's training is a very narrow band of the full spectrum of knowledge. This is the nature of any professional training. The laity have a wide diversity of experience and training! This is especially true if your partnership in ministry goes beyond one or two people and exists in a leadership group of several people.

Styles of leadership, personality difference, variety of temperament as well as diversity of experience and education make it clear that we have much to learn from one another. The ministry will be effective only to the degree that ist leadership exists in a true partnership where all learn from the others.

To learn from one another takes mutual respect, humility, intentional listening, and time. Since partnership is the goal, and since learning from one another is one of the requirements of true partnership, it is well worth the effort.

DRAW ON ONE ANOTHER'S STRENGTHS

Many marriages go on the rocks because a couple clash over their weaknesses rather than putting their strengths together. For one to see the weakness of another and move to criticism and denouncement is a sign of immaturity and selfishness. To see the strengths of others. Then, put the strengths together. Identifying your weakness help you know where you need the strengths of your partners.

A common fault of clergy is to either be in denial regarding our weaknesses or, knowing them, finding ways to conceal them from those who would be partners. This fault causes a lay person to try to relate to an unreal person. Besides that who can relate to a perfect pastor? Projecting a faultless image keeps one's prospective partners at a distance and, let us admit it, many feel more comfortable that way.

Honesty with ourselves and others is the key to drawing on one another's strengths for the sake of the kind of ministry which will please God. In *Can the Pastor Do It Alone?* I give an example of putting strengths together, During the year and a half the Ministry Leadership Group was putting the what Lay Pastors would do. I prepared an ivory-tower type of ministry description. We had become partners enough by that time for them to throw my proposal out. With that out of the way they were able to come up with the description which has made the ministry workable in hundreds of churches:

Does that mean they did not need me? Not at all! I had the theological and philosophical perspective which the description needed. They had the practical know-how. I knew what it should contain Biblically. They knew what would work. I knew what it was to be a pastor. They knew that would be understood and accepted.

We put our strengths together. Without them I would have had lay people pastoring like seminary graduates. Without me they would come up with a program which would have been far less than the kind of ministry God was calling forth. Granted, this way take more time and a good bit of struggle over personal turf, but we came up with a ministry design which met our church's pastoral care needs and is doing it for hundreds of others.

BE PATIENT WITH ONE ANOTHER

True partnership not only takes more time, it takes a lot of patience, the fourth Fruit of the Spirit. And Patience is born out of love. Consulting with one another is not always a comfortable experience. The struggle to compromise what you believe to be the only way to go may be very painful. The struggle to compromise takes patience but "patience produces character and character produces hope." (Romans 5:4) God who knows all about this struggle adds, "And hope does not disappoint us..."

Patience has to be mutual. This is new terrain for both clergy and laity. The path of clergy domination and lay intimidation has been traveled so much through the past centuries that it is well marked. If you feel a bit insecure and a little frightened finding your way along the new partnership hath do not abandon it. Press on because God is doing a new thing in his church and he is with you.

We must have patience with each other. Lay people will make mistakes which they cannot hide as easily as clergy are able to do. Clergy will make mistakes and tend to pull rank in order to cover them. Patience with one another is the key. Remember, it is one of the fruits of the Spirit.

IDENTIFY YOUR ROLES

Distinctive roles for the clergy and laity are not a foreign idea in the Scriptures. Moses was the leader of Israel. The leaders of 1000's, 100's, 50's, and 10's had roles different from Moses. The people who were led by Moses and the others had a role different from them. Their different roles involved them at different levels of responsibility rather than different levels of prestige and exclusive privileges. Hebrews 13:24 subtly states a difference between "your leaders" and "all God's people." In the way one's eye must be distinctive in performance from the ear, one Christian must see his or her performance in the body of the church as distinctive from another. And this must be done without any air of superiority or feeling of inferiority.

On Crete, Titus, who was the spiritual leader of the Christians, was to appoint elders who were to be "entrusted with God's work" of caring for God's people. (Titus 1:7 ff.) There were differences of qualifications and differences of role. But they were related to different ways of serving the church, not to prestige and positions of honor.

Those in Thessalonica who "are over you in the Lord and who admonish you" are referred to as "those who work hard among you," not as those who lord it over them. Their position is one of privilege, but a privilege of serving them and the Lord rather than a privilege, of position and place of honor. They are to love them because of their work, not because of their high position. (I Thes. 5:12, 13)

9

What do you mean by "family"

I HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED IN MY LAY PASTORS EQUIPPING SEMINARS OVER WHETHER TO CALL THE CONGREGATIONAL UNIT ASSIGNED TO A LAY PASTOR A FAMILY OR A HOUSEHOLD IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE USE THE RIGHT WORD BECAUSE, AS JUAN CARLOS ORTIZ SAID, "IF WE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT WORD, IT MAY BE BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT IDEA." PROVERBS 25:11 COLORFULLY DESCRIBES A WORD WHICH IS DOING ITS JOB OF SPEAKER, "A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN A SETTING OF SILVER." "FITLY" IS THE KEY PRINCIPLE IN DECIDING TO USE *FAMILY* OR *HOUSEHOLD*. CLARITY IS PREMIUM. FOR ME THE ISSUE HAS BEEN RESOLVED. READ ON.

Our rule of thumb policy is to assign a new Lay Pastor between five and ten families to care for. The reason for the number is twofold: 1) Fewer than five probably indicates that the Lay Pastor will not take the ministry seriously enough to make it a priority, 2) more than ten is unmanageable.

Because Lay Pastors already have several other people in their lives, they can relate meaningfully only to a limited number of families. In the primary biblical model for Lay Pastors Ministry, Moses assigned ten people to each non-administrative caregiver (Exodus 18). It seems that the most practical number for effective care is five to ten families.

MY CONCERN IS THE TERM

But, it's not the number that concerns me. It is the definition. Are they

families? What do we mean by family? Many people in my Lay Pastors equipping seminars around the country ask what we mean by family. In my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*, published in 1987, I wrote." (Page 65)

The standard answer to the question has been, "family includes everyone who lives under the same roof." That's a pretty good answer. But the problem is the word family creates a picture in the Lay Pastor's mind that is different from the reality he or she faces in contacting many of the people. The mental picture is that of a nuclear family: father, mother and children. However, the reality is that only about half of the families assigned will be made up of father, mother and children. In fact, a Lay Pastor who is single may be assigned all singles so not even one of the families is the traditional nuclear family.

'HOUSEHOLD" IS MORE USEFUL

I now use the word *household* in place of *family* to designate the unit of congregational care assigned to Lay Pastors. They are assigned five to ten *households*. This word clarifies the mental picture a Lay Pastor has of the unit and makes the question, "What do you mean by *family*".

However, should the question, "What do you mean by household?" Using household makes for clear understanding by eliminating the mental image of a nuclear family. And it is culturally relevant.

NINE KINDS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Now, what about those living "under the same roof?" It is a great help to Lay Pastors to learn that there are at least nine different kinds of households.

Nuclear family household: Father, mother and children who all live under the same roof.

Empty nest household: A married couple without children.

Single parent household: Father or mother only and the child(ren).

One-person household: A person living alone whether in a house, apartment, dormitory, retirement center or nursing home.

Interracial family household: Two people of different ethnic origin along with their children if there be any.

"Mr. Mon" household: The roles are reversed. The husband keeps house. The wife is gainfully employed.

Multi-adult household: Unrelated singles living together (sometimes called "fictive kin"), young people, old people, disabled or homeless people.

Cohabiting household: Living together without legal marriage.

Same-sex family household: Family formation by gay and lesbian couples, with or without children.

THE CURRENT TREND CONTINUES

According to Dr. Shervert H. Frazier (Psychotrends: What kind of People Are We Becoming?) psychological and economical forces propel the trend to further reduce the number of nuclear families, erode traditional family values and increase both the number and acceptance of diverse family forms. Dr. Frazier predicts that the divorce rate will soar from the present 50% to 60% in the

near future. More single women with children now prefer to remain single. Two of the proliferating forms of households, cohabitation and same-sex, though unbiblical and non-Christian, are not only growing in number but growing in secular social acceptance.

ALL NEED TO BE LOVED

A Lay Pastor is called to care for the people in these diverse units of their congregation. Did Jesus know about this diversity when he gave the new command, "Love one another?" Was the Holy Spirit aware of this when he led Peter to write not just for his contemporaries but for us as well. "Tend the flock of God which is your charge?"

If we limit our pastoral care to nuclear family households we may be missing as many as half of "the flock of God." Also if we understand only the characteristics of a nuclear family we will not be able to care for the other kinds of households effectively. Should we not include the other kinds of households if we are not obedient to the spirit's call the need or love in shapes of (1) nurturance, (2) security and (3) connectedness is universal. Lay Pastors are in the unique position of loving and caring without the added agenda of judging, generating uniformity, straightening people out or getting them to change. As long as people have professed faith in Jesus Christ and continue as members of our churches, Lay Pastors are committed to love and care for them.

FOUR PRINCIPLES

Jesus cared about the adulterous woman. He continued to include Judas in the twelve and he loved Peter even though he knew he was about to deny that he was a disciple. Four principles flow from Jesus' relationship with the woman,

Judas and Peter, which guide the Lay Pastor in being "love with skin on it" to all households in a congregation:

1. He came not to condemn but to save.
2. Acceptance of a person does not condone all he or she does.
3. His standards were not compromised by his closeness to those living by different standards.
4. He loved to the end.

OUR CHALLENGE KNOW AND GROW

Jesus' challenge to his disciples after some difficult teaching is also a challenge to Lay Pastors, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." Can anyone doubt that he expects Lay Pastors to grow in their understanding of the characteristics of these diverse households and to learn the skills necessary to love and care about them!

10

Some Common Problems

IN ADDITION TO THE SEVEN "COMMON DIFFICULTIES" TREATED ON PAGES 128-141 IN *CAN THE PASTOR DO IT ALONE?* THE FOLLOWING DIFFICULTIES, SOME OF WHICH ARE VARIATIONS OF THE SEVEN, NEED TO BE ADDRESSED:

REBUFFS

FRUSTRATION

GUILT

NO NEED

MY LIFE: DISORDER

Lay Pastors encounter problems in the process of doing their ministry, out where "the rubber meets the road." The problems test the depth of their commitment, the clarity of their vision and the certainty of their call. If they are merely volunteering to do a task, they may quit when the going gets tough; but if they are obeying God's call to use their spiritual gifts to be "love with skin on it" to people, the problems become challenges. "Come hell or high water", they will stick with it.

Lay Pastor's discouragement and frustrations also test the metal of the leaders. Their commitment and vision are on the line. The problems call them to prayers of desperation, creative thinking, personal consultation and other means of reliable support. If they are convinced that God both called this ministry forth and called them to lead it, their commitments to this ministry and their excitement for it will perpetually enliven the spirits of the lay pastors.

In doing this ministry only a short time, one discovers that it is not a "snap" It takes work, commitment, perseverance and toughness. Paul wrote. "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." There is no ministry without a cross. Jesus never promised that following him into ministry would be easy, but he did promise that some day we would hear the words, "Well done good and faithful servant." Now to the problems several ministry leaders and lay pastors have asked about.

REBUFFS

You are told upon phoning to make arrangements for the First Visit: "I was wondering when you were going to call Before you get started I need to tell you that I have my family and friends to help me if I need help. And what's more, if and when I need a pastor I will call Rev. Smith. You can give your time to someone who needs it."

what do we do with people who break our heart with this sort of unkind or contemptuous refusal? It is a rare response, but, like people who have are rare disease, it doesn't matter that it is rare, it is happening to you. And it can be devastating. What can one do with rebuffs?

For starters, you can take them like Jesus did: "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate, when he suffered, he made no threats, Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (I Peter 2:23). Or take them like Paul did: "When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered we answer kindly" (I Corinthians 4:12). Smile. Be kind Accept them. Love them Be faithful to them and your commitment to PACE them.

Even if they rebuff you, you can pastor them with **PACE**.

"P" You can *pray* for them faithfully. In fact you have something very special to be praying about, their acceptance of care.

"A" You can be *available* to them. Your attempts to contact them tell them you are there for them when they need you.

"C" You can *contact* them. God will use your cards, letter, brief phone calls, chance meetings on the street, in the store or at church to do something significant in their spirits.

"E" Your *example* of commitment to them, to your church and to Christ will get through to them.

The Lay Pastor must be committed to the relationship, not just to the person. Marriage is an example of this. In marriage, one must be committed to the relationship as well as to the partner. This double commitment will preserve a Lay Pastor's love and affection while in the valley of painful frustration-until they are safely on the other side where love and affection become dearer and stronger because of the time in the valley.

When the relationship is not mutual, the formula MP/MC (maximum prayer/minimum contact) is called for. One Lay Pastor's initiatives were resisted for five years by an older couple assigned to them. However, their faithfulness in prayer and persistence paid off in a break-through one Christmas. They were thrilled and felt adequately rewarded for hanging in there.

Another Lay Pastor's initiatives were spumed. Her strategy was to "back off." She prayed faithfully. Occasionally, with sensitivity and respect, she made contact. Note that though she backed off she did not "back out." The day came when the young lady who rebuffed her Lay Pastor hit a crisis. The Lay Pastor

happened to phone again at that time, and she was immediately accepted. What a change!

Only God knew what had been happening during the pastoring attempts. He was building a positive relationship out of negative resistance. The serious crisis revealed what God had been up to. So, you do your part: pray, be patient while persistent, and occasionally contact with sensitivity. While you are doing your part, know that God is doing his part. Time will prove this.

Rebuffed Lay Pastors can borrow Paul's prayer for his Colossian brothers and sisters, "that you may have great endurance and patience" (Colossians 1:11). One may need to keep praying for that endurance and patience for many months or a few years.

Summary:

1. Take the rebuffs like your Lord took them.
2. You can pastor resistant people with PACE even though they are not open to you.
3. Commit to the relationship, not just the person.
4. It is OK to back off, but not to back out.
5. Know that a positive relationship, over time, will grow out of a negative response.
6. Pray and be persistent with sensitivity.

FRUSTRATION

This self-talk is triggered by rebuff. "Now what do I do? Here I give myself to

this ministry and this is what I get. I don't know whether I'm angry, hurt, disgusted with myself or sorry that I over got into this. Oh. God help me!"

This is the Lay Pastor's inner emotional state, created by the outer relational state of rebuff or rejection. The receiver is not receiving. The caring initiatives of the lay pastor are opposed and it hurts. Since this miserable state is in the spirit of the Lay Pastor, it must be dealt with in that inner sanctum.

The first thing you must do is **pray**, not for the person resisting you, but for yourself. Ask God what you must do about this situation. Tell him your feelings. Tell him you want to quit. Then listen. Here is a guarantee - you pray faithfully and something will happen to you and to him, which will surface sooner or later. And it will be something good!

Second, **love** them. Adopt this philosophy, "God loves them and so do I." If we can believe that what Jesus said to his disciples when he sent them out also applies to us as he sends us out, we will see that the rejection is not as much of us as it is of him. "He who rejects you rejects me, but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (Luke 10:16). God loves them while they are rejecting him, and is trying to reach them with his love through you. To quit is to let God down.

Third, be **patient** with them. Because patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit, number four in Galatians 5:22 in fact, impatience is a sin. To be impatient with them is to be resisting the Spirit. Could it be that the Lord gave us a few resistant people so he could use their resistance as a "grace builder" in our lives. If we get hurt, disgusted or disillusioned and give up, both we and they suffer the loss of what God is wanting to do in both of our lives.

Fourth, have **faith** and **hope**. You recognize these to be spiritual qualities

which, in time, surface in a tangible form such as a productive visit in an ex-resister's home. As you pray, love, and practice patience while making an occasional contact with sensitivity, do it in faith. Believe that God is at work through you, Believe that the Spirit is doing something through you. Never give up hope that the warmth of your love and God's love will melt the ice of resistance. The pent-up response will be like melted ice of transformed into a refreshing stream of mutual acceptance and love. The lone-awaited relationship comes alive.

Fifth, be **persistent**. But be sure your persistence is laced with sensitivity and respect. Undue insistence, too frequent contacts of unthinking pushiness will be counterproductive. You will come across to them rude, irritating and obnoxious. The other extreme, to back out, is to fail God who calls his church to tend all the flock, especially those who are resistant. Covert your self-talk to prayer, setting goals and creating action steps. Such conversion will replace the frustration with hope, trust, optimism and joy.

One goal could be to enlist two people to pray for you in this challenging situation. The first action step could be either to ask them to come to your home to talk about something important to you or to take them to lunch and talk about it there. I advise that the rules of confidentiality be respected, that you only refer to their situation. Do not name the person. Other goals and action steps will come from your praying and asking the advice of your ministry leader.

Summary:

1. Identify frustration as your problem, your inner response to their rebuff or resistance.
2. Pray for yourself first, then for the resisting person

3. Love them. ("God loves them and so do I.")
4. Be patient. Consider their resistance a "grace builder."
5. Have faith and hope Know that God is doing something through you.
6. Be persistent with sensitivity and respect.
7. Set goals and create action steps.

FEELING GUILTY

Guilt can be false guilt or true guilt. It is imperative that a person knows which of the two hounds him.

False guilt is brought on by setting unrealistic expectations for ourselves. We shoot too high either because we don't know what God and our leaders expect of us or because we don't accept our limitations. Then we feel guilty because we have failed to fulfill our self assigned expectations. One example is that we are called to love people, not change them And yet if one of our people is not in church regularly we feel guilty for not getting them there. The question is not, "Did you get that person to come to church?" but, "Do you love that person and are you praying for him or her?" Away with false guilt! Be realistic in your expectations and commitment and affirm yourself often!

Then, there is true guilt. The ministry is not being done. The commitment to contact the people is not being kept. The priority of this ministry has slipped into second or fifth place. The vision has dimmed. Contacts have not been made for a month or two or three. Guilt nibbles at the conscience. Another month goes by Now guilt bites the conscience. Embarrassment is added. "What do I do now?" A few more weeks. Guilt and embarrassment add humiliation. The barrier is now so high that there is no way over. Guilt! Guilt! "What do I do about this?" Many Lay pastors have been caught up in this syndrome.

Lay pastor's guilt is a challenge to the ministry leaders. Here is what you can do: Make an appointment with the Lay Pastor. Explore what has been done and what has not been done so you have the full picture. Then help the Lay Pastor find where his or her heart is. Usually, they want to begin again to fulfill the commitment. The next step is to plan how to re-enter. The honorable and practicable way is for the Lay Pastor to level with his or her people. Tell it like it is. They will renew their expectations. When this decision is reached, the Lay Pastor and leader seal it in the presence of God in prayer.

Actually, if the leadership is on its toes, the decline will be spotted before it becomes a problem. Reports do not come in. They miss the monthly Lay Pastors' meetings. The pastoral supervision (pages 71-78 and 230-234 in the book) has either not been done or not been done effectively. One of the ministry foundation blocks, accountability, has weakened. If the leaders have not done their job, they must share the guilt. Accountability and support are imperative!

Occasionally it is necessary to let a Lay Pastor withdraw from the ministry. Either they have found that they do not have time for it or have discovered that they do not have pastoral gifts. The challenge for the leaders, then, is to help them out of the ministry with their blessing and without compounding the guilt. I helped one lay pastor out of this ministry and into children's ministry for which she had gifts and where her heart was. She was happy and productive in teaching children.

Summary:

1. Identify the kind of guilt: false or true.
2. False guilt: reduce unrealistic expectations.

3. True guilt: confess the ministry lapse, find where your heart is, be honest with the people, and get a new start
4. Good leadership will usually preclude the cause of guilt.
5. Occasionally a Lay Pastor must be released from the ministry with the leader's blessing

NO NEED

"I don't feel the need for a Lay Pastor. Wouldn't it be better to spend your time on someone who has the need." Or the Lay Pastor concludes after a period of time, "These people don't seem to need a Lay Pastor. Can you give me somebody who needs me?"

By observation alone, we could conclude that many people have no need for pastoral care. However, one of the realities driving this ministry is that everybody has needs. Take me for example, a Christian minister who appears to have it all together, who seems to be trouble-free and therefore has no need for pastoral care. Don't be deceived The trouble-free look is only skin deep, whether it's me or someone else. I need prayer and encouragement I too have problems concerns and worries I need someone to open up to and will do so to the one I have learned to trust If the relationship is deep enough, cultivated over a period of time with genuine concerns and love, I will be ready to "spill my gut" when the time is right Occasionally someone has broken through to my need and it felt good. In fact, it was therapeutic.

Assume that every person needs pastoral care in the context of a relationship created out of genuine concern and love In other words, to conclude that one has no need for pastoral care, is unwarranted Pastoral care, when understood to be a relationship laced with concern and love, is as basic to life as food and

water.

We need to expand our understanding of "need to include another set of needs for pastoral care such as:

- 1) The need to grow spiritually.
- 2) The need for encouragement in life's pursuits.
- 3) The need for affirmation (congratulations, pats on the back, commendations, acknowledgements).
- 4) The need for someone to heighten the joy of celebrative events such as birthdays, anniversaries, births, new job, retirement, etc.
- 5) The need to pray about people's everyday matters.

For example, a church officer, whom most people would conclude has no need for pastoral care, needs someone praying for him or her regarding the issues he or she faces as a member of the board. Even the church officer himself may not be aware of this need until the Lay Pastor offers to support him or her in prayer, asking, "Could you tell me some of the issues the board is dealing with so I can pray for you with specifics?"

As a professional pastor, I am thrilled and feel supported when someone assures me they will be praying for me about specific decision, involvement and other heavy matters. I need this kind of care.

Then there are the latent needs. Sooner or later, everyone gets has an accident or suffers reverses of some kind. The ideal pastoral relationship is built while things are going good in the person's life so that when the chips are down they already know they have someone to whom they can turn, someone whom they can trust with their fears and pain.

I deal with this problem in my book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*(pages 136-139) I speak of a "non-crisis initiative."

"The reasons it is a relatively simple pastoral act to respond to a crisis such as a sickness, injury, loss of job, fire, death, and to such happy events as marriage, birth of children, graduation and birthdays is that these crises and events provide a very simple process: crisis and response.

"There are these four elements in a crisis purpose, time, notification and focus

1. The purpose is identified by the need, For example, a person is rushed to the hospital The purpose for a pastoral call is already identified.
2. The time is set, The person is in the hospital now.
3. You are notified of the crisis Someone has given you the information to which you respond There is nothing to initiate.
4. The focus is the crisis Deciding what you will do, out of a wide range of possibilities, is narrowed for you. You will bring a sense of the presence of God into the room of a troubled person.

"In initiating a non-crisis contact the Lay Pastor must do these same four things on his or her own initiative:

1. Identify the purpose, Examples may be:
 - a) A desire to know the person better
 - b) "touch base" to see if everyone in the family is okay
 - c) Talk about some matter of spiritual nurture
2. Set the time. When there is not a crisis it is not urgent that the contact be made today or this week. That is the problem. Without procrastinating you have

to determine your own time and negotiate an appointment convenient to the flock member.

3. Take the initiative in contacting. The Lay Pastor cannot wait to be notified by the family that they want to visit is very rare that a flock member will call a Lay Pastor unless there is a problem.

4. Establish the agenda "I just stopped by to visit, to get better acquainted and to see if everything going along fine."

Summary:

1. Know that everyone, without exception, has need of pastoral care. Assume this
2. Expand your understanding of "need" to include spiritual growth, encouragement, affirmation and the like.
3. Know that there are latent needs. The ideal pastoral relationship is built while things are going well.
4. In non-crisis times you have to establish the need, set the time, take the initiative and determine the agenda.

MY OWN LIFE IS OUT OF ORDER

"How can I serve my flock when I myself have problems?"

"What kind of example am I setting when my wife and children are in rebellion towards God?"

"How can I reconcile having a ministry to others while struggling with sin or problems or failures in my own life?"

The fact is that all of us are struggling with all of the above to one degree or another. One pastor preached, "I want you to know this about me, I can preach this better than I can practice it." Laypeople like to think that their pastor is without sin. Pastors like to think that some of their laypeople are without sin. But, I John 1:8 includes us all: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Our question is whom is God going to use if the cannot use struggling people? Observing the lives of Biblical heroes answers the question. God uses people struggling with sin, problems, imperfections and habits. That doesn't excuse us. It just answers our question.

Three principles help us deal responsibly with this pseudo reason to either quit the ministry or to not answer the call of God to do the ministry in the first place.

1. Be sure this is no "cop out", as we would say. They need to know in their own heart that this is not a rationalization of an inner and repressed desire to quit the ministry for some known or unknown reason. It involves a basic inner searching for which ministry God has given them spiritual gifts and their willingness to be his servant in the use of these spiritual gifts.

2. This moral, relational or spiritual disorder is to be looked on in the same way we look at a physical disorder, an asset to ministry Henri Nouwen's idea of "Wounded Healer" is the principle. Struggling with a spouse or children who are in rebellion toward God will enable a Lay Pastor to truly understand those in his or her flock who are having the same or similar struggles The Lay Pastor's painful circumstance raises the empathy aptitude. To minister to others when one's life is not in order requires these three conditions.

- a) That any guilt of sin is confessed and forgiveness accepted.
- b) That one is open to sharing the struggle when asked or when it is appropriate to volunteer the information. An example is the senior pastor of a church with whom I am acquainted. His son was recently divorced.

He is not hiding this fact. nor is he broadcasting it, but is very open to talking about it when it is appropriate. His own personal life is an example of Christ-centeredness His son's life does not limit his effectiveness in Christian ministry. It actually helps people to be encouraged in their struggles when they know that their pastor suffers some of the same.

- c) That the person feels called to do this ministry This is the most important condition for continuing The call can be explored and if it is there to reaffirm it and renew commitment to ti. Ideally, a time of prayer is in order at this point. Earnest prayer will give the struggling person the assurance that God is most certainly renewing his call and will continue to give his Spirit, thereby making the ministry effective.

3. A possible leave of absence We gave one Lay Pastor six months off because his life situation was so difficult that he needed to be relieved of the ministry temporarily. One could be given as much as a year's leave of absence to provide time to get over the hump and be ready again to minister as a Lay Pastor Explanation needs to be given to the flock, not the details but just that his or her life situation requires a leave of absence. This can be given in writing, a phone call or a personal visit.

The last course of action to be considered, assuming that you have worked satisfactorily with these three principles, is to resign from the ministry. If this is the decision, the ministry leader(s) must help the Lay Pastor out of the ministry without compounding his or her struggle and without adding guilt to an

already discouraging ordeal. These steps must be taken so as to help rather than hurt the person further.

1. **Listen** - Try to hear the person's feelings in addition to the story. Help him or her deal with those feelings. Listening with empathy, warmth and respect (feeling, love and deference) will encourage him or her to "get it all out" so they feel good rather than guilty about leaving the ministry.

2. **Listen** - Do not "problem solve" This is not the time to try to counsel regarding the details of the struggle. Good listening will create peacefulness to the spirit and start the person's creative juices flowing, enabling this person to either solve or successfully cope with the problems.

3. **Listen** - You will want to pray with and for this person, By listening carefully both to the feelings and story you will be able to pray with specifics while with him or her as well as in your own private intercessory prayer time.

4. **Pastor** - They need to experience what it is to be cared for when the chips are down. The genuine empathy and concern for them which you are experiencing within you will surface in such a way that the Lay Pastor will know you are there for him or her. Touching base with them frequently will assure them that you care for them as a person, that your major concern is for them, not the ministry they are no longer doing.

5. **Closure** - Some final statement followed with a prayer should declare the ministry finished. Occasionally we have brought a Lay Pastor's ministry to a close, regardless of the reason, by publicly making the announcement at a regular meeting of our Lay Pastors, following the announcement with special prayer for him or her. A few have been open to sharing some parting words. However closure is reached, it should leave the person feeling loved, affirmed

and cared for, not quality, judged or lonely. The door should always be left open for them to return to the ministry in the future.

Summary:

1. God uses imperfect people for ministry, people who are struggling with personal, relational or faith problems.
2. Be sure the discouraged person's reason for quitting the ministry is not a "cop out".
3. A disorder of any kind can be an asset to one's ministry, assuming
 - a) That sin is confessed and absolved;
 - b) That one is open to disclosing the struggle;
 - c) That the person feels called to do this ministry.
4. It may be necessary to give this one a leave of absence.
5. The last course of action is resigning. When this decision is made the ministry leader must take these steps: listen, care for and bring this person's ministry to a fitting closure.

In conclusion, lest this Monograph give the impression that the Lay Pastors Ministry is heavily laden with problems. Read this impressive list of statements They are a sampling of those written by Lay Pastors of one church in response to the question: "What are three of your most satisfying pastoral experiences?"

1. Praying with family members and seeing results.
2. Feeling I was there for a lonely person.
3. Getting to know some church members better.
4. Being able to converse about the Lord freely.
5. Providing linkage to the church that these people haven't experienced on a regular basis.
6. Being told by one that she counts on my prayers.

7. Being part of a network of supporters for one woman during a crisis with a teenager.
8. Brightening their day by a visit.
9. Seeing people get help
10. Being able to see our relationship grow.
11. Sharing in their joys and concerns.
12. Making friends with people I would not have know
13. Helping in a time of deep sorrow.
14. Finding that they sometimes minister to me more than I do them.

11

When love doesn't sell

LAY PASTORS LOVE THEIR ASSIGNED PEOPLE BY BEING THERE FOR THEM AND CARING ABOUT THEM. BUT, AS EVERY LOVERS KNOWS, LOVE REQUIRES BOTH A GIVER AND RECEIVER. SO WHAT ARE YOU DO WHEN THE GIVER GIVES BUT THE RECEIVER DOESN'T RECEIVE? OR, AT BEST, WHEN THE RECEIVER IS POLITE BUT INDIFFERENT TO YOUR INITIATIVES?

LOVING A NON-RECEIVER RAISES SIX HARD QUESTIONS:

HOW DO YOU HANDLE REJECTION?

HOW DO YOU REACT TO INDIFFERENCE?

WHAT DO YOU WITH A COLD SHOULDER?

HOW LONG CAN YOU CARE FOR A PERSON WHO DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOU?

WHY CONTINUE LOVING WHEN LOVE ISN'T SELLING?

Lay Pastors are not the only ones struggling with these had questions? America's largest retailer, Wal-Mart, has struggled with them since entering the German market in 1997. Their bottom line in Germany is showing a loss of between \$200 million and \$300 million a year. Such a loss pressures them to find a way around potential shoppers' resistance. What does a corporation do about its bottom line in a market in which its friendly and helpful service doesn't sell?

What does a Lay Pastors Ministry do about its "bottom line" when its service of

"love given" doesn't sell? To have a successful "bottom line" - love received - lay pastors must also, like Wal-Mart, find a way around people's resistance.

What can we learn from Wal-Mart's challenge in Germany that is useful to lay pastors? The one who said, "My kingdom is not of this world," commended *the people of this world* for being more shrewd than *the people of light* (Luke 16:8). Jesus' insightful statement tells us to use Wal-Mart's strategy to fulfill His assignment to us - "Take care of my sheep" (John 21:16). So, let's see what we can learn.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES is the first entry to our learning list. German resistance has nothing to do with Wal-Mart's merchandise, but has everything to do with Wal-Mart's corporate culture of friendliness and helpfulness.

Simply stated, the root of the problem is German shopping culture versus Wal-Mart's business culture. The German shopping culture is entrenched and conservative. People are used to things the way they are. To them, Wal-Mart's friendliness culture smells like a sales pitch. Helpfulness feels intrusive. As a rule, they don't like it when other people touch their things.

Specially, Wal-Mart's corporate culture of friendliness and helpfulness produced culture shock for prospective German customers. In America, this same corporate culture produced great success. The Knight Ridder Foreign Service described the surprise reaction like this: "Grumpy Teutonic shoppers recoiled when employees greeted them in the aisles. Customers, used to finding for themselves, resisted when cashiers tried to pack their purchases in free plastic bags.....Them marriage of American hominess and German frostiness has been rocky so far for Wal-Mart."

This culture conflict is causing more than financial losses. It is also triggering government intrusion, union and materials-supplier problems, and the downsizing of their expansion plans.

The clash between Wal-Mart's business culture and the German shopping culture helps lay pastors understand why some church members resist their caring initiatives. Often, resistance is due to the culture clash between belief in pastoral care by laypeople and the congregation's deeply entrenched belief in pastoral care by clergy only. What about resistance in congregations which believe in lay ministry? In churches where lay pastoral care is widely accepted, resistance can be due to a church member's individual culture. He or she has not yet bought into the ministry culture of lay pastoral care.

Whether resistance is due to church culture, individual culture, or both, in many churches, giving and receiving pastoral care is like pouring "new wine into old wine skins." Some people say the old wine is better, they prefer things as they were. (Luke 5:37-39).

So, what do we learn from culture differences? We learn that people's "frostiness" has nothing to do with the merchandise of loving care, but everything to do with the biblical culture of every-member ministry.

To say it plainly, resistance is due to traditional culture versus biblical culture - the appeal in I Peter 5:1-4 "ordinary people" to be shepherd's of God's flock versus the centuries-old belief that only ordained clergy qualify.

SHREWD STRATEGY is the second entry to our learning list. Wal-Mart is moving ahead on three shrewd-strategy tracks. Assessment, Evaluation, and Studying the German culture.

The first track: They are assessing the situation. "We have a societal problem, not a service problem," one of their consultants said. She attributes the trouble to the social revolution of the late 1960s when politeness was deemed "a bourgeois relic." This is the root of cashiers scowling at customers and even ignoring them. Shoppers perceive friendliness as hypocrisy or currying favor. They don't trust human warmth in business.

Lay pastors, assessing a frosty situation, can know it is likely a "societal problem, not a service problem." In other words, it is cultural problem, not a lay pastoral care problem. **And especially, it is not the fault of the lay pastor.** I emphasize this latter point, that it is not the fault of the lay pastor, because many lay pastors rush to judgement in blaming themselves when they are not accepted. They hastily conclude that the resister would respond favorably to another person, that they themselves are deficient. The problem is ordinarily **not** with the giver, **but** with the receiver.

Again, the problem could be the culture - people holding fast to the myth that only clergy are capable of giving pastoral care. This is a frost-producing tradition. The people holding to this myth are uncomfortable with the idea of receiving care from other laypeople even though they are called, equipped, commissioned and assigned to love them by their presence, prayer and care.

The personal culture of some church members (1) makes them skeptical of true Christian love and warmth, (2) causes them to be suspicious of the motive of Christian brothers and sisters who truly care about them, and (3) makes them cynical about lay pastoral care. Their indifference or outright rejection may be due to some deep heart from church people in the past, betrayal by people they trusted, or just plain unbelief that laypeople can be called gifted by God to be lay pastors.

The second track: They are evaluating what they are doing. "We screwed up in Germany," Wal-Mart's international head, John Memzer, told Economist magazine. They identified errors and admitted to them. For example, they slapped their logo on the new stores and imported the practices that had made the worldwide retailer a success. But Germany was not impressed. Wal-Mart's assumptions were wrong. Service wasn't selling.

Lay pastors and ministry leaders who evaluate what they are doing may discover their assumptions, like Wal-Mart's, are faulty. Six erroneous assumptions could be:

1. People are just waiting for a lay pastor's attention.
2. Everyone will respond favorably to pastoral love in the form of presence and care by an "ordinary member."
3. You can relate to everyone in the same way.
4. Because the Lay Pastors Ministry is a church program, every member will go for it.
5. All members are as gung-ho about the lay pastoral care ministry as lay pastors are.
6. Some people don't need a lay pastor.

It is imperative that lay pastors and leaders alike evaluate **what** they are doing, **how** well they are doing what they are doing, **how** what they are doing is being received, and **why** they are doing what they are doing. When called for, say, "We screwed up. Our biggest mistake is _____." Then, proceed

to learn from the mistakes.

The third track: They are studying the German shopping culture so they can adapt to it or change it. Wal-Mart is on this track as of January 2002. At the present, it is "a work in process." They have their work cut out for them and they are committed to meeting the challenge with success rather than to give up and abandon their mission.

Analyze the culture of your church. If it has not transitioned from the clergy-only practice of ministry to every-member ministry, you know what you have to do - change the culture to the Moses-Jethro model in Exodus 18 and indoctrinate the people with the every-member- a-minister" teachings from Romans 12:6-8, I Corinthians 12-14, and Ephesians 4:11-12. How one church charged its clergy-only culture in a year is detailed in chapter 12 of my book, *The Lay Driven Church*. You can imagine the impossibility of laypeople trying to pastor the individuals of a congregation who believe only professional pastors are qualified, even though the laypeople have been called by God and equipped by the pastor.

What can you do when love doesn't sell? The significance of the mission - "Take care of my sheep" - and the importance of the One who mandated this mission compels lay pastors and ministry leaders alike to find a way around the problems so as to bring God's Love to even the frosty people by praying for them, caring about them, and being there for them.

When love doesn't sell, what do you do? Back out? Falsely assume that some people don't need a lay pastor? Only care about those who make it known they want a lay pastor? Quit the ministry? Our Lord encourages us who are people of light to be as shrewd as people of the world; not only by dropping out but by (1) assessing, (2) evaluating, (3) studying, and (4) continuing to love,

even though the receiver doesn't receive, until we can find ways to adapt to or change the culture. As Christ's servants, let's be like Him by loving even when love doesn't sell!

12

A Seasonal Concept of the Lay Pastors Ministry

Hawaii has only one season - summer. I enjoyed the one-season world for seven years. Their 12-month summer is so dependable one hotel painted the temperature on a post near the entrance - 80°. But in Minnesota we live in a four-season world. And in the Church of Jesus Christ, we are living a four-season mission.

The Church's mission is defined by Jesus, the Head of the Church: *make and shepherd disciples* (Mat. 28:19-20 & Jn. 21:16). He assigned this huge task to the apostles and their successors. The mission at this point in history is a 2000-year "work in progress."

This huge task divided into two related, but separate segments: *evangelism and shepherding*. The evangelism segment of the mission is carried on by a variety of ministries. The shepherding segment is likewise carried on by a variety of ministries.

One major segment (a.k.a. ministry) of the Church's shepherding segment is pastoral care. To care for the flock as the Chief Shepherd wants it cared for takes a partnership between clergy (vocational pastors) and laity (volunteer pastors). Vocational pastors pastor the congregation as a whole by preaching, teaching, visioning, training and much more. They are the spiritual leaders of the church with oversight of the congregation as a whole.

Volunteer pastors on the other hand - laypeople with pastoral gifts, call, passion, and training - pastor a specific number of members by one-on-one, grass-roots, ongoing personal relationships. They can be thought of as *undershepherds of pastoral care associate*.

Imagine a four-seasons jigsaw puzzle titled *The Church's Mission*. As you add piece by piece to form the Church's mission picture, you come to where the lay pastoral care piece fits. (I'll point that out later) Whereas the picture includes the four seasons of Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, the Lay Pastors Ministry is primarily a Summer ministry. But first, let's start putting the Spring pieces together.

SPRING The season for hope - trees leafing, daffodils, and kites, but also planting the "good seed" and watching the green shoots push their way through dirt and darkness to bright sunlight. The seed is the gospel of Jesus Christ - crucified for our sin, buried, bounding from the tomb on the third day, regrouping His disciples, ascending to heaven with a promise to return. In a way similar to Hawaii's never-ending summer, sowing the gospel followed by new life never ends. A 2000-year succession of evangelists offer each new generation new life in Jesus Christ. The making of disciples is a work never finished.

SUMMER The season for caring - watering, weeding and fertilizing, but also cultivating God's "field of wheat" as it grows, helping it weather the storms, survive disease and insects, and enriching the soil so it will yield "a hundred times more than was sown" (Luke 8:8). As surely as summer follows spring, pastoral care follows evangelism.

PLACE THE LAY PASTORAL CARE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE HERE

Peter and Paul are examples of this evangelism-pastoral care sequence. Jesus Call Peter, first to be a **"fisher of men,"** and **"second to be a shepherd - "take care of my sheep."** (I'm not the only mixer of metaphors.) Paul was first an evangelist, then a pastor. He built Christ's Church by winning converts and forming them into local churches; then he returned to the churches to "see how they were doing" (Acts 15:36). Winning converts was evangelism; *seeing how they were doing* is pastoral care. Both apostles were passionately driven by love for people: evangelistic love for the unconverted and shepherding love for the converted.

Paul, in addition to visiting his churches, wrote letters to encourage them in the faith. Some sound-bite writings are;

- To the church in Corinth: "Lover never fails" (13:8).
- To the churches in Galatia: "Live by the Spirit" (5:16).
- To the church in Ephesus: "By grace you have been saved" (2:5).
- To the church in Philippi: "I have you in my heart"(1:7).
- To the church in Colosse: "Set your hearts on things above." (3:1).
- To the church in Thessalonica: "You are so dear to us." (2:8).

Pastoral care is far more than member-holding strategy, it is God's requirement! If a church is only converting people, as quintessent as that is, it defaults on the second part of the mission, "Take care of my sheep." Too many churches fish but don't take care of their catch. Such churches are a one-season-only churches, an aberration. As my friend, Geroge Hunter III wrote in his remarkable book on evangelism, *Church for the Unchurched* (Abingdon, 1996), "People worth winning are worth caring for."

FALL The season fo celebration - colored leaves and harvesting crops, but also enjoying the fruit of Spring and Summer ministry. Some biblical verses are **Fall**

verses:

"Let us not become weary in will doing, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Gal. 6:9)

"He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with shouts of joy, carrying his sheaves with him." (Ps 126:6)

"You will eat the fruit of your labor." (Ps 128:2)

(A sad one) "The harvest is past, summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jer 8:20)

Harvest is a celebration for people who worked, but a disaster for those who burned their time, energy and passion in play.

WINTER The season for snow, Christmas, "cabin fever" and rest - but more: "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds will follow them" (Rev. 14:13). In His Spring ministry, Jesus began to teach and help people; He called His disciples and bonded with them. In His Summer ministry he prepared His disciples for mission He would pass on to them. Fall was short, just time to prove His resurrection and turn His ministry over to those He trained. Winter came early. He left this earth, promising to return at a time only the Father knows.

Later, Jesus' servant, Paul, wrote to Timothy about his approaching Winter; "The time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Work winds down when winter comes.

I must note here that, whereas in the *calendar world* the four seasons follow the Creator's divinely-ordered sequence, in the *ministry world* Fall and Winter

ordinarily follow either Spring for Summer ministers.

Ordinarily Spring ministers (evangelists) are not also Summer ministers (pastors) and Summer ministers (pastors) are not also Spring ministers (evangelists), even though there will be significant overlapping. Paul and Peter were both evangelists and pastors, ut that is not the norm for the Church.

Why? The answer is simple: The total mission of evangelism-pastoral care is too big a task for any one human being, especially when "the harvest is plentiful." God gives individually-tailored gifts to be either an evangelist or a pastor - "If was He who gave some to be...evangelists, and some to be pastors..." (Eph 4:11) No Christian has time, energy and passion to major in both evangelism and pastoral care. This means that each Christian is a specialist in the area of their spiritual gifts. Here is a very important insight, and quite new: All activities and ministries of the Church and tributaries flowing into either of the two great rivers - evangelism or shepherding. Together, they constitute the one mission given by Christ.

* To do both evangelism and shepherding, the entire church membership has to mobilize.

I feel the need to correct the notion that every Christian is to evangelize and shepherd. It is true that every Christian's character and life style is to include witnessing for Christ and loving one another, but evangelism goes beyond witnessing and pastoral care goes beyond loving one another. Witnessing for Christ comes short of evangelism like telling your neighbor about your care is different from a salesperson writing up the order. Loving one another comes short of pastoral care like the visit of a friend to a hospital patient is different from the visit of the door.

Evangelism incorporates witnessing into the ministry of midwife-ing people into the kingdom of God. Pastoral care incorporates loving one another into the ongoing ministry of being with members in life's joys and sorrows. The Lay Pastors Ministry, though closely related, differs from birthing. Birthing a child is "Mission Accomplished." Parenting is a "Mission in Process." It goes on and on and on. In other words, every Christian is to witness and love, but God neither gifts nor calls every Christian to be a specialist in both evangelism and pastoral care.

While other lay people are using their gifts in a variety of ministries, lay pastors are partnering with vocational pastors in total shepherding ministry. Total shepherding ranges from preaching, to small group leadership, to administration, to teaching Sunday School, to planting and leading worship, to pastoral care and the like. The lay pastor's part of the partnership in one-on-one, grass roots, ongoing pastoral care of an assigned number of church members.

We have already seen that the lay pastoral care piece of the puzzle fits in the Summer season. The *Church's Mission* picture will never be complete without this piece. Lay pastors are specialists in their ministry. They are "love with skin on it" to their mini-flocks which number five to ten church households. They **PRAY** for them, are **AVAILABLE** to them, maintain **CONTACT** with them, and are **EXAMPLES** to them. While faithfully PACE-ing their people they discover they are "mutually encouraged by each other's faith." (Rom 1:12) Each Christian has time, energy and passion to be productive in only one Season. Lay pastors, your ministry is a Sunday ministry. It will be followed by Fall, then Winter. Sometime in early Winter you will receive "the crown of glory that will never fade away." (I Peter 5:4) What a beautiful splash of bright colors your Summer jig-saw-puzzle piece contributes to the total picture of The Church's Mission.

13

You, too, can be success

99% OF THE POPULATION KNOW DAVE THOMAS AS THE FOUNDER OF WENDY'S, ACCORDING TO A COMPANY SURVEY. I HAVE SEEN THOMAS PERSONALLY HYPING HIS BUSINESS ON TV AND HAVE EATEN A HAMBURGER OF TWO AT A FEW OF HIS MANY VENUES. THOMAS OPENED HIS FIRST RESTAURANT IN 1969 IN COLUMBUS, OHIO. TODAY THERE ARE MORE THAN 6,000. THOMAS DIED ON JANUARY 8, 2002 AT AGE 69 OF LIVER CANCER, A REMARKABLE HORATIO ALGER -TYPE SUCCESS.

HIS DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT WAS DRIVEN BY THREE PERSONAL CONVICTIONS;

HARD WORK

QUALITY CONTROL

SHREWD MARKETING

These three convictions also drive lay and clergy leaders of successful lay pastoral care "business." Likewise, individual lay pastors become success when driven by these same convictions. Considering that Wendy's ongoing business is selling great hamburgers to the public, and that the Lay Pastors Ministry's business is "selling" great love and care to God's people, let's look closely at Thomas' three-point success formula.

HARD WORK

A successful ministry doesn't just happen. Think how hard Jesus worked at His

ministry: walking myriads of miles; teaching and healing by day, praying by night; dealing with hostile officials on one hand and squabbling, slow-learning disciples on the other; weary and hungry; betrayal, denial and desertion. He not only made the take-up-your-cross for being a disciple, he took up His cross - literally. He worked hard physically, mentally, emotionally, relationally, and spirituality.

Think how hard Paul worked at his ministry. Listen to him: "I have worked much harder [than other Israelites] ...have been in prison...been flogged...exposed to death again and again.. shipwrecked...I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep...I have known hunger and thirst ...I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches." (II Cor. 11:23-28)

Someone said, "Having a dream takes imagination; making a dream come true takes work." Every successful business person, every successful lay pastoral care ministry leader, and every successful lay pastor, testify to the HARD WORK conviction.

QUALITY CONTROL

"Excellence in all things and all things to God's glory," so reads the plaque on a church wall. Excellence in people's spirits control the quality in their life and ministry. God gave Moses requirements for constructing a world class tabernacle (curtains of finely twisted linen, gold hooks, acacia wood frames..."by a skilled craftsman"), better-than-Armani "suits" for the priests (finely twisted linen, braided chains of gold, engraved onyx stones, "the work of a skilled craftsman." (Exodus 26 and beyond) You can be sure Moses assumed the **QUALITY CONTROL** task because he was accountable to God for "excellence in all things and all things to God's glory."

A successful pastoral care ministry will be led by and carried on by people of quality: inner quality of spirit (love for God and love for neighbor), and outer quality of body, "words and actions" (I John 3:18). The Apostle Peter wrote, "Your beauty should be...that of our inner self." (I Peter 3:3-4) The "nots and buts" of the Lay Pastors Ministry Magna Charta (I Peter 5:1-4) control the quality of shepherding God's flock:

Not because you must, but because you are WILLING;

Not greedy for money, but EAGER to serve;

Not lording it over others, but being **EXAMPLES**.

Willingness is one's spirit surfaces as authenticity, and is perceived as "for real" by the receivers of lay pastoral care. *Eagerness* in one's spirit as passionate commitment, and is perceived as such by the receivers of lay pastoral care. Accepting the role of *example* in one's spirit surfaces as godly living, and is perceived to be standards for Christian conduct by the receivers of lay pastoral care.

Both ministry leaders and individual lay pastors need to be committed to quality. And by setting standards, politics, procedures, and biting-the-bullet evaluation, quality can be controlled. Successful ministry leaders and ministry doers testify to the **QUALITY CONTROL** conviction.

SHREWD MARKETING

In one of His parable, Jesus legitimizes (even encourages) shrewd ministry methods by commending the dishonest manager for his shrewd business methods - "For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than the people of light." (Luke 16:8)

Shrewd means foxy, artful in wielding practical skills, cautious, sagacious, perceptive, sharp in the ways of the world, and "cool." Jesus meant all of the above when he sent out the Twelve with these instructions: "Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." (Matt. 10:16)

How do you combine these two opposites - snakes and doves? The one is sneaky, subtle, deceptive, frightening and deadly (a symbol of Satan); the other is pleasant, graceful, attractive, out in the open (a symbol of peace, love and Holy Spirit). Here's how:

Be realistic - see things as they are, use the eyes of secularists.

Be expedient - be pragmatic...do what works; fight fire with fire.

Be aware - be wary, alert to the character and motives of people.

Be aggressive - get "in their face;" go after them; get the jump on them.

Realism, expedience, awareness and aggressiveness....*all in a spirit of respect, humility, love, without violating our Christian principles.* Jesus was being all of the above as He drove the animal peddlers out of the temple, labeled the Pharisees "hypocrites," and stood before Pilate in non-defensive silence.

The following story about a shrewd duck helps me understand *shrewd*. A duck waddled into the country store and asked the attendant, "Do you have any corn?" "No, we don't have any corn." The duck returned the next day. "Do you have any corn?" "No, we don't have any corn." The duck returned the third day. "Do you have any corn today?" "No! we didn't have any corn yesterday! We didn't have any corn the day before! We won't have corn tomorrow! If you ever ask for corn again, I'll throw your feet to this counter!" The duck returned the next day. "Do you have any nails?" "No." "Do you have any corn?"

Dave Thomas, famous among "the people of this world," is a prime source of shrewd marketing ideas for "the people of light," even though the product - love and care - is different.

The first usable **SHREWD MARKETING** idea from Thomas is promotion. The lay pastors ministry has to be publicized. It's just this simple: People have to *hear* about it!

The first two convictions, **HARD WORK** and **QUALITY CONTROL**, by themselves, did not make the founder of Wendy's restaurants a success. He had to *publicize* his quality product. Dave Thomas knew that the American people had to *hear* about his delicious hamburgers, just having them available was not enough. He blanketed the county with information about his products by effectively using television, billboards, newspaper ads, and mailings of money saving coupons. (I have used my share of them.) He, himself, made over 800 television commercials.

One of the hospitality industry companies, Baymont Hotels, as I write, is upgrading its rooms. Just to get the word out to potential "guests" about the additional comfort and convenience, Baymont plans to spend between \$400,000 and \$700,000 just in advertising. Publicizing business is an absolute essential, whether it's fast food, hotel rooms, or lay pastoral care.

Jesus publicized His "business." His plan was to cover the world with the Gospel by people who would travel, teach, preach and live it. He told them, "You will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) He has been telling his people the same thing for 2,000 years, through the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit and church pronouncements. The first usable idea is publicity.

The second usable is one of the most important missiles in our **SHREWD-MARKETING** arsenal: the personal appearance and testimony by ministry leaders and those doing ministry. Seeing the people doing the ministry and hearing from them, themselves, is most convincing. This can be done in worship services by interview or personal testimony, at other church gatherings, through newsletters and other printed pieces, and by scheduling special Lay Pastors Ministry information meetings.

The third usable idea is an absolute: "Don't cut corners." Thomas heard These words over and over from his grandmother during his childhood summers with her. (He was adopted as a baby and lost his adoptive mother at age of 5 and two stepmothers before he was 10.) This oft-repeated admonition morphed into a quintessential for success. If you promise quality; deliver quality. If your attractive brochures, church bulletins, and pulpiteering create expectations of love and care, to be a success, you have to deliver. The energies of love and care, of course, are **Prayer, Availability, Contact and Example (P.A.C.E.)**. Quality is marketing strategy. "Don't cut corners."

Whereas Thomas depended on thousands of managers, chefs and servers to make a good on his promise of quality, clergy and ministry leaders depend on their lay pastors to make good *their* promises of quality love and care. Thomas' employees held the key to his success; lay pastors hold the key to their own success and to the success of their leaders. Again: **Quality is SHREWD MARKETING**. Without quality, no amount of hard work, colorful brochures and pulpit hawking will make a ministry successful.

If, when you go to Wendy's you are served a tasteless or bad-tasting hamburger and limp French fries, you'll probable not go back. Likewise, if a church member has the tasteless or bad experience of a half-hearted, conversation dominating, self-interest contact, that member will likely resist

subsequent contacts. If this happens often, "business" will fall off. No amount of hyping the ministry will offset the affects of poor quality.

"Fool me once, shame on you;
Fool me twice, shame on me."

Don't cut corners on anything: publicity, lay pastor selection, equipping, accountability, prayer, commitment, passion, relationships, perseverance, servant hood, ministry and spiritual growth.

I'll list four more usable ideas from the Dave Thomas' success story and leave them for creative and enthusiastic readers like you to flesh out:

DISSATISFACTION WITH THE STATUS QUO Wendy's restaurants started with Thomas' frustration at not being able to find a good hamburger in downtown Columbus, Ohio. The Lay Pastors Ministry started with a pastor's frustration at not being able to personally care for all his people, or to hire a staff large enough to do it.

SUCCESS IN AN ALREADY CROWNED BUSINESS Thomas demonstrated that success could be achieved in a highly competitive segment of the restaurant business. Church leaders, lay and clergy, who see the possibility of lay people doing pastoral care, compete with an already crowded church program, overextended personal schedules, and the already overlapping commitments of prospective lay pastors. Tight church budgets are also a challenge.

GENUINENESS AND INTEGRITY ARE ESSENTIAL Thomas was not only a success in business; he was a success in life. In addition to managing a rapidly expanding international business, he became a leading champion for the adoption of foster children, arguing that they needed to love in their lives. The

former president George Bush named Thomas national spokesman on adoption issues. President Bill Clinton thanked him personally for his leadership. Thomas' valuable involvement in this great need is undoubtedly attributed to his childhood experiences. Lay pastors can likewise draw on their life experiences of sickness, troubles, loved-one's death, need for God, spiritual journey, and the like, to be genuinely emphatic and helpful to their people.

Dave Thomas died a success. When Jesus approached the end of His life on earth, He prayed, "Father...I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." (John 17:4) I want to be able to tell God the same at the end of my life on earth. That's what being a success means. Applying this meaning of *success*, I want to be a success and I want *you* to be success. With the prodding and power of the Holy Spirit, we shall make it.

Letters to Lay Pastors

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A Preview of my upcoming pocket of letters to lay pastors

By Dr. Melvin J. Steinbron Founder, LPMI

A few years ago the Lord pressed a simple idea on my heart: Write a series of letters to lay pastors. Since that time I have been pecking away at it, filing ideas as they come, writing bits and pieces, completing a few. My extended time of fighting cancer is nearly over, praise God, and I am ablaze with a new passion for writing (Ps. 45:1). I have a lot to give lay ministers.

I want to pay you up to 50 ""visits"" (each one five minutes or so) via letters. Each epistle comes from my heart and 62 years of *clergy pastoral care* in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Hawaii and Ohio, the last 32 of them given mostly to *lay pastoral care*, crisscrossing the USA, Canada, The Bahamas and parts of Australia to give seminars, speak and preach. Via e-mail and phone, I am now consulting with Lay Pastors Ministry leaders in South Korea, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Pakistan, and more. Each letter will be a useful and serendipitous visit about one of the following three categories of vital subjects:

DO IT ALL: *Discharge all the duties of your ministry* (II Tim. 4:5). I will write about what lay pastors are called by God to do in their ministry, give tips on how to do it, and what you can expect as you do it.

BE IT ALL: *Participate in the divine nature* (II Pet. 1 :4). You'll read about offering your body to God as a ""living sacrifice,"" what it is for your body to be a member of God's ""body,"" and how to have your Father's

""genes"" (Spirit) and word shape both your life and the lives of those you P.A.C.E.

RESPECT IT ALL: *Remember your leaders ... their way of life-Respect all your leaders and all the ministries they lead. Obey your leaders ... they keep watch over you as those who must give an account""* (Heb.13:7 & 17). In case you wonder about *obey*, the Greek word is *peitho*, meaning assent, agree with or obey - take your pick. All human effort, Christian or not, needs leaders and organization. God calls *many* of his people to tend his flock, *but few* to lead – *We have different gifts ... if it is leadership, let him govern diligently* (Rom. 12:8). We'll have a lot to learn from Moses' leadership, he is one of our posthumous leaders (Ex. 18).

#1

SEVEN HABITS OF NOTABLY SUCCESSFUL LAY PASTORS

Dear Lay Pastors,

The *Magna Charta* (*Great Charter*) of the Lay Pastors Ministry, I Peter 5:1-4, includes a crown of glory to notably successful lay pastors. You are earning your crown now, presentation will happen upon the Chief Shepherd's return. Don't let "notably successful" intimidate you. The point in one of Jesus' parables is that God takes note of those who are *good* and *faithful*. Matt. 25:21. Skills will not earn a crown or guarantee success, but God gives both to good and faithful lay pastors. The Bible says a lot more about character, gifts, and doing than skills.

I stole the idea of *Seven Habits* from Stephen Covey's, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Why seven? I don't know, but the Spirit is bugging me to offer you *Seven Habits of Notably Successful Lay Pastors*, a letter for ministry success.

Habit 1: Be Willing The Great Charter focuses us on willing—"Be shepherds of God's flock...not because you must, but because **you are willing**, as God wants you to be!" *Willing* is to "take ownership," make personal sacrifices and have authentic relationships. Understand willing by its antonym, **must**—dutiful,

reluctant, servile. Jesus knew slavish hired hands make poor shepherds. When the going gets tough, they run away. Jn. 10:11-13 Three scriptures each that willingness is in a born-again person's DNA: 1) Jesus, whose Spirit is in us, said "*I am willing*" when the leper begged for healing; Mk 1:41 2) "It is God who *works in you to will and to act* according to his good purpose; Phil 2:13 3) The Corinthians' willingness and completion of the task are laced together. I Cor 8:11-12 God, pleased with your willingness, names you a notably successful lay pastor.

Habit 2: Be Eager The Great Charter shifts our focus: "Be shepherds of God's flock...not greedy for money, but **eager to serve.**" Just as willingness is a divine-human blend, so is eagerness. Like most God-you blends, *eager* is understood best by observation, not definition. For example, to know what it is to be eager, watch a first-time mother stretching her arms out to take her baby from the nurse.

Eager gets fresh meaning from its antonym, **greedy**. (Lay pastors are not paid, so substitute awards for money.) My thesaurus has *eager* as a synonym for greedy, so read "not eager for money, but eager to serve." Let's admit it: we "feel" what eager for money is, therefore we can "feel" what eager to serve is. Noting your eagerness, God identifies you as a notably successful lay pastor!

Habit 3: Be an example The focus moves on: "Be shepherds of God's flock ... not lording it over those entrusted to you, but **being examples** to the flock." A distressed lay person, asked by her pastor to lead the group starting their Lay Pastors Ministry, phoned me about a serious problem. Her voice was shaky, "What can I do about one of my group who is adamantly against including

Example? He is convinced only Jesus is worthy of being an example, and warned me that he will speak out against it tonight, and he will!" Following the plan in *Can the Pastor Do It Alone?* they came to the ministry description—PACE: Pray, Available, Contact, Example. He was fully in favor of PAC, his only beef was with E.

I referred her to I Peter 5:1-4, especially *being examples to the flock*. I cited other biblical support: Phil 3:17; II Thes 3:9; I Tim 4:12, and I Thes 1:7 which makes it clear we do not choose to *make* ourselves examples, we *are* unintentional examples whether we want to be or not. This habit calls us to give attention to the fact we are already examples and should intentionally grow into being better and better examples. This habit precludes our "lording it over others." Since God put example in the Great Charter, noting it tells he includes you in the notably successful lay pastors crowd. You will therefore receive the crown of glory.

Time out: These first three habits are so supremely important to the Church of Jesus Christ that they are included in the order to shepherd God's flock. This three-fold divine-human blend is indispensable to your working alongside Jesus as he continues building his Church— "so that the body of Christ may be built up...as each part does its work." *Eph 4:11-13* These three blends are, 1st, divine strategies to keep the gates of hell from overcoming it. Matt 16:18 (aka keeping members from falling through the cracks), 2nd, divine tactics to encourage Christian brothers and sisters to mature in Christ, and 3rd, our Father plans for the Church to be the "family of God," *Eph 3:14-15* brothers and sisters in Christ who love and care *for* and *about* each other. Actually, these blends flow, first, from Jesus' love for Peter, then Peter's love for Jesus —Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you." *Jn 21:17* Think of it! Your source of love is Peter's source—Jesus—who was the first to take on the form of a willing, eager and exemplary servant. *Phil 2:5-8* Loving marks a lay pastor as a

notable success.

Habit 4: Covet Integrity It's not cleanliness that's next to godliness, it's integrity—"I know, my God, that you test the heart and are **pleased with integrity**. I Chron 29:17. What does God test for integrity? The heart (aka spirit), that non-physical, inner secret center of one's life, a little higher than man, a little lower than God. It is inaccessible to family, friends, science, philosophy, accessible only to God and you. It's where integrity and/or hypocrisy rule, where decisions and inner drives originate, finally surfacing in external behavior and attitudes. Integrity matches inner drives with external performance, something like the color and flavor of Reagan's Jelly Bellies (gourmet jelly beans) are the same inside as outside.

Though integrity can be defined as complete, incorruptible, and fixed adherence to values, it is best understood by seeing it. The more we "see" Jesus' life in the gospels and the Apostle Paul's in his letters, the farther we will move from *coveting* integrity toward *being* a person of integrity—"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you," Jn. 13:15 and, "Whatever you have heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice." Phil. 4:9 We know what the antonym, hypocrisy, is by "seeing" Judas kiss Jesus, Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde and Madoff's ponzi scheme. Hypocrisy = failure; integrity = notable success in life and ministry.

Habit 5: Be free with love and joy After telling the sports reporter the best ad-vice she ever got, "Let go and let God," America's No. 1 college basketball player from the UConn 2009 NCAA winning team, answered his question about what she wanted her epitaph to say: "Here lies Renee Montgomery who loved life and loved everyone in it." Don't you just *love* a person who loves you! Jesus

taught that love and joy form the core essence of life—"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another," and "...So that my joy may be in you and that your joy will be full." Jn. 13:34-35; 15:11 Edwin Markum said, "We have committed The Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to our lives." I say, "Let us now commit love and joy to our lives." Go for them! And share them!

Habit 6: Think Pastoral Care *Pastora?* Certainly, because most church members would like their pastor to care personally for them as doctors care for each patient and teachers care for each student— **Pray** for them individually about their spiritual and physical needs; be **Available** for drop-in visits, emergencies and celebrations; **Contact** them (be in touch) occasionally; and know him or her well enough to have a helpful **Example** of how another Christian struggles with his or her life issues. Clergy *cannot* do this (you do the math). God calls them to pastor the congregation as a whole (preach, teach, train laity, and the like). Lay pastors *can* do this. God calls and gifts them to be "love with skin on it," to PACE the congregation...one person at a time. That's why the congregation needs dozens of lay pastors (scores in larger churches), but only one clergy pastor (or staff).

Habit 7: Keep the end in mind Jesus prayed to his Father near the end of his life, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. Jn. 17:4 From the beginning, Jesus knew he was to preach, teach, heal and finally give his life for the sins of the world. To be able to say from the cross, "It is finished" he had to be doing these things each day through his years. Paul, near the end of his life, wrote "I have fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith." II Tim 4:7-8 For this to be true, starting with his conversion, he kept the crown of glory in mind each day through his years. Keeping the end in mind will keep *you* on track for the crown of glory to be presented to notably successful lay pastors!

Keeping at it, mjs

#2

THREE GREAT MYSTERIES WITH A PURPOSE

My dear brothers and sisters,

Who doesn't like a mystery! Especially when an exciting event unfolds into a revelation previously unknown. A biblical mystery is what?—something God kept secret for ages, now revealed to his people"— Col. 1:26-27. He kept it secret until people were ready for it—"the fullness of time." Three mysteries are before us:

The mystery of life, death, and life again—**The Resurrection** The mystery of God in Christ and history—**The Incarnation** The mystery of Christ in you and the Church—**The Infusion**

Mystery # 1: The Resurrection – Job's issue—*If a man dies, will he live again?* Both he and Lazarus' sister, Mary (and myriads of people since) saw in the fog-shrouded distance *something* happening after death. But what? A general event of some kind—*After my skin has been destroyed, in my flesh I will see God.... I know he (Lazarus) will rise again in the resurrection at the last day* – Job 14; 19 & Jn. 11.

Jesus' resurrection dispelled the fog, and his assuring words to Martha brought the distant future into the present: *He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die* – Jn 11:25. "He will live even though he dies," is how we see at the cemetery. But we can't

understand “he will never die” until we see this is how God sees it. The believer lived, then was taken to paradise, as was the thief, to await the resurrection of the body. This will happen upon the return of Christ, “the firstfruit of the resurrection,” – I Cor 15:20. The purpose of this revealed mystery is to assure us of a seamless life after life.

Mystery # 2: The Incarnation – This is history’s greatest mystery— God entered the world as a baby whose peasant mother was a virgin, engaged to an honorable young Jew. This unparalleled event—God in human flesh— was prophesied by Isaiah 700 years before it happened: *The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel, which means God with us* – Isaiah 7:14.

How will this be since I am a virgin? was Mary’s shock-and-awe question to Gabriel after announcing she would give birth to a son. The angel explained, *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you* – Luke 1:30-35. Later, Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to be registered. While there, Mary gave birth. From the East, Magi came with their gifts. The record rapidly moves on to Jesus and his Twelve, teaching, miracles, crowds, opposition, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension with a promised return.

Suddenly, 20 centuries later it’s Christmas again.. We followers of Jesus continue to celebrate his birth—the Incarnation, God in human flesh. I am writing this a week before Christmas 2008. It so happens the 60-voice National Lutheran Choir is in Minneapolis tonight to give a Christmas concert with a timely title: *LOVE INCARNATE—God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself* - II Cor. 5:19.

While we who follow Jesus celebrate this one-of-a-kind mystery, our culture gets its jollies from its secular/material "Season," having hijacked the Jesus event, and down-sized humanity's greatest miracle to a Santa-type myth. Actually, Jesus' followers more than "double the pleasure, double fun" of Christmas by giving priority to Jesus and celebrating with all kinds of people – family gatherings, cards, decorations, gifts, lights, parties, Jingle Bells music, special food and more.

The purpose of revealing this mystery is so all nations know that God in Christ so loved the world (and continues to love it) that he died to save us from our sins.

Mystery # 3: The Infusion – *the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints...which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory* – Col. 1:26-27. Infusion will take some explaining because it's a new name for the great event of Christ coming into the Believer...like he came into the world.

Since naming is the first step in understanding, it's imperative to know that infusion is the act of introducing one thing into another so as to affect it throughout. An example is yeast in bread, it permeates the entire loaf. **The Infusion** of Christ in you permeates every part of you: body, mind, heart, and spirit—*Here I am! I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me* - Rev. 3:20.

Infusion is really another incarnation—as God is in Christ, Christ is in you, really *in you*. Jesus makes this clear in his prayer to the Father— *I in them and you in me....That the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them* – John 17:23, 26.

The purpose of this revelation is so you can live incarnationally, i.e. activating Jesus' love and power for your daily challenges and your PACEing ministry. As yeast makes bread delectable, Jesus will make your life and ministry successful.

Paul attributed his relentless passion for his ministry to the infusion event in his life. After writing to the Colossians about "Christ in you," he wrote, *To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.* I pray for you, that God will lead you to access the same energy and power in your ministry.

Successful pastoring, Mel Steinbron

#3

AS FOR ME...

My dear brothers and sisters,

We live in a country where freedom to choose what we will be and do is a right. Of course, responsibility and consequence come with freedom. Near the end of his life, Joshua assembled the tribes of Israel to tell them they were free to make one of two choices:-Joshua 24:14-15.

*Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the River in Egypt. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers...or the gods of the Amorites. But **as for me** and my household, we will serve the Lord.*

The Psalmist was also free to choose—*For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked....But **as for me**, it is good to be near God* – Psalm 73:3, 28.

A mini-drama of the Caesarea-Philippi experience would go like this: Jesus to the Twelve: "Who do people say I am"?

The Twelve: "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others."

Jesus: "What about you? Who do you say I am"?

Peter: “[**As for me**]* you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”- Matt. 16:13-16

The following mini-drama about Peter’s boast—[**As for me**], *even if I have to die with you I will never disown you*, - Mark 14:31 may tell something about ourselves:.....A servant girl in the courtyard, looking closely to Peter warming himself at the fire: “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus.”.....Peter: “[**As for me**], I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about.”.....The servant girl seeing him again: “This fellow is one of them.”

.....Peter: Again he denied it.

.....Later, One standing near Peter: “Surely you are one of them, you’re Galilean.”

.....Peter, calling curses on himself: “[**As for me**], I don’t know this man you’re talking about.” The cock crowed; Peter broke down and wept** - Mk 14:66-72

The Apostle Paul chose to serve God, suffer for Christ, and fight for the Gospel: [**As for me**] *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. The consequence is awesome—Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing* – II Tim. 4:7-8

*Brackets indicate implied words. **As noted above, responsibility and consequence come with freedom of choice. Peter recovered from his devastating implosion and is reinstated – John 21:15-19. Jesus: “Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?”

Peter: "Yes, Lord, you know that **[as for me]** I love you." Jesus: "Take care of my sheep...Come and follow me." Peter: "Lord,**[as for John]**, what about him?"

Jesus: "What is that to you? You must follow me." Peter followed!

On the Day of Pentecost, the words of Jesus still ringing in his ears, Peter, now filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore finished with two- faced duplicity for the rest of his life, stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice which had affirmed his belief that Jesus was the Christ, but which also had disowned Jesus, saying to the crowd (which had shouted to Pilate, "Crucify! Crucify!" now risking the same for himself)—**[As for me]**, *fellow Jews, you, with the help of wicked men, put Jesus to death by nailing him to the cross. But, God raised him from the dead because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him"*- Acts 2:14-24.

Most of this letter is biblical record about the precipitant choice for all humans from the beginning (Eve, **[As for me]**, the apple)—"Choose whom you will serve." Many, if not all of us, identify with Peter's three Christian-life struggles: (1) choice and affirmation, (2) some form of denial and remorse, (3) reaffirmation and reinstatement. Most, if not all, of our choices are now being made in stage 3—(a) How long will you be a lay pastor and how far will I follow Jesus in my ministry?

(b) Will I serve Jesus half-heartedly or with my whole heart (will I love him half-way or all the way)? (c) Am I giving the necessary time, energy and spirit to my ministry or am I stingy with them?

Haven't I asked the right stage 3 questions? But you get the idea. The same

Holy Spirit who managed Peter's life after Pentecost will put the right questions in your spirit. **As for me**, he questions as necessary (those I need to face up to, usually from stage 3). **As for me**, I have no problem with stage 1, and, **as for me**, only an occasional problem with stage 2. **As for me** I am helped in making choices by Jesus' wise words—*Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it*—Matt. 16:25 —and I connect with the Holy Spirit for access power for live out right choices—*The Spirit who lives with you and in you*—John 14:17.

[As for me], another follower of Jesus, Mel Steinbron

#4

Good Rapport

Dear Lay Pastor

A good rapport opens the door to good pastoral caring, the soul of Jesus' compassionate care for people. For lay pastor, *rapport* marks one-on-one relationships with harmony, accord and affinity. In the medical profession this is called "good bedside manners." I believe all lay pastors desire a good rapport with each member of their flock. But how can you achieve that?

A new wave in training medical doctors may tip us off. Medical schools began a movement to "humanize" doctors about ten years ago. Two-thirds of the schools are using actors to help young doctors perfect their bedside manners, stressing respect and empathy for patients as well as medical knowledge. The effort is a response to patient complaints that doctors are too detached and distant, some even arrogant, callous, abrupt, and abrasive (AARP Bulletin, Nov. 2006).

Church members make the same complaint about some clergy pastors. The reality is: many clergy do not have a passion for one-on-one caring because God gave them other gifts, e.g., preaching, teaching, administration, leadership, equipping, and the like. Those duties come easy for them, pastoral care of

individuals is a chore. Don't think this strange for Ephesians 4:11-12 reveals God's plan for the care of his people — pastors are to equip church members to do the ministry of one-on-one, grass-roots pastoral care. Moses learned from his father-in-law, Jethro, that his duty was to lead the whole body of Israelites, not the impossible task of caring for them individual — "Moses, what you are doing is not good; you much teach them the laws, show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. Select capable people to care for them in groups of ten, then you will be able to stand the strain and the people will be happy." Moses did this. He was now able to be what God originally called him to do — lead the people as a whole." (This is my paraphrase of Exodus 18:17-26).

As Moses was to shepherd God's Chosen People as a whole, clergy pastors, according to Ep. 4:11-12, are called to shepherd the congregation as a whole, part of which to call forth, equip and commission pastorally gifted members to care for the congregation one member at a time. This kind of one-on-one attention is utterly impossible for clergy pastors.

But lay pastors can do it if assigned only five to ten families. A strategically essential unit of training is *Building a Relationship*, which could just as well be called *Creating a Good Rapport*. For both doctors and lay pastors this truism is really true: Any relationship worth having is worth working on. Both doctors and lay pastors maximize their respective kinds of care by training. As doctors' good bedside manners earn the confidence of their patients so lay pastors' good pastoral care manners earn the confidence of their flock.

Lay pastors, you have a running star in forming good relationships because you have God's Spirit in you and with you, hardwiring the ingredients of love into your spirit (aka pastoral gifts) — compassion, empathy, warmth, respect,

gentleness, kindness, thoughtfulness, and the like. And this is the same Spirit which energized Jesus to give himself and his love to people.

And example of this is in Mark 1:41. He was *"moved with compassion"* by the leper who came to him for healing (*"filled with compassion"* is another translation). These words not only tell what he did, they tell what he was — a person who truly was "love with sin on." There are many accounts of his compassionate and loving actions which flowed from his spirit.

Are you ready for this — Jesus said, *Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing...and will do even greater things* (John 14:21). He is depending on you to build a good rapport with your people by loving and respecting them, by being real with compassion and empathy, by encouraging and helping them, and by being there for them. Our Chief Shepherd is our model — *Be kind and compassionate to one another...Be imitators of God, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us* (Eph. 4:32-5:1). Here is a formula for achieving, maintaining and improving rapport:

1. Anticipatory preparation — Set your mind on having a good rapport and ask God to teach you how to achieve it.
1. Make your contact (connect) — visit or phone.
1. Evaluate — In God's presence, reflect on what and how you did in order to continue working on your relationship.

#5

YOU HAVE HANDS, OFFER THEM TO GOD

You'll find three pearls of great value, one in this letter and one in

each of the next two. Try this: put your hands 12 inches in front of your face and say, "I offer these hands to God as instruments of righteousness." It's as Annie Johnson Flint wrote, "God has no hands but our hands to do his work today." (*Hand*, in this three-letter series, is a metaphor for all body members.) Surely, early in your faith you offered your total body to God as a living sacrifice.

Sacrifice suggests fire, if what was once fire is now embers, now is the time to fan it into flame ... *NOW!*

Did you know as you use your hands for others, unless God infuses your efforts with the energy of his Spirit, you may accomplish what human effort can accomplish, but you'll come up short of making the kind of differences in people's lives God desires for them. *Without me you can do nothing*, is the way Jesus put it as he briefed his disciples while walking from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane. Success in ministry is the you-and-Jesus partnership. It's as some one said, "Without God, you can't do it; without you, God isn't going to do it."

Pearl # 1: Your hands - instruments of righteousness - Rom. 6:13. Now, let's think together how you might use this pearl in your lay pastoral care ministry: Hands: Place one on the shoulder of a discouraged student or grieving spouse as you verbally encourage the one and comfort the other. Ears: Listen, intently focused.

This tells them you are there for them, happy or sorry for them, according to their present life situation. Arms: A man in a distressed state was being encouraged by a friend who slipped his arm across his shoulders as he prayed for him. The man was euphoric, "God put his arm around me!" His friend admitted, "It was me, but it was really God using the arm closest to you." Feet: You use *your* creative imagination, then try other body members This guy in a TV movie trying to make points with a girl said, "You've heard that we use only 10% of our brains, I believe we use only 10% of our *hearts*."

By using the members of your body-your heart especially-to laypastor your people you can count on God's Spirit to at least quadruple the Christian love-power of your caring initiatives. This prayer was included in our church this morning: *We thank you for hearts to love; we thank you for hands to serve.* When you love with your heart you "participate in the divine nature."-II Pet. 1:4 After your next pastoral contact, ask yourself, "Did I heart-love them?" My next letter is about offering your body as a whole to God.

#6

YOU HAVE A BODY, OFFER IT TO GOD

Did you know God has a body, too? Trust me, you will discover the second pearl by standing before a mirror saying, "Just as this hand is a member of my body, my body is a member of God's 'body'." The way you use your hand and other body parts as instruments of righteousness is similar to the way God uses you, intact, as an instrument of righteousness. The difference is God uses your *total life* as his instrument, its entirety; you use members of your body. As the hymn goes, "Take my life and let it *be* consecrated Lord to thee ... take my hands ... my feet ... my voice ... my lips ... my silver and my gold." (Some who are keeping themselves for themselves should sing only "Take my life and ... LET IT BE!") You have offer-ed your body- your total self-to God as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. He accepted your offer, don't keep him waiting for you to deliver.

Pearl # 2: Your body - God's instrument of righteousness. When your hands are physically and spiritually connected to a body offered to God as a "living sacrifice," two great things follow: 1) the affect of your hands as a laypastor is maximized; 2) the affect of your body, used by God in the lives of others as a member of his body, is also maximized. It's this way-you are a Christian bundle of character, reputation, persona, faith, church life, community life, job, marriage, family, singleness, values, goals-everything ... all you are ... all you have ... all you do. God's reputation to your friends and acquaintances hangs on how they perceive you. You're more than the *parts* of your body, you're a "bundle" God uses to draw them. Like the skilled Counselor he is, God's Spirit, in the center of their lives, uses their perception of you to attract them to himself, his love

and grace.

Wow! That 2nd Pearl is heavy! You may wish to re-read the preceding paragraphs and ponder them before reading on. It's hard to believe! Always in secret ways and most of the time unknown to you, God uses you (the whole bundle) to connect with individual members of your flock-also members of your family, relatives, neighbors, friends, co-workers, and more-in the private inner sanctuary of their hearts, a very sacred and secret place, accessible only to his gentle Spirit.

The source of this truth is God, *the Spring of living water*, Jeremiah wrote. For example-*Your bodies are members of Christ himself* - I Cor. 6:15; *We are members of his body* - Eph. 5:30; *Offer your [total] selves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life* - Rom. 6: 13; *You are not your own; you are bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body* -I Cor. 6:19-20.

If you hold this pearl to the light, you'll see people as pragmatists, wanting to see for themselves what their lives would be like, should they turn them over to Jesus. For them, God needs observable living examples of what a Christian is and does. He needs flesh-and-blood models to support the written and spoken truth, in other words, people who walk the talk. That's you! You don't know who all is watching you, in fact they may not even be aware they're watching you. They have no way of knowing God is using what they see in you to permeate their lives with his disarming love and grace. You know the biblical teaching, but you don't know how or when, or where God is doing what he is doing. ""God is always up to something,"" someone said. That someone is right! What a mystique!

Now, realizing that knowledge is not the same as action-knowing is no substitute for doing-I need to release Pearl # 2 from this paper so you can see what it is in real life It's as President Bush told the leaders of the world's 20 richest countries at a meeting on the global recession, November '08: ""Meetings will not get things done, only people get things done." You'll see how critical it is to live what you know by living out your Christianity in real life so God can do what only he can do - open people's hearts to his great love and give them a new life. Now, let's get on with liberating Pearl # 2 from this paper

Be an example: God plans for you, a member of his body, to be an example as Jesus was-I *have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you* - Jn. 13:15. People want to know whether they would be better off if Jesus were Lord of their lives. It's like a political candidate asking, ""Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"" People eagle-eye you to get an idea of what Christians are and do. God uses your example to woo them and win their hearts, or if he already has their hearts, to lead them to a deeper life in Christ. God needs total-life Christians. ""Try it, you'll like it.""

Be a lover: God plans for you to unconditionally love people so they ""get a feel"" for what genuine love is. The Greek word for love is *agape* - wanting life to be good for another and a desire to help make it so, regardless of the cost to you. You must know a few people who need that kind of love, don't you? There's so little of it in our world. It's as David Iglesias, former U.S. Attorney for New Mexico alleged, ""It's becoming more and more uncivil and nasty and brutish."" God needs members of his body to be examples and lovers. Be good ones!

#7

THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST

I know you are a member of your church, and I know it expects you to: "Confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," "Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,""" and then live out what you confess and believe - Rom. 10:9-19. (One wag gave his spin on church expectations: Join up ... Show up ... Pay up ... Shut up.)

I also know you're a member of another Church (it's written all over your faith) the Church Universal and Eternal (CUE), aka "the mystical body of Christ. Look at these five striking comparisons of the CUE with your church: (1) the CUE neither overshadows your church nor disparages it, but glorifies it and is mystically in communion with it;

(2) the CUE is universal and eternal, yours is local and temporal; (3) Jesus is the ""head"" of the CUE, your pastor is the head of your church; (4) the CUE is invisible, yours is visible; (5) the CUE is spiritual, yours is corporeal. Summary: the two are separate but congruent. .. *amazing!*

The CUE is a supernatural wonder, rooted in Judaism, founded by Jesus Christ, overarching myriads of God's people past, present and future. Think of it as a transparent overlay on all believers of all ages, no matter what form the Church has or had in the PAST-Judaism, God said, ""I am the God of Abraham, Isaac

and Jacob,"" PRESENT-church: mega, small, house) or FUTURE-who knows?

Pearl # 3: The Church Universal and Eternal The following biblical Church scape helps grasp the connectedness of your church with the overarching CUE: Jesus: *I will build my Church*. Just prior to the cross, with cup in hand, he said to his disciples: *This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins* - Matt. 16:16-18; 26:27-28 *In Christ we who are many form one body* - Rom. 12:5. *Christ is the head of the church each part does its work This is a profound mystery -but I am talking about Christ and the Church* - Eph. 4:15-16; 5:32.

I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth is named To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through out all generations, for ever and ever - Eph. 3:14,21.

To the seven churches ... I am the alpha and omega, says the Lord God, who is, and who was and who is to come - Rev. 1:4 & 8 *The blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ* - Titus 2:13.

The following six *Alphas* and *Ome~as* are the mountain peaks in the Church scape: Jesus is building his Church out of people whose sins are forgiven.

- Jesus loves his Church, he gave himself up for her.
- Jesus is the ""head"" of the ""body,"" his Church.
- Jesus' Church submits to its ""head,"" each part is to do its work.
- The true nature and future of the Church is a "profound mystery."
- Last but not least, the hope of the world is the return of Jesus
-
- This is the Church of which your local church and all individual Christians

past, present and future belong. What a special privilege! What a great joy it is to be members-simultaneously-of both your church and the CUE in your lifetime!

For the rest of my letter I'll focus on your church, the highly visible one with its spire reaching upward. Sociologically, your church is one among many institutions in our society, others are schools, government, banks, casinos, industry, and more. Some people are turned off by "the institutional church." True, "organized religion" is faulty. I know it is, I'm one of its faulty clergy. We're always in need of three R's-Repentance, Renewal and Reform. Only the Founder was perfect.

In spite of all its faults, in its 2000-year history no other societal institution comes close to the church as a force for good. For starters, the church founded public education at all levels, built hospitals, spawned charitable organizations, and most of the founding fathers who created our unique democracy were leaders in their churches. In spite of its own guilty conscience, it is the best "conscience of society" in existence, a sure "shelter in the time of storm." Our challenge is to be a part of our church's strength, not of its weakness. Your lay pastoral care ministry definitely includes you as a part of your church's strength! In some way you and the Apostle Peter have two things in common: You confessed your love for Jesus, and you stepped forward when he summoned you to ""Take care of my sheep."" Perhaps you can affirm the other laypastors by sharing this at your next meeting.

You may also want to share the following: Laypastors belong to something far bigger than themselves. Your church is both organization and organism~ at one level ... human, at another ... divine. It bridges the span from temporal to eternal. Jesus makes the difference-he infuses the organization with his life,

making it an organism~ he himself is the bridge connecting the church (you know the church is people, it only *has* a building) to the Kingdom of God, granting dual citizenship to his followers. His bridging words are authoritative: "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the father except through me" (In. 14:6).

Know you are doing a great job by pastorally caring for those in the Way,

Truth, and Life! Happy laypastoring, Me! Steinbron

#8

MY PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE THREE MYSTERIES

I'm connected to each of the three mysteries; these connections make my day...today and every day! Each individual you PACE is connected in their unique way. You may want to try this: as their lay pastor, ask God to help you discern each person's one-of-a kind connection so you may rejoice with them, or empathize, if that pastoral-care art of listening and loving is more appropriate.

THE RESURRECTION *He who believes in me will live [again], even though he dies* – Jn. 11:25. Charlotte, with whom I shared 62 years of marriage, lies in a cemetery a half mile from where I live. Her death was the most severe pain in my 84 years. My deep-seated bruising gave way to healing, bit by bit, as my ongoing relationship with Jesus, the first-fruit of the resurrection, began to replace my grief with a grief-joy mix. Praise God, the grief part is gone.

The words chiseled on the grave marker, I GIVE THEM ETERNAL LIFE, witness to my belief the two of us will live again - Jn. 10:28. (My name is also on the stone.) Job's mystery, *If a man dies will he live again?* is now solved. My answer to Job is a booming YES! So is yours! You will bless those you PACE by sharing your answer with them.

Our connection with this mystery is faith in the resurrection, i.e. we'll live again.

THE INCARNATION *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself* – II Cor. 5:19. The doctrine, Christology, names the God-in-Christ event The Incarnation—*In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form* – Col. 2:9. This is a simple truth but not simplistic, easy to see but not to perceive, easy to hear but not to understand. Christology and The Incarnation have something in common with astrophysics and Dark Energy—a “mysterious essence which is causing the universe to expand at an ever-accelerating pace.” It may eventually cause a “big rip and blow us to smithereens.” Lawrence Krause, physicist at Arizona State University said, “We’ve discovered this incredible Dark Energy; we don’t understand what it is.”

Theologians and astrophysicists have three things in common: First, both are sure of what they believe by faith—theologians have faith in the Bible, astrophysicists, have faith in scientific theory. Second, both admit knowing something exists that.. cannot be understood— theologians, Incarnation, astrophysicists, Dark Energy. Third, both believe effect validates their claim—God-in-Christ has a two- thousand-year positive and measurable affect on individuals, families, communities, government, culture and more; Dark Energy is an observable force causing the universe to expand. Personally, I’m not sure about Dark Energy (science has a way of moving on), but I stake my eternal life on the Incarnation—God-in-Christ, my Savior. My connection with The Incarnation: *I confess with my mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in my heart that God raised him from the dead* – Rom. 10:9.

THE INFUSION *The glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory* – Col. 1:27. Infusion necessarily follows Incarnation for the next phase in God’s big plan is for Christ’s followers to continue his ministry, *All this is from God who reconciled*

us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation

– II Cor. 5:18. He also gave us the task of caring for the reconciled. Jesus assigned it first to Peter—*Take care of my sheep* – Jn. 20:16. Later Peter passed the ministry on to lay successors, known to us as The Lay Pastors Ministry – I Pet 5:1-4.

Now, with Christ in you, God expects two things: 1) Carry on Christ's ministries of reconciliation and shepherding; 2) Remember Jesus' sacrifice on the cross by The Lord's Supper—*Do this in remembrance of me...For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes* – I Cor. 11:23-26. Take special note of "until he comes," for the third phase in God's big plan is Jesus' return, not as Savior this time, but *KING of KINGS and LORD of LORDS* – Rev. 19:16. Jesus teaches in one of his parables about our being held accountable to carry on his ministries, *[Do this] until I come back* – Luke 19:11-12.

Infusion is really another Incarnation. Incarnation was God in human flesh; Infusion is Christ in human flesh—the huge difference is God's flesh was Christ, and Christ's flesh in his myriad followers. Let me illustrate: *Christ in you* is some- thing like *conscience in you*, both incomprehensible but real. Conscience, forged by "nature and nurture," is faulty and unreliable. Christ, by divine nature, is fault-less, reliable, and the inner source of love and light. He is full Deity:

Father (Creator); Son (Jesus the Savior); and Holy Spirit (divine power, truth and wisdom)—*In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives* – Col. 2:9. It's impossible to understand the Triune God, but we ply lots of things without understanding them, e.g. TV, computers and cell phones, and we experience lots of other things without understanding them, e.g. life, love, human nature, and things

we're not aware of going on in our bodies, things our lives depend on.

For now it's enough just to know Infusion is real, that Christ is really *in* you! Two sure-fire ways of living out this reality and maximizing the experience *now* are:

1. Affirm what you know about Christ in you, how much of what you know you truly believe, and what you are doing with what you know.
1. Commit all you know about yourself to as much as you know about Christ in you, before waiting for more knowledge and understanding. I connect with Infusion by asking, what in my life proves that Christ is in me.

Perhaps in another letter I can share the insights that form the answers.

Blessings! Melvin

#9

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT BLOWING YOUR OWN HORN?

My dear covenant-motivated brothers and sisters,

This morning my pastor, David Lenz, preached on giving -- *How to Give Away Money*. You know how sermons about money usually go over, well, this one was a hit! It was biblically nurturing, super- interesting, and homiletically perfect. Preparation must have included praying this song: *Take your truth O Lord/ and let it be/ a river of love flowing out through me*. The river flowed!

As David approached the pulpit, loud blasts from a trumpet nearly jolted us out of the pews. All heads immediately turned to two men parading down the aisle, one blowing his trumpet, the other waving a sign, I'M GIVING; I'M GIVING! This action ignited my imagination, I saw myself pushing a dollar bill into the Salvation Army kettle slot and shouting to those pretending the kettle was not there, "See me, I'm giving." I was ready for the sermon. The Scripture was part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount:

..... When you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets..... to be honored by men But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you openly

(Matt.6:1-4).

Secret and *reward* caught my attention. These two words of Jesus nailed down forever two major principles for Giving. David masterfully (translate: "filled with the Spirit") sculpted his sermon out of them. I'm borrowing the Secret principle and the Reward principle for this letter, after all, he borrowed them from Jesus. But first, we'll hear two of Jesus' other teachings: the *act* of giving, the *treasures* to give, then the *principles* for giving.

The act of Giving -- "WHEN YOU GIVE." Note Jesus' three words: *WHEN*—not if you give; *YOU*—this is you, your self, choosing the purpose and amount; *GIVE*—divesting one's self of something tangible like food, clothes and/or money to the needy. Giving is a majestic feature in God's nature which seems to have survived "the fall" in better shape than many others. God must have considered giving as needed more than many other practical acts for the survival of the human race. One example of giving in our area is the annual Toys for Tots drive, carried out by the U.S. Marines. Close to Christmas (20 days from today) they will distribute thousands of gifts to needy children in the seven-county Twin Cities area. Though dire needs plague children all year long, the Marines act is significant. They surprise the children with hope as well as toys. Between Christmases, the Salvation Army, churches, and community organizations help families with food, clothes and hope.

The treasures to give -- MONEY AND SELF. Two of the 26 issues Jesus preached on the Mount were on giving (no 15-minute three- point sermon here). If preachers are to fulfill their call to "Preach the Word," they will preach what Jesus preached. On this day Jesus included giving money and giving self. Because money and self are so big in our lives, giving money is giving self, and giving self is giving money. Consider Jesus' comment about the widow who

put two copper coins in the collection box—*All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on* (Luke 21:1- 4). (Now to simplify my wording from this point on, I'll use two words instead of five—"giving self" in place of "giving money and giving self.")

Many are in a Catch-22 dilemma (a situation presenting two equally desirable alternatives). It is spiritually, emotionally and psychologically impossible to give self to the true God while also giving self to the bogus god of self. For our own sanity and peace of mind we have to decide who is # 1 -- God or self. Tony Campolo tells about a troubled man who came for counsel, "I've got this terrible problem, it's tearing me apart: I love my wife and I love my secretary. It's killing me." Tony's counsel: "You don't have a problem, you have a decision."

His counsel applies to Christians trying to give their hearts to both God and self. When you give your heart to God, all other things, including self, are secondary. When lay pastors struggle between giving self to God to do lay pastoral care and giving self to *self* to do its own agenda, they have a huge decision to make. Let Jesus have the last word: *If your first concern is to look after yourself, you'll never find yourself. But if you forget about yourself and look to me, you'll find both yourself and me* (Matt. 10:39 in *The Message*). Say, "Yes Jesus, you are Lord!" No more struggle.

The first of the two principles of giving -- *THE SECRECY PRINCIPLE*: *Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men to be seen by them..... So when you do something for an individual or family of your flock, do not announce it loudly with fanfare so that giving your self may be in secret* (my paraphrase of Matt. 6:1-4). In other words, do not toot your own horn. If we do "acts of righteousness" for the purpose of being seen as a good guy, we'll more likely be seen as an egotistical guy. Jesus' acts were seen by thousands,

but he didn't do them for the purpose of being seen and praised. In fact it was just the opposite, in Nazareth he was treated like trash (Lk. 4:14-30), and in Gadara the people asked him to leave, valuing their pigs more than the healing of a troubled man (Matt.8:28-34).

Two realities emerge at this point: First, about your motives, be sure you're not giving yourself to be seen by people so as to be praised, but giving yourself for the sake of your people and for the sake of Jesus whose sheep they are. Peter told shepherds to check their motives for willingness, eagerness, and humility (1 Pet 5:2-3). Second, secrecy does not mean you don't tell anybody. You may need to share with a few Christian friends and other lay pastors—respecting the rule of confidentiality, of course—to encourage them and be encouraged by them. Jesus told his "friends," formerly called servants, what he did and what he was about to do (John 15:14-15). The principle of secrecy avoids the Jack Horner syndrome: "He stuck in his thumb and pulled out a plum and said, "What a good boy am I!"

The second principle of giving -- *THE REWARD PRINCIPLE: Your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you openly.* Being loving and faithful in Praying, Availability, Contacting and Example are not intended as ostentatious acts for admiration but are bona fide acts of giving self, which pleases the Father who sees your integrity and rewards accordingly. The "Great Charter" of the Lay Pastors Ministry promises a reward -- *When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away* (1 Pet.5:1-4). Receiving the crown assumes the covenantal motivations: *willing, eager, and humble*, which, because they are inner qualities, are secretive.

Your acts may not be secret (most of Jesus' were public because that's where

the people were), but, if you blow your trumpet, i.e. believe you have "earned bragging rights," you expose egotistical motivations rather than covenantal. Of the egotistical, Jesus said, *You have received your reward in full* (Matt. 6:2). Of the covenantal, Jesus said, *Your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you*. Which of the two should we prefer, the one which *soon* fades away or the one which will *never* fade away (I Pet. 5:4)?

I believe most lay pastors shrink away from the idea of rewards. They don't give themselves to God, and his people to be rewarded. The joy and privilege of ministry is sufficient reward! However, to God, rewards are important for he wants to show how pleased he is with what you *are* and what you *do*. It took me years to learn how important it is to accept appreciation from people graciously with a sincere "Thank you." I learned that refusing the gift is refusing the person. Knowing God is a Giving God, we ought pray something like this: "God, the joy and privilege of making a difference in people's lives is enough reward for me, nevertheless I'll cherish forever your reward of the "crown of life." God's reward is given without our soliciting it by tooting our own horn.

Your covenantally-motivated brother, Melvin

#10

FAITH PLUS

Dear Faith-Plus partners in ministry,

For my hayfever I take *Alka Selzer Plus*. To wash the little hair I have left I use *Pert Plus*. To flesh out my faith I use *Faith Plus*, a laundry list of seven spiritual add-ons from II Peter 1:5-8—goodness, knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. “If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Wow! The apostle gives us a life-molding Faith-Plus challenge directly from six words or word clusters:

IF YOU: Do you want success in your ministry? Add “these qualities” to your faith.

POSSESS: It’s up to each lay pastor to “make every effort” to add these qualities.

THEM...THEY: These pronouns represent all seven qualities. Don’t avoid a one.

IN INCREASING MEASURE: It’ll not happen over night. Keep at it! Persevere!

THEY WILL MAKE YOU EFFECTIVE & PRODUCTIVE: Success is assured.

IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: Truly know and share him.

You already have a faith to add to—"Without faith it is impossible to please God."¹ You either leaped to faith in Jesus Christ or you crawled to faith inch by inch over a rugged terrain of doubts and delays. (The contractor who fixed my driveway told me his conversion was by microwave, not by crock pot.) However you obtained your faith, you have it!²

Because you have faith, God's Spirit—who seems never to leave us to ourselves, for our own good of course—is ready to help you add these seven qualities. The fact is, if we expect to (1) "participate in the divine nature," (2) "escape the corruption of this world caused by evil desires,"³ (3) "keep from being ineffective and unproductive," we can't do it alone—we must seek his help. "Don't put it off; do it now. Do this, and you'll have your life on firm footing."⁴ Now, on to the seven *Faith Plus* add-ons.

ADD GOODNESS: *Be good and do good.* Being precedes doing. A tennis champion said, "If you don't win the game in the locker room, you won't win it on the court." Goodness on one's inside makes for goodness on one's outside. The key to being good is to be filled with God's good Spirit; the key to doing good is adding these doing- good qualities to your faith, starting with goodness. *Faith Plus* capacitates you to "discharge all the [good] duties of your ministry."⁵

ADD KNOWLEDGE – There are two worlds of knowledge: (1) The tangible—the totality of reality (the world, its systems, and the endless space around it.) Learn all you can learn in one lifetime about the material world over which the Creator-God is sovereign. 2) The intangible—the Lord Jesus Christ who is also the Son of the Living God.⁶ ("All things were created by him and for him." He

therefore is Lord over all that exists.⁷ Knowing Jesus runs far beyond just knowing *about* him, it means personally and intimately *experiencing* him, as did the two people on their way to Emmaus who, after discovering it was Jesus who had been walking with them, asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us?”⁸ We don’t truly *know* Jesus until we experience him: first, as the LORD of our life; second, as JESUS our savior from the penalty and practice of sin; third, as CHRIST the Messiah who came to give his life as a ransom,⁹ and who is coming again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.¹⁰ Knowledge is the engine driving your ministry, making it effective and productive. You need all eight cylinders (faith, plus all seven qualities) tuned up and firing at full power.

ADD SELF CONTROL – We often read of respected people (Christians included) going berserk, shooting or beating up on a friend, carrying on an affair, or some other bazaar form of spinning out of control. Often I’ve said, “If only they’d had *Faith Plus*—a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus, plus the self-control add-on—how different things would have been.” In addition to controlling self destructive behavior, we need self control to mature our faith, sweeten our relationships, purify desires, pray earnestly, faithfully engage in personal & public worship, and to “make every effort to add to your faith in increasing measure” all seven qualities.

ADD PERSEVERANCE – This quality is one of the great themes of the Bible, one of the majestic features of God’s nature—steadfast, unfailing, unchanging, faithful, trustworthy. Some OT words for this quality are loyal, enduring, standing firm, continuing ever; some NT concepts: holding firm, patient, settled, secure, determined not to cave in to pressure. To persevere means not being distracted from moving steadily forward toward a chosen goal. Jesus taught perseverance when he refused to accept a wanna-be disciple, *but* who had to

do something else first—"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."**11** Those who serve him must keep their eyes fixed on the task and their hand on the plow.

I'm about out of space and you've had about enough for now...so I'll stop here and pick up the last three qualities in my next letter. Besides, both you and I need a breather to ponder the first four of the Apostle Peter's heavy challenges.

Your *Faith-Plus* fellow aspirant,

1. Hebrews 11:6
2. Ephesians 2:8-9
3. I Peter 1:4
4. II Peter 1:10 The Message
5. II Timothy 4:5
6. Matthew 16:16
7. Colossians 1:17
8. Luke 24:13-35
9. Matthew 20:28
10. Revelation 19:16
11. Luke 9:62

#11

THREE MORE FAITH-PLUS QUALITIES

To my persevering colleagues,

This is a test! By continuing to read, you are scoring high in the seven Faith-Plus qualities which you are making “every effort to add to your faith.” Congratulations! I’ll see that you get the Pulitzer Perseverance Prize.

To the previous qualities—goodness, knowledge, self control and perseverance—now add godliness, brotherly affection and love. To the extent you add these seven qualities “in increasing measure” to your faith, you will unknowingly add them to your flock members’ faith. How? They are transferable, first from God to you, then from you to your people, like one entity starts vibrating when the one at its side is vibrating. Adding these qualities to your faith makes your one-to-one caring a win-win ministry—you win and your people win.

One more thing before moving on, think of these qualities as links in a chain suspended from your faith—a faith anchored in Jesus Christ. As a child, I remember cutting colored poster paper into narrow strips to make chain-like

links, pasting each one to form a circle after threading it through the preceding one. After linking several of them we hung the chain on the Christmas tree. Now, in my "second childhood," I am working with godly links, "making every effort" to attach them to my faith.

ADD GODLINESS — Godliness means exactly that, to be like God, It is the far opposite of Godlessness. God says, "Be holy (Godly) because I am holy."¹ Do we have a problem here? Yes...but the problem is more with *understanding* Godly, than *being* Godly. We can be like God even though always short of perfection. I'll illustrate: a 7-year-old boy can play baseball like his 30-year-old baseball-pro father. Both stand up to the plate, both hold the bat, both hit the ball, both score a run...each in his own league, of course (Little and Big). We and God are doing some of the same things, but in different leagues. Godliness is a process of "increasing measure,"² always making progress but never fully achieving it in this life. We falter...but we never quit. Between now and heaven we will always be "a work in progress." The Big League is the top league for us in this life, but we continue to make errors like Big League baseball players do. One day God will "call us up" to his MAJESTIC LEAGUE, then, immediate perfection, for "we shall be like him!"³ The day Stephen was stoned to death, "he looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Stephen said to Jesus, "Receive my spirit.... Do not hold this sin against them." Then he fell asleep.⁴ Since then Stephen has been playing in God's Majestic League. Totally Godly! No more errors!

ADD BROTHERLY AFFECTION — *Brotherly kindness* and *mutual affection* are variant translations of *philadelphia*, a Greek word formed by combining *philos* (affection) with *adelphos* (brotherly). I translate it brotherly affection. Don't worry about brotherly being gender biased because *adelphos* means *sisters and brothers from the same womb*. Let's say the womb is the Church of Jesus Christ

which offers new birth to who will receive Christ. I hope this hasty word-study helps understand brotherly affection.

Brotherly affection—the kind of love Christians cherish for one another—is the kind of love lay pastors make every effort to add to their faith. It is a godly affection for the brother and sister church members who make up their flocks. It's a family love among blood brothers and sisters—the family is "the family of God,"⁵ the blood is the blood of Jesus Christ.⁶ Galatians 6:10 names the lay pastors ministry as an in-house ministry—"As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Your commitment makes this possible—No member left behind. You have gifts for, and a call to, congregational care. Other members have gifts and calls to ministries beyond the family of believers. No one can do it all.

ADD LOVE — *Love* is in the New Testament 158 times, most often translated from the Greek word, *agape*—love for all people. It's different from *philadelphia*—brotherly affection—the special love Christians have for one another. *Agape* is love in a moral or social sense, a matter of principle and duty. We don't have to like everybody, or even be fond of everybody, but we do have to seek the best for them, not counting the cost or personal sacrifice—even when we are neither thanked nor appreciated. Jesus taught: "Love your enemies, bless those that curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you."

Jesus defined *agape* by his Good Samaritan story. This non-Israelite was not motivated by brotherly affection to rescue the beaten and bloody man from the ditch, but by a self-sacrificing sense of duty to a helpless, perhaps dying, fellow

human. The story was Jesus' reply to "Who is my neighbor?" after he taught "Love your neighbor as yourself."⁸ God loves (agape) all people—"He makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."⁹ Who are we not to love anyone whom God loves?! But we must realize that this kind of love is a perfect fit for the ministry of evangelism, while brotherly affection is a better fit for pastoral care.

If for our spiritual lives we do little more for the rest of our days than mature our faith by adding these seven qualities to it, we will be good ministers of Jesus Christ.

Still working on Faith-Plus qualities,

-Melvin

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. I Peter 1:16 | 2. II Peter 1:8 | 3. I John 3:2 |
| 4. Acts 7:54-60 | 5. John 1:12-13; 3:3-8 | 6. Romans 3:21-26 |
| 7. Matthew 5:44 | 8. Luke 10: 35-45 | 9. Matthew 5:45 |

#12

WHAT'S IN *YOUR* MIND?

Dear fellow dreamers,

You are a person after my own heart, dreaming of enlarging the place of your Lay Pastors Ministry tent and seeking ideas for stretching the curtains wide to make room for all the members of your church. For better or for worse the president of the United States signed the H C (health care) plan yesterday, providing medical care for every citizen. I say "for better or for worse" because no one knows how it will work. All we know for sure is the cost is astronomical.

When you sign off on the P C (pastoral care) plan offering adequate pastoral care for every church member, you also will not know for sure how it will work. All you will know for sure is that God wants it and you are ready to pay the price of work and prayer. You'll find out later how it works.

This letter is about Comprehensive Pastoral Care, a follow up of the preceding letter, *What's In Your Wallet?* I've been dreaming it for years. As I write I am excited because my dream now includes you. Please don't say, "Dream on, Mel!" I say, "Pray on, Michelle!" or Eric or whatever your name is. I'll use Home

Depot's slogan, "You Can Do It, I Can Help."

Isaiah not only wrote, "Enlarge the place of your tent" and "Stretch your tent curtains wide," the prophet also wrote in the same verse (Isaiah 54:2), *LENGTHEN YOUR CORDS, STRENGTHEN YOUR STAKES.*

If you ever pitched a tent in a campground for you and your family like we did for six years of vacationing, you will know what lengthening cords and strengthening stakes mean—every member of the family will be covered. That's what Comprehensive Pastoral Care is.

You will want to consider these five essential steps:

STEP ONE: Accept the size of the mission. It's *God's Mission* size—comprehensive. It includes all your members by enlarging your plans and stretching your faith, lots of prayer, lots of commitment, and lots of work. You are on a grand mission!

STEP TWO: Help for the mission. Hear these words from God: "Whatever he does prospers" (Ps. 1:3). You do it, God will prosper it! You do your part, God will do his part. Bank on it! You can bank on this too: "All that we have accomplished, you (God) have done for us" (Isa. 26:12) God is an involved God! And he will be working at it while you work at it.

STEP THREE: Passion for the mission. Never lack zeal; keep your spiritual fervor (Rom. 12:11), but keep your excitement grounded in common sense and Scripture. For example, Jesus' advice in Matt. 7:24, "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man..." Jesus joins practice and wise in the same breath. Look at John 13:17, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." Here Jesus joins know, blessed and do.

STEP FOUR: A plan for the mission. There are three leaps, not just steps, in this plan:

1. The comprehensive plan assumes the existing Lay Pastors Ministry includes many but not a 100% of the members.
2. Inventory your church for ministries and organizations either (a) already providing some form of pastoral care for the people in these groups or (b) likely to be open to consider adding pastoral care to their purpose and schedule. Example: One choir had already appointed one member of each section—bass, tenor, alto, soprano—to be the leader for that section. For the first twenty minutes of the rehearsal, each section met separately, shared needs for prayer and spent the rest of the allotted time praying for each other. The leaders followed up during the week on those they deemed needing it. Two side affects were that the singing on Sunday was super joyful and the bonding of choir member's lives was unbelievable. You will need to visit the leaders of the organizations, ministries and boards to explain the mission, enlist their participation, train selected leaders, and support them.
3. People not actively participating in church groups and not pastored by lay pastors

are assigned to a phone-care corps who will contact these people by phone at least monthly. The corps will need to be enlisted, trained, supported and accountable. This is a good ministry for shut-ins, the elderly, and extremely busy church members.

4. Sometime between concept and implementation, you will need to present this plan to the senior pastor for acceptance, support and perhaps involvement. Then you and your pastor will need to take it to the ruling body for approval, support and perhaps involvement.

STEP FIVE: Manage and Evaluate the Mission. If plans are not made for ongoing management and evaluation of the mission after it has been designed and implemented, all the work will go down the drain, having been done for naught. Evaluation is only a useless exercise unless you use it to see what you are doing right and what needs to be changed or improved, then take action. God will provide leaders and lead you to them, or them to you. The Lay Pastors Ministry management team will have enough to do without also managing this Comprehensive Plan. However it would be good to have one or two members on both management teams so the efforts are coordinated and information flows freely.

When you begin to design the Comprehensive Lay Pastoral Care Plan by leaning on these five steps you will find how bare-bone they are. However, I discovered long ago that a group of lay people, committed to Jesus Christ, to their church and to this mission, will design a ministry which will work and be a love-and-care blessing in your church.

As Jethro assured Moses, I assure you, "If you do this, and God so commands,

you will be able to stand the strain and all the people will be satisfied" (Exodus 18:23)...and you will have a model for other churches. If you are ready to do this or have questions about it, I would love to hear from you.

One final word—pray, pray, pray, pray, pray, pray, pray,
Amen!

Mel Steinbron

#13

WHAT'S IN YOUR WALLET?

Dear soul mate,

Have you been annoyed by Capital One's TV ad featuring the antics of pre-historic men? Or am I the only one who switches the channel when it screens? To me the ad is a nuisance, a nonsensical interruption of the news...but it did its crafty duty—*What's in your wallet?* really got to me. I think of Capital One every time I take a competitor's credit card out of my wallet.

What does this have to do with you as the leader of your Lay Pastors Ministry? Lots! You'll see when I change the last word of the ad from *wallet* to *mind*. What's in your mind about (1) your leadership and (2) the ministry you lead? Take a moment to search your mind. Many leaders are yet to discover that their dreams and expectations are visions from God. "Dare to Dream ~ Trust Your Crazy Ideas" tickled me as I read it in a gift shop on a curio. Treat your dreams and ideas, not as crazy, but as from God. Believe me, they probably are!

Dare to dream about God's call to Israel through the prophet: *Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes : For you will spread out to the right and to the left.*

Try to have a prayerful curiosity about whether your Lay Pastors Ministry is growing, has plateaued, or is declining, and how its future under your leadership will thrive as you dream the prophet's "impossible dream" and pray about God's daring challenge to you.

God located me during my time with him early this morning through this verse. Does he find you, too? He "spoke to me," about my vision ("visceral compulsion" psychologists may call it) for these *Letters To Lay Pastors* I'm writing. I see my "work in progress" as a useful tool for ongoing equipping of lay pastors, whether assembled or individual and alone. My vision includes Dr. Byeong Chea, Rev. John Ogilla, Rev. Daniel Patrick, and Rev. Chand Alnaser translating them into the languages of their respective countries: South Korea, Kenya, Ghana, Pakistan, and ministry leaders in the USA, Canada, Australia, Bahamas and other countries using the letters as they are. The words from God to Isaiah especially *Do not hold back*, rapidly displaced *What's in your wallet?* But this is *my* vision. Forgive me. Please allow me to help you (if you could use it) grow *your* vision with the pregnant ideas of God's call to Israel. We'll take it line by line:

ENLARGE THE PLACE OF YOUR TENT

Very few churches have their total membership under the lay pastoral care tent. And, after failing they settle for only a part of the congregation. Please dream about enlarging the place of your tent and making plans to stretch the curtains enough to include everyone as it becomes necessary. Jesus intended the care of the whole flock as he gave this assignment to Peter, *Take care of my sheep*.

Peter intended the care of every sheep in the flock when he passed the assignment on to the leaders of all churches, *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care.* Make *DO NOT HOLD BACK* the core imperative of your dream. Don't let it dim or die, don't think it crazy. Make it happen. God says, "You can do it! I will help."

STRETCH YOUR TENT CURTAINS WIDE

This line says your vision is to include a Lay Pastors Ministry (LPM) tent larger than needed for the number of people now in it. It's like grandparents giving a size 10 coat to a 6-year old to grow into. As you and your ministry leadership group, with the encouragement and possible participation of your pastor, face the challenges by trouble-shooting, creative planning, faith to execute the plans, second-effort drives (like a football team makes to move the ball closer to the goal line) and pleading prayer, God will prosper all you do. (He can't prosper what you don't do.) The following paragraph will assure you I'm not trying to lay a guilt trip on you. I've been where you are. Rather, I want to help you with a creative plan which may enable you to include your total membership in your tent.

We had this challenge (a euphemism for *problem*), as most churches do, at Hope Church in Minneapolis where I spent 10 years, after officially retiring, in a very limited staff capacity, traveling most weekends giving LPM seminars and preaching across America and Canada. I knew of only two churches which had 100% of their members under their LPM tent. This challenged me. God gave me a plan for correcting this by enlarging the place of our tent and stretching the curtains wide. My last year at Hope, I worked with a blue ribbon group and an associate pastor to understand, design, and implement this plan. I retired again.

You've heard it—"Old preachers never die, they just go out to pastor."

This *Comprehensive Plan For Lay Pastoral Care* was about ready to go when the 43-old associate who was to lead from that point on, tragically and suddenly had a heart attack and died. So did the plan. But I'm out of time and space so I'll write the plan in my next letter, hoping you and/or others will try it.

Blessings and more blessings!

Mel Steinbron

1. Isaiah 54:2

#14

A TRIPTYCH WORTH BILLIONS

My dear friends,

A triptych hangs on the right wall as you enter our home. It's a three-panel painting, scenes of trees and hills, each a separately finished work of art. Hanging next to each other, the three panels make one large picture with one synergistic theme: rural beauty—the total effect is greater than the sum of its parts. Triptyches can be dramas and writings as well as paintings.

The Magna Charta of the Lay Pastors Ministry is a written triptych. Its one theme is, *Shepherds of God's flock*; the three panels' sub themes are, *Willing*, *Eager*, and *Example*. We'll flesh out the theme by looking at the panels separately to discern shades of meaning and subtleties of nuances. But first, here's the Magna Charta:

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed. Be **shepherds of God's flock** that is under your care serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are **willing**, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but **eager** to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being*

examples to the flock (I Peter 5:1-4, bold type added by me).

1st PANEL: WILLING *Not because you must, but because you are willing. But* infers one may be doing the right thing for the wrong reason—lay pastoring only out of a sense of duty to the church’s pastor, to ministry leaders, to conscience, or because one feels uncomfortable saying “No.” I heard a lay pastor confess, “I volunteered ‘cause *somebody* has to help the pastor.” Those pastoring because they must, won’t do it for long, not be effective, or get out of it as soon as possible... and they should. Those who are willing usually keep at it and grow in fervor, skills and effectiveness. A divine call fuels one’s desire to be willing, *as God wants you to be.*

Peter appeals to *elders* (an office: lay shepherds/pastors) to do the right thing for the right reason. Jesus confronted his three disciples who did a right thing at the wrong time, falling asleep the night he was betrayed—*Could you men not keep watch with me one hour?* He put his finger on the reason—*the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.*¹ True! Just when one’s spirit is willing, it gets stymied by unwilling flesh. Jesus told them how the spirit could trump the flesh—*Watch and pray.* This puts new life in an old cliché, “Where there’s a will there’s a way.” In other words, if one gets in sync with Jesus, spirit and flesh will likely be willing at the same time. Is it possible to live in sync with Jesus 24/7?

2nd PANEL: EAGER *Not greedy for money, but eager to serve.* All three God-like qualities in the triptych—willing, eager, examples— are preceded by demon-like qualities—must, greedy, lording it over those entrusted to you. *Eager* is preceded by *not greedy for money (...not calculating what you can get*

out of it is Eugene Peterson's translation in *The Message*). Lay pastors are not salaried, how can they be greedy for money? Peterson suggests there are other kinds of illicit greed, perhaps coveting the praise of their leaders and their flocks

Regarding praise of people, there's a wide gulf between (1) humbly accepting recognition and legitimate praise for serving with excellence: *The elders who [do the work] of the church well are worthy of double honor,*² and (2) pridefully accepting recognition and praise as though we accomplished it by ourselves: *Not that we are competent in ourselves...for our competence comes from God.*³ Jesus was teaching on bearing spiritual fruit when he said, *Apart from me you can do nothing .*⁴

Eager is such an emotionally active quality that it requires synonyms to flesh it out. *Zeal* and *fervor* are two—*Never be lacking in **zeal**, but keep your spiritual **fervor**, serving the Lord;*⁵ two more, *Titus is coming to you with much **enthusiasm** and on his own **initiative.***⁶ Scripture tells us what to do should our efforts become spiritless, *If any of you lack [passion], he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given him.*⁷ Is it possible to be perpetually eager?

3rd PANEL: EXAMPLES Serving as shepherds of God's flock requires eager, and willing examples. Lay pastors, you responded to God's call; you are equipped to fulfill the call; you have been commissioned by the laying on of hands; you are discharging the duties of your ministry; you are fine examples of those who lovingly and faithfully serve God and people. God is using you to PACE his flock. Serving him with all your heart—willing, eager and exemplary—you

have great satisfaction and joy. *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*⁸

You are living triptyches, each a unique work of divine art, with one synergistic theme—willing, eager and exemplary shepherds of God's flock. You are worth more than a billion \$\$\$s, *more precious than gold, than much pure gold.*⁹

Your brother in Christ, Mel Steinbron

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|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Matthew 26:40-41 | 2. I Timothy 6:17 | |
| 3. II Corinthians 3:5 | 4. John 15:5 | 5. Romans 12:11 |
| 6. II Corinthians 8:17 | 7. James 1:5 | 8. I Peter 5:4 9. Psalm 19:10 |

#15

TEN SHREWD PRINCIPLES TO SUCCESS

Dear people of the light,

At the end of his parable about the Shrewd Manager, Jesus made his point: "The master praised the crooked manager. And why? Because he knew how to look after himself. Streetwise people are smarter in this regard than are people of the light. They are on constant alert, looking for angles, surviving by their wits. I want you to be smart in the same way—but for what is right!"¹ Jesus wants lay pastors to be as smart (shrewd) in their Christian life and ministry.

I read a newspaper-like publication, *Investment Business Daily* (IBD), at the library yesterday. I was excited by its *10 SECRETS TO SUCCESS*. I saw them as 10 shrewd principles of the people of this world ("streetwise people") which, if used by lay pastors, would be their response to Jesus' request. Note: Three different styles of print will enable you to identify the three different messages in each of the following *10 Shrewd Principles*—First, THE CAPITALS are the "10 Shrewd Principles;" second, this regular print is IBD's comment on the principles; third, *the italics* are my spin for lay pastors on each of the principles.

1. HOW YOU THINK IS EVERYTHING: Always be positive. Think success, not failure. Beware of a negative environment. *My spin— (it is really Paul's): "Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and*

meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse.”²

2. DECIDE UPON YOUR TRUE DREAMS AND GOALS: Write down your specific goals and develop a plan to reach them. *My spin—the goal and plan of a famous painter, Vincent van Gogh: “I dream my painting and then I paint my dream.” Dream your ministry, then minister your dream.*

3. TAKE ACTION: Goals are nothing without action. Don't be afraid to get started. Just do it. *My spin—I have a beautiful bronze-coated metal ruler in my desk drawer, a memento from a Time Management seminar I took some years ago with these classic words painted in black: GOALS–PRIORITIES–PLANNING. But...a fourth word is missing—ACTION! Without action the other three are only exercises in futility. ‘Nuf said!*

4. NEVER STOP LEARNING: Go back to school or read books. Get training and acquire skills. *My spin—Listening skills are needed most by many lay pastors. I can say this humbly as a clergy pastor because after 30 years in three different churches, I spent a two-week study leave at Princeton Seminary learning listening skills. I realized what an ineffective listener I must have been to many of those parishioners. Would you consider asking your library or book store for a good book on listening skills, or attending evening classes at a nearby school? Think grow!*

5. BE PERSISTENT AND WORK HARD: Success is a marathon, not a sprint. Never give up. *My spin again is Paul's: “Work from the heart for your real Master, confident that you'll get paid in full.... Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ. The sullen servant who does shoddy work will be held responsible. Being Christian doesn't cover up bad work.*

6. LEARN TO ANALYZE DETAILS: Get all the facts, all the in-put. Learn from your mistakes. *Two spins:* 1. "Get all the facts." In my last Seniors Defensive Driving workshop I learned to "give the other driver the benefit of the doubt." Example: If a driver doesn't get going soon enough after the light changes, don't honk or fume, there may be a health reason. Be patient. 2. "Learn from mistakes." A female rookie lay pastor, visiting a member with a problem pregnancy, thought she was making good conversation by telling about miscarriages she knew of. The member's friend informed the LPM leader of the emotional damage. The leader saw a teachable moment, called the lay pastor in, counseled with her, and salvaged her ministry by teaching her a valuable lesson from her mistake.

7. FOCUS ON YOUR TIME AND MONEY: Don't let other people or things distract you. *My spin—Focus on your Lord, your ministry, your flock, not letting other people or things distract you. (I'm remembering you are a volunteer minister and do not have the amount of time we clergy ministers have to focus. Do what you can. Don't worry about what you can't do.))*

8. DON'T BE AFRAID TO INNOVATE; BE DIFFERENT: Following the herd is a sure way to mediocrity. *My spin—When you became a lay pastor you were given rule-of-thumb start-up expectations. Since you are unique among all lay pastors in personality, temperament, maturity, life experiences, education, spiritual gifts and almost everything else, and your flock is also unique, a greater expectation is that you and the Spirit of God make your ministry your own— DON'T BE AFRAID TO INNOVATE; BE DIFFERENT.*

9. DEAL AND COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY: No person is an island. Learn to understand and motivate others. *My spin—Give yourself time to understand where your people are in their spiritual journey. As you trod this sacred road, don't forget the huge difference between being pastoral and being judgmental. There's no place for being judgmental, lots of room for being pastoral! If you learn of some things that seem*

negative, your only thought is "Except for the grace of God there go I." You will know better how to pray for this person (these people) and to ask for help from the Holy Spirit to motivate them to a closer walk with Christ. This will motivate you to a closer walk as well, one of the greatest premiums for your work, the crown of glory will be given later.

10. BE HONEST AND DEPENDABLE; TAKE RESPONSIBILITY: Otherwise, Nos. 1-9 won't matter. *My spin—Since "honest, dependable, and take responsibility" are in sync with biblical qualities for life and successful ministry, be shrewd — Be honest and dependable; take responsibility.*

Your shrewd spinner, Mel Steinbron

1. Luke 16:1-9 *The Message*
2. Philippians 4:8
3. Colossians 3:23-25 *The Message*

#16

LET LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS NEVER LEAVE YOU

My loving and faithful friends,

I wanted to give a memento to the LPMI Board of Directors which would symbolize “the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love” and etch the core qualities of the Lay Pastors Ministry in their spirits forever. What I saw in a trophy shop clicked—a bronze pendant. I ordered 12 of them, had the LPM logo etched on one side and the words LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS from Proverbs 3:3 on the other.

The proverb gave two instructions: bind them around your neck (for this I threaded ribbons through each loop) and write them on the tablet of your heart (this would hopefully happen in a time of silence during my presentation). As it turned out, I was unable to be at the meeting. The pendants were presented by another member of the board. For the years since, my pendant has been suspended from the corner of the picture of Jesus on the Road to Emmaus which hangs on the wall two feet beyond my desk. I’m glancing at it as I write. The pendant reminds me of my board-member friends again today and to be loving and faithful. The picture tells me again to value highly “What a Friend I have in Jesus.”

LOVE and FAITHFULNESS are the two spiritual dynamos of I Corinthians 13 supplying energy to the inner-core of the larger action-core of all pastoral care, lay or clergy. They are like warm sunshine, so welcome on a chilly spring day and at the same time like powerful sun rays purifying infections, lighting up dark corners, and warming cold homes and hearts.

LOVE is tough—not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, and always perseveres.

FAITHFULNESS never fails—it is patient, not self-seeking, not proud, always trusts, and always hopes.

The prize for being loving and faithful is winning favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Let's get the total message of Proverbs 3:3-4 before us:

Let love and faithfulness never leave you... this will require prayer and intentionality.

Bind them around your neck...place them somewhere so as to see them daily.

Write them on the tablet of your heart...use as a mantra 20 days; will be in your heart for life.

Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man...your prize!

LOVE? What is it? Because it's so central to life, pursued by all, and grossly misunderstood, let's spend a couple of paragraphs on it. Definitions don't help a lot, in fact definitions of an unexplainable experience like love reduces a transcendent human reality to a disappointing intellectual or theological exercise. The best answer may be, "You know it when you see it." Or better, "You know it when you experience it." When we love God, people and self we know it, and when we don't love God, people and self we know it.

Besides that, others know when we love God, people, and self. I saw Jesus artfully scripted on the bottom of an Olympic snow board. Under Jesus was printed, "I can't hide my love." I was awe struck and deeply moved by this witness. I'm sure people who know her, whether they've seen it on her snowboard or not, know she loves Jesus.

Additional love scriptures: Above all, love each other deeply¹ Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence. This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is another to set alongside of it: Love others as well as you love yourself... You're God taught in these matters. Just love one another! You are already good at it.

Keep it up, get better and better at it,² "Get better and better at it"—I like that! God plans that we grow in love as a child grows into larger clothes, without

intentionally trying. We grow in love, not by learning more about it, but by doing more of it.

FAITHFULNESS? What is what? Like love, you know it when you see it. We see faithfulness lived out by Jesus and taught regularly. In his parable of the talents (one talent = \$1,000), the master, about to leave on a journey gave three servants a trust of \$5,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 respectively to invest. Upon his return he called for an accounting. The first two increased their trust by investing wisely, "Well done, good and **faithful** servants! You have been **faithful** with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come, share your master's happiness." The third didn't fare that well, he was censured severely for being unfaithful.³ Both love and faithfulness are fruits of the Spirit.⁴ In addition to practice, there are two ways to grow these qualities:(1) be filled with the Spirit who energizes us, and (2) read God's Word which tutors us. "It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."⁵ Lay pastors, you are given a trust by your Master, "Take care of my sheep." In discharging all the duties of your ministry, let love and faithfulness never leave you.

With love and faithfulness, Mel Steinbron

1. I Peter 4:8
- 2 Matthew 22:27-29 & I Thessalonians 4:9-10 (The Message)
3. Matthew 25:14-30
4. Galatians 5:22-23
5. I Corinthians 4:21

#17

How Will You Be Remembered?

Each week, for the Saturday issue of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, sports Reporter, Bob Sansavere, asks one stellar amateur or professional athlete several questions about his body, strength, health, etc. The final question usually has to do with some variety of, "How do you want to be remembered?"

Today Sansavere's athlete is the captain of the University of Minnesota hockey team, Ryan Stoa. His answer to the question boils down to what I would call two "spiritual values" ... *respect* and *goodness*. "I just want to be respected by my teammates, by the coaches, and by the fans. I'd like to be known as a good leader, as a good captain, first as a good person." What are spiritual values? They are personal inner assets that warrant respect and validate one as a "good person." These values outplay the glory of athletic excellence, outlast the athlete's college and professional

sports, and permeate all of one's life: faith, behavior, ambitions, and relationships.

"Teammates' respect" "A good person!" Lay pastors, when you have the respect of your peers and are known as a good person you possess an

“amazement quotient” (AQ) essential for your ministry.

Jesus possessed a wondrously high AQ. “The people were *amazed* at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.” AQ does two things: it credentials a person who has few if any formal credentials, and it draws a direct line from amazement to authority (not *authoritarian*, which is dictatorial arrogance). Jesus’ authority radiated from his love, truth, and genuine concern. Your “authority” radiates from the same.

The deeper a person’s integrity, the greater the respect of others. The more generous the good, the higher the regard. Both integrity and good are deeply rooted inner-life qualities that surface in outer-life behavior. A lay pastor’s integrity is the congruence of professed faith (“Jesus is Lord”) and publicly-lived faith. A lay pastor’s goodness is multi-dimensional: honesty in all things at all times, accepting all people at all times, loving, respecting, helping, befriending, cheerful, fair, optimistic, moral, and principled in all things at all times. These things I’m writing are biblical: “May integrity and uprightness protect me.”² “Blessed is the man ... in whose spirit there is no deceit.”³ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”⁴ God’s grace is perceived in his warning to get our inner lives in order. “If you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the Lord; and you may be sure your sin will find you out ... do what you have promised.”⁵ Good character is as genuine as my solid gold wedding ring, a projected persona is as fake as the imitation gold of costume jewelry. The longer people know us, the more they get on to us, for better or for worse.

Respect and a good reputation are two of the best credentials lay pastors can

possess. These qualities increase as we work on our inner lives. What you've heard many times. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," underscores the point just made. If you deserve respect you will win the respect of others, but if not, you will be satisfied with the respect you have for yourself. If you are a good person, you will be known as a good person, but if not, you will be satisfied by knowing you are a good person. Jesus is the prime example of a respectable and good person who often was neither respected nor seen to be a good person. He was rejected and nearly thrown over a cliff in Nazareth by those he taught in the synagogue. But he slipped past them and went to Capernaum where, upon teaching in their synagogue, the people "were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority." 6

One of the criminals crucified with Jesus hurled insults at him, the other defended him, "We are getting what our deeds deserve. but this man has done nothing wrong." The chief priests and rulers shouted. "Crucify him!" Just before breathing his last, Jesus, having no doubt about his true self, called out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." The soldiers who did the crucifying mocked and ridiculed him, but after Jesus breathed his last the centurion (the Roman officer in charge of 100 soldiers) who witnessed it all said, "Surely he was the Son of God!" It is written, "Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame ... " 7

Joy? Yes! Because he knew who and what he was. It's clear from this that the inner life has priority, that respect and goodness are in the life of the beholder. not in the eye of the beholder, and that the two desired remembrances arc

birthed by solid-gold integrity and goodness. Even if the eye of the beholder mistakes a person of integrity for someone trying to impress others, and a good person for a do-gooder, your solid gold life will outlive the disrespect. "Truth will come to light." 8 Lay pastors, may I ask, what is our answer to Sansevere's question, "How do we want to be remembered?" We are the ones to determine how we *will* be remembered.

Yours, with great respect,

Mel Steinbron

1. Mark 1:22
2. Psalm 25:21
3. Psalm 32:2
4. Mattbcw 5:8
5. Numbers 32:23-24
6. Luke 4:32
7. Hebrews 12:2
8. Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice, Act 2

#18

You may have an Oprah Winfrey in your Flock

My dear lay-pastoring friends,

Surprised? Oprah Winfrey may be in your flock. Not in person but in type. She takes the last page of every issue of *The Oprah Magazine* to write "What I Know For Sure." In her recent one-page essay she wrote this:

"Moving with the flow of life has given me a supreme confidence because I know there's a Power greater than I, a natural rhythm to things that is a force beyond my own. I trust it and believe that no matter what, I will be okay. I know for sure that this is the ultimate confidence. I know that I am more than my personality, my body, and my body image."

If Jesus were to hear Oprah say this, I believe he would tell her with his inimitable love and respect the same thing he told the teacher of the law, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." (Mk. 12:28-34) Oprah has these things going for her-(1) she believes in a Power greater than she; (2) she trusts that Power; (3) this "Power" is the *ultimate confidence* (i.e., there is no higher

Power); (4) she is more than personality and body.

Oprah needs someone-probably not a clergy, more likely a lay pastor- who would lovingly and respectfully tell her something like Paul preached to the pagan Greeks in Athens: ""You believe in a Power, but this Power is unknown. Can I tell you who this Power is? He is the Living God, the Creator of life and everything else, who revealed himself by coming into the world in the person of Jesus Christ."" And then tell how you began your relationship with Jesus and what he means to you at the moment.

You may have an Oprah type in your flock. In his little flock, Jesus had Peter who denied him, Thomas who doubted his resurrection, and Judas who betrayed him. It took some time for Peter and Thomas to truly believe. For Judas it was too late. Your Oprah type flock member is a member of your church, but church membership doesn't always equate with kingdom membership. However, she or he is only one step short of the kingdom - the decision to receive the Jesus in whom they professed faith when joining and by this decision, begin their life-long (eternal life-long) relationship with him.

It is likely that Lay Ministers of Pastoral Care (Lay Pastors) will have one or more in their flocks who are only *near* the kingdom- *near* but not yet *in*. Another flock member's biblical faith may be intact but is being challenged by secularism, atheism, hedonism, other pop religions, and/or New Age. (You may have recognized Oprah Winfrey's beliefs as New Age.) Such people need their biblical beliefs reaffirmed by their lay pastor and his or her living example of a Christ centered life before them.

Lay pastors, it is your privilege and even your pastoral duty- ""discharge all the duties of your ministry"" (I Tim. 4:5)-to try to discern where your people are spiritually by listening for their core beliefs, then seize the opportunity to share where *you* are spiritually.

Achtung! Caution! Please note that to *discern* is pastoral, not judgmental. There's a world of difference! Someone said, ""Pastoral is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."" Being pastoral calls for lots of humility to be positioned properly, and lots of prayer for seeking the Spirit's wisdom and guidance. It may be that the leader of your lay pastors ministry will want to build witnessing passion, sensitivity, and skills into ongoing pastoral care training because you may be looking for help with the Oprah (or the Peter or the Thomas or the Judas) in your flock. Faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love,

Mel Steinbron

#19

Three Defining Events

My dear brothers and sisters,

There are three events which define us and determine who and what we are. "Quick, tell me! I am concerned about who I am, what I am doing, and how I got to where I am." Wow! That covers all of life. The three events, Hear, Believe, and Receive, determine everything we are and do from birth to death, from learning the alphabet to becoming a Christian. As you read about them you will recognize them and want to use them to your advantage all your life.

You and I became Christians by hearing, believing and receiving. We *heard* the gospel of Jesus Christ; we *believed* it was true; we *received* Jesus into our hearts. Romans 10:8-10 cites the three events: First, *hearing* "the word of faith" is perceiving its meaning, i.e., "you get it." Second, *believing* is to "confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," making sure it's from your heart, not mere words. We can learn the right words and recite them but only we and God know whether Jesus is really *our* Lord. (Recall Jesus' question, "Why do you call me "Lord, Lord" and do not do what I say?") Third, *receiving* Jesus into our hearts. "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified." (The Greek for *believe* is *pisteuo*, "giving one's self up to Jesus"). John Calvin came close to this three-event sequence in writing, "Doctrine is learned only when it resides in the heart and passes into the conduct, transforming you into

itself in the process." "Here is a necessary sidebar: For Paul, BELIEVING and RECEIVING Jesus immediately after HEARING him speak combined the three events into one great event like an e-mail address, Hear Believe Receive@DamascusRoad.com. (The full story is in Acts 9:1-22.)

Unlike Paul, Timothy's RECEIVING event is known only to God. Without reference to the HEARING and BELIEVING events, Paul referred to Timothy's "sincere faith" which lived first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice." (The full story is in 2 Tim.1-7.) This parallels the practice in churches which baptize infants of Christian parents, followed by their adolescent children confirming their own personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Here are Biblical examples of the keys which unlock these three life-transforming events:

Hear — Moses heard God from a burning bush, "I've heard the prayers of my people and I have come down to deliver them. This is how I'm going to do it, I am sending you." Moses believed it was God speaking and he meant business. Moses' reply was, "But" . . . then five sensible reasons why he would not go. But he went. He experienced all three events (Ex. 3-4).

Believe — The Rich Young Man started a conversation with Jesus about inheriting eternal life. He heard Jesus clearly when he said, "One thing you lack. Go sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." He heard Jesus and believed him but "he went away sad." He rejected Jesus. (Mark 10:17-30).

Receive — Jesus' parable of the two sons whose father said to them separately, "Go and work today in the vineyard," illustrates the difference

between receiving and rejecting. The first son said, "I will not," but later he changed his mind and went. The second said, "I will, sir," but he did not go." Jesus asked his listeners, "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" It was a rhetorical question, of course. Jesus' lesson: Receiving is not what you say, it's what you do."

You who have never seen these three spiritual events packaged together may wonder why you didn't see it before. It's so obvious. Martin Luther also wondered why he didn't see "justification by faith alone." It was so obvious in Romans 1:17. It had been there since Paul wrote it nearly 1500 years earlier. But, better late than never. His discovery changed his life and Church history. Now that you have discovered Hear Believe Receive you can keep using it to your advantage in living Christianity every day. I became aware of this when I began to use the book of Psalms for my Time With God. Each morning I began to do what I read. This is what I mean—Psalm 105:1 says, "Give thanks to the Lord," so I stopped reading and took time to thank God in detail. The next words are "call on his name," so I stopped again to spend time calling on his name. I Heard, Believed, and Received God's Word (to *do* is to receive). Daily Hearing, Believing, and Receiving continue to power my life. I use them also for health principles and relationship tips.

I could write a whole book just on HEARING, but I've only space for one example now. The Magna Charta of the Lay Pastors Ministry, 1 Peter 5:1-4, includes three ways to do the ministry: willing, eager and just, but because you are *willing*, as God wants you to be." To help us Hear "willing" I have an item from the sports section of today's paper. Two university teams, Connecticut and Butler played the championship game of the NCAA last night. Connecticut won 53 to 41. Their coach told the reporter, "The halftime speech

was rather interesting. The adjustment [we made] was, we were going to *out-will* them and outwork them (the Butler team)."" HEAR ""willing"" from 1 Peter 5:2, then BELIEVE and RECEIVE (DO). That's what UConn did and they won. Try *eager*. Then consider practicing the three spiritual events with ""Be shepherds of God's flock,"" also in verse 2. Happy Hearing, Believing, and Receiving,

Mel Steinbron

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