



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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It is our prayer that the tools provided in this resource packet will train conference leaders in their care for our pastors and churches such that the Kingdom of God is advanced as we form healthy, biblical communities.

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WELCOME to this training series for Free Methodist Leaders (August 2010)

The following six modules have been created to assist Free Methodist Leaders in their care of Ordained Elders. As such it is designed for superintendents, district leaders, Ministerial Education and Guidance members, Ministerial Appointment Committee members and Ordained Elders.

The modules teach the following skills:

1. The use of the RESTORATION MANUAL. This manual was developed and approved by the General Conference of 2007. It is designed to be used by any Elder hearing a private confidential confession of another Elder and who therefore accepts responsibility to restore that Elder privately. It is also designed to be used by a Superintendent and MEG Board who have received an accusation of an Elder and have the responsibility to verify the validity of that accusation, and, if true, to begin the process of repentance and restoration of that elder. Although we will not study the Court of Appeals Manual, this document is included in the resources to be printed and distributed.

2. The second skill is the identification of Elders with possible Personality Disorders. Though only licensed psychologists are qualified to diagnose a person with a disorder, Superintendents and conference leaders need to have a beginning understanding of how such disorders can impact a person's life and ministry.

3. The third skill is the identification of Clergy Marriage stresses and difficulties. Though a Superintendent or conference leader may not be qualified to provide marriage counseling, the ability to identify problems and stresses common to clergy marriages will help the leaders know how to strengthen and protect their Elders. This skill also includes knowing when to refer for marriage counseling.

4. The fourth skill is assisting Church Staffs into healthy cooperation. Working together with other pastors in service to the same church has unique stresses that need to be identified and understood. This module will explore a workbook looking at 18 issues that need to be addressed in creating a healthy staff.

5. The fifth skill provides an understanding of leadership supervision. The ability to lead an organization as complex as a local church, with its hybrid joining of paid and volunteer workers, requires special training and understanding. This module provides tools to assist in this process.

6. The sixth skill provides training in reconciliation. Conflict is an inevitable part of congregational and conference life. Being able to understand the causes of conflict and the process of reconciliation empowers superintendents and conference leaders to bring peace.

Also included in this training are resources that empower the application of these skills. These address such areas as:

The Affective Domain – the process whereby new values become integrated into a person’s life.

Case Studies on Difficult Persons – the opportunity to understand how to care for disordered or difficult people.

Examining the Causes of Marital Breakdown Within Minister’s Marriages – by Teresa Trascritti – an article exploring the specific pressures that causes trauma to clergy marriages.

Free Methodist Ministerial Ethics – by Kevin Mannoia, Denny Wayman and Matt Thomas – a standard of ministerial ethics for Free Methodist Elders.

Spiritual Life Checkup – by Denny Wayman – a process of preventative care that assists in the evaluation of a person’s spiritual health.

# Restoration Process – A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards



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When a minister has confessed to or been accused of grievous sin, the entire church comes alongside to take responsibility for his/her repentance, restitution and restoration. The initial response of the church is entrusted into the hands of any elder to whom the minister voluntarily confesses, and in certain cases to the superintendent and the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board.

In such a situation the elder or superintendent who receives a confession begins the process of healing. This process focuses not only on the minister, but also on his/her family, others harmed by the minister's sin, the congregation the minister serves and the larger Christian community.

The following process will be useful in all cases, even though each restoration case will be unique. When we follow these principles of healthy biblical community, then God's guidance through His church maintains a consistent pattern of wholeness and holiness in each unique situation.

## **PREPARATION**

### **A. Spiritual**

As leaders, we begin with prayer. We are never in more spiritual danger ourselves than when we are in a restoration process with someone who has done wrong. Paul warns us: "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Galatians 6:1-3).

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1. Before beginning this restoration process take extensive time to pray. Pray for protection, humility, wisdom and insight. Ask the Holy Spirit to come alongside you as you come alongside all those who suffer because of this alleged failure.
2. Pray for those you will be restoring and comforting. Pray for every person affected by this confessed or accused wrongdoing. Pray for the truth to be clear and each person to be humble and open. Pray for God's protection over the church and willing spirits within everyone.
3. Discern whether you are in a place of spiritual health to be the elder who accepts responsibility for either hearing a private confession with the responsibility to direct the restoration, or investigation of an accusation. The danger to be permissive rather than merciful, or punitive rather than holding accountable, is greater when we are personally struggling with similar sin. If in your meditations and prayers you discern this is not something you should do then find another elder to do this spiritual work in your place.

## **B. Resource Manual**

The following procedure is designed as a companion to Thomas L. Pedigo's *Restoration Manual: A Workbook for Restoring Fallen Ministers and Religious Leaders*.<sup>1</sup> The Pedigo manual deals with a full range of aspects common to catastrophic failure by clergy. Some of Pedigo's details are not included in the basic restoration guidelines here. Some of them will be helpful in specific instances. Pedigo offers, for example, checklists to evaluate those who are responsible for guiding a restoration process.

Footnote

<sup>1</sup> <http://win-edge.com/Restoration.shtml>

## FIRST ACTIONS

We respond differently to a confession of grievous sin than to an accusation or discovery of such sin.

### A. Confession

1. “The confession of one elder to another is an inviolate confidence, unless the conduct is both ongoing and unrepentant” (*Book of Discipline*, ¶7170B). The opportunity to bring an end to wrong behavior through the confidential care of another elder is a healthy biblical opportunity within the community of the church. Thus, when a minister confesses the truth of his/her sin and repents from that behavior such that he/she turns away from that behavior to do what is right, then such a confession is confidential and need not be reported to any other person or to any official body.
  - a. A private confession to another elder will require a restoration process and accountability that is guided by the elder to whom the confession is made. A clear statement of confession needs to be written by the penitent elder and must include a pledge stating exactly how the behavior will be changed. (See Pedigo pp.15-36.) Though confidential, this process still deals with all the areas a formal restoration would cover as noted in Pedigo, such as: Denial; Spiritual; Moral; Behavioral; Emotional; Mental; Marital; Psychological; Relational/Social; Familial. The questions provided by Pedigo hold the person accountable to his/her own confession and pledge to changed behavior.
  - b. This private restoration process can be delegated to a professional counselor or pastoral counselor with the agreement of the penitent elder. When such a referral occurs, the counselor must agree to follow the Pedigo categories and to work with the elder in providing a full restoration in all stipulated areas, agreeing to report to the confidential elder when the work is complete. If the confidential elder is trained to provide this counsel and chooses to do so, it is understood by the confessing elder that the confidential elder will be seeking confidential supervision from a pastoral counselor or professional counselor for both accountability in the process as well as transference issues. This will not be the confessing elder’s superintendent or bishop but a trained pastoral counselor or professional counselor.
  - c. The accountability to assure that the offending conduct is not ongoing or unrepentant rests on both elders. Repentance requires

a consistent change in behavior. When this change has occurred, then completion of the restoration focuses on the future life of the elder. These include such topics as vocational, volitional, physical and personal/recreational (Pedigo pp.37-64).

- d. If the penitent minister is unable to maintain a consistent change of behavior, then the confidential listening elder is responsible to negotiate a voluntary withdrawal from ministry. Both elders have responsibility to see that this step is taken. Withdrawal from ministry allows the elder to be free from the weighty responsibilities and pressures of ministry, to focus on recovery and to focus on his/her own and the family's spiritual well-being.
2. When an elder's confession is not followed by a change in behavior, and is unwilling to voluntarily withdraw, then the confidential listening elder must alert the failing elder that his confession is no longer confidential. The failing elder is now abusing the ministry position. The failure is therefore evidence of "... a request to be helped to stop this abuse and removed from the temptations and responsibilities of his/her position until repentance and healing occurs" (*Book of Discipline*, ¶7170B). It is to the detriment of the minister, others involved in the wrongdoing and the congregation as a whole if grievous sin is allowed to be ongoing behavior in an elder's life. If the use of confidentiality becomes a way an elder attempts to protect his/her sinful behavior, then the elder to whom the confession is made is responsible to contact the superintendent who informs the MEG Board. The individual now moves to the Restoration Process outlined in this manual.

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## **B. Accusation**

1. An accusation usually arises through the complaint of a spouse, a member or an informer, either from inside or outside the church. Word may come while the wrongdoing is occurring or some time after the fact. The passing of time does not ease the necessity of careful attention.
2. This principle must be kept clearly in mind: Every elder is innocent until proven otherwise. The respectful exploration of the accusation must establish wrongdoing beyond any reasonable doubt. Hearsay is never evidence. All who make accusations must be willing to document or otherwise prove his/her allegations against the elder.

3. The investigation of a denied accusation is to be kept confidential. This confidentiality extends to those requested to participate in the investigation.
4. When an accusation has been shown to be true and the elder is involved in grievous sin, then the Restoration Process is begun. If the accusations are unfounded, the matter is over.

## RESTORATION PROCESS

Following the first step of Confession, there are three additional steps in the Restoration Process: Communication; Repentance; Recovery.

### A. Communication

1. The overseer's first communication is with the elder having a pastoral counselor or professional counselor present. This communication is first pastoral.

Ascertain whether the elder has sought and found pardon from God through Christ. If not, offer to make this moment of initial contact one of contrition and confession before God.

Discover whether they have also been reconciled to other persons and made restitution, to the degree possible and appropriate, to persons who have been victimized by their sin.

Explore ways this could be accomplished. Explain clearly what his/her rights are as an elder and what the Restoration Process entails.

The process of restoration entails this:

- a. We *communicate* this restoration process by reading these rights to the elder;

The rights of an elder are these:

An accusation of \_\_\_\_\_ has been made about you. This is an inappropriate behavior as described in ¶7130 of the *Book of Discipline*.

This meeting is explained in Chapter VII of the *Book of Discipline* titled Church Order and sets forth the purpose and goals, response to disorder and processing of complaints. Anything you say in this or subsequent meetings, including any written communication will become a part of our report to the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board.

You have the right to consult with another elder and with the *Book of Discipline* before speaking with us. You have the right to have another elder with you during this meeting. You also have the right to voluntarily “withdraw under charges.” Do you understand?

If you decide to continue this meeting now without another elder

present, you will have the right to stop at any time and have another elder present with you. Do you understand?

The content of this meeting is held within the confidentiality of the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board unless there is risk of imminent bodily harm to another person present, or if the allegations are required to be reported by law, such as sexual abuse of a child or abuse of the elderly.

Knowing and understanding these rights as they have been explained to you, are you willing to continue this meeting without either having another elder present or consulting with Chapter VII of the *Book of Discipline*?

- b. We seek a sincere *repentance* as verified by a consistent change in behavior; and
  - c. The MEG Board will form a Restoration Team to seek a full *recovery* from the sin and a restoring to ministry.
2. The second communication is with the area bishop. This communication is in writing and explains that a Restoration Process has begun with this elder. This communication seeks counsel and wisdom as well as possible resources beyond the conference.
  3. The third communication is with the MEG Board. This communication is done in a meeting of the board with confidentiality by all members.
  4. The fourth communication is with the church and conference. This communication is at the discretion of the superintendent in consultation with the bishop and MEG Board and may be made later in the restoration process when recovery is well underway. The public statement made at the time of the removal from ministry may simply say: “Pastor \_\_\_\_ has asked for a leave of absence to work on personal issues in his/her life.” Or: “Pastor \_\_\_\_ is being relieved from pastoral responsibilities to work on personal issues in his/her life. We ask that you respect his/her privacy and when appropriate, Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ will speak to you of his/her journey.” If the elder’s grievous sin is public knowledge then a statement may be made: “Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ has been relieved from pastoral responsibilities to enter a process of restoration to God and recovery to ministry. We ask that you pray for him/her and ask for God’s care during this difficult time.”

## B. Repentance

1. The process of restoration requires a time of recovery measured by transformation and fresh empowerment to reenter ministry.
  - a. Pastoral and professional counseling explores the power of a grievous sin's hold over a person, not only enslaving but damaging to one's character and self awareness. Denial and self-deception are two psychological defenses which make it difficult for a person to be aware of his/her sin and its power over them. Hypocrisy and deceit are also forms of self-protection which humans tend to use in order to escape from accountability.
  - b. The spiritual and emotional support of the elder's family, victim of the elder's pastoral abuse and the congregation will require a time of recovery as well. This recovery may necessitate the provision of counseling and group healing to deal with trust and grief issues. This care for the congregation is the responsibility of the superintendent in cooperation with the Restoration Team.
2. The process of restoration requires an accountability procedure. These procedures involve the creation of a "Restoration Team" by the MEG Board. Pedigo describes the formation of this team and the accountability procedure on pages 9-14. In addition, Pedigo treats "Scriptural Instruction Regarding God's Grace in Restoring and Reinstating Fallen Leaders" on pages 86-94 and provides an extensive bibliography on pages 95-99.
  - a. Financial care of the elder and the elder's family. Due to the life changes restoration requires, the financial needs of the elder and his/her family are discussed in Pedigo (pp. 39-40). Working with the superintendent and the local board of administration, the Restoration Team will help the elder work out a plan to financially care for his/her family. Care should be taken in this difficult task to make sure that the family is not put further at risk by the crisis of lost income. The goal is financial stability during the transition and expert assistance toward alternate employment.
  - b. Remaining within the congregation or finding a host congregation. The question of continued participation in the local church or finding another congregation to host the elder and his/her family during the restoration is discussed in Pedigo (pp. 73-74). Working with the superintendent and the local board of adminis-

tration, the Restoration Team will help the elder work out a plan to spiritually care for his/her family.

- c. The process of restoration requires the accountability procedure to refer both to the accountability of the elder to the Restoration Team, as well as the Restoration Team to the MEG Board. To assist in this Pedigo has several additional pages of helpful reference: Initial Meetings Purpose Planner (pp. 75-76); Guidelines for Restoration Team (pp. 77-78); Accountability questions (p. 79); and John Wesley's Questions (partial) (p. 80). Also helpful is a Checkpoint Rating Scale so the Restoration Team can assess their own process in an ongoing way (pp. 66-67).
- d. The process of restoration requires the elder to surrender his/her ordination parchments, without ornamental frames, to the conference secretary until restoration is complete. The elder's membership is then placed with a local church to provide spiritual care for the elder and his/her family. (See Pedigo's "Pastor-in-Residence Program" pp. 73-74.) When restoration is complete and the elder is restored to ministry, a celebration of his/her ordination can be held as the parchments are returned and ministry restored.
- e. Continuing relationship with the elder is an important part of restoration. Healthy biblical communities are those which reach out to those in restoration, inviting them to personal and public gatherings, offering love and grace in our Lord's name. This is made more feasible if the conference provides prevenient care in supportive groups so that personal relationships are enhanced and ongoing love is expressed.

### **C. Recovery**

1. When the restoration process has been followed, giving ample time for the elder to establish a trustworthy pattern of Christian character and conduct, the Restoration Team reports this completion to the superintendent and MEG Board.
2. The MEG Board may then interview the elder and determine whether the time has come to return the elder's parchments and restore him or her to ministry, or whether additional restoration is necessary. When it is determined that the restoration process is complete the MEG Board recommends to the conference or its board of administration the return of parchments and a restoring of ministry.

3. The recovery of an elder is a cause for celebration. The conference or its board of administration may publicly rejoice with the elder and his/her family by restoring his/her parchments in a way that brings dignity to the elder and the church.

## APPENDIX

### A. Records

In all instances where an elder is being restored, a complete log of phone calls, personal contacts, reactions and responses are to be kept. In addition, a careful compiling of all correspondence related to the restoration or attempted restoration is to be done. Duplicate copies should be made and placed in two separate and safe locations.

### B. Covenant of Restoration

**MINISTERIAL EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE BOARD  
COVENANT OF RESTORATION WITH \_\_\_\_\_ (elder) of the  
\_\_\_\_\_ CONFERENCE of the FREE METHODIST CHURCH**

This agreement is entered into as a Covenant by and between \_\_\_\_\_, an ordained elder, who is currently in the Restoration Process in the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference of the Free Methodist Church, and the Conference Ministerial Education and Guidance Board.

The elder and the board enter into this covenant for the purpose of pastoral care and professional restoration.

It is therefore hereby acknowledged that as an elder in the Free Methodist Church, I accept the authority of the Restoration Team established by the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference. The Restoration Team and the MEG Board will join the elder in pursuing every effort to accomplish the restoration to wholeness of life and service within the Free Methodist Church. The MEG Board retains the authority to determine when the Restoration Process has been completed.

#### **Restoration Team**

The Restoration Team established by the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board will guide the restoration process. Members of this team are:

#### **Ordination Credentials**

The elder agrees to leave his/her ordination credentials voluntarily submitted in trust with the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference.

## RESTORATION PROCESS

The process for restoration is outlined in the document: *Restoration Process — A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards*.

### Restoration Time Line

There is no specific time given in which the Restoration Process must be completed. This allows for the unique journey of each elder in their restoration process. However, if the elder has not submitted to the restoration process as outlined above, or not become actively involved in a Free Methodist Church prior to the \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference, he/she agrees to request to be withdrawn from the conference and denomination with the designation: “Withdrawn Under Complaint.”

In witness thereof, the parties agree in the presence of God to abide by and fulfill this Covenant of Restoration:

_____	_____
Elder	Date
_____	_____
Superintendent	Date

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### C. Moral Failure Debriefing (Sample Format)

#### Introduction

The following is an outline for a debriefing by the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board and superintendents on cases of breach of church order. The intention in carrying out this check-up is to learn from the experience. With regard to process, this agenda may also be useful to outline important elements to follow as the case is treated.

Define the situation in one sentence in professional language.

- How did church authorities learn of the problem?
- Were there legal/civil charges?
- Was there confession, contrition and repentance?

Characterize:

complete, remorseful;  reluctant;  resistant, forced

Describe the attitude of spouse, family, etc.

Was the area bishop informed?

Describe the action of conference leadership relating to 1) the minister involved, 2) the other person(s) involved, 3) the local congregation:

- What did the superintendent do?
- What actions did the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board take?
  - For discipline
  - For restoration (see Restoration Process)
- How were these decisions/actions communicated?
- Was there counsel from the area bishop?
- Was a detailed record kept of all interactions and communications in the case (telephone conversations, interview, correspondence)?

What were the (initial) reactions to the superintendent/Ministerial Education and Guidance Board actions?

- By the minister involved
- By the other person(s) involved
- By the congregation
- By the conference

To what extent was the minister cooperative with the Restoration Team of the Ministerial Education and Guidance Board in receiving discipline and participating in the process for restoration to ministry/leadership?

- A year after the event, what seems to be the outcome?
  - a) What have been the identifiable effects on the local congregation?
  - b) What have been the effects on the individual involved and his/her ministry?
- What did you learn from this situation? What did you do right? What went well?
- Has a debriefing report been filed with the area bishop?
- If you had to handle this situation again, what would you do differently?



# Review Board and Court of Appeals Procedure Manual



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## Checklist for Processing Accusation of Breach of Church Order

This checklist is to ensure that all accusations of breach of church order are processed in a thorough, complete and just manner. The use of this checklist will affect the general principles contained in Chapter VII of the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America. Formal procedures set out in Chapter VII are regarded as a drastic step reserved for serious situations. When it appears that such formal proceedings may become necessary, this checklist provides a confidential and tactful manner for handling the matter to reach a satisfactory resolution.

1. What is the accusation?
2. Is it being taken seriously? Why? Why not? How?
3. Who brought the accusation? When? How?
4. Is the accusation made in writing, signed, witnessed and dated?
5. Is the accusation precise and clear? If not, why not?
6. Is the accusation true? How do you know? What is the evidence?
7. Is the accusation, by its nature, conduct that is unbecoming to a Christian? Why?
8. Is the behavior a pattern? How is this verified?
9. Are there other witnesses? Who? Are they willing to give testimony?
10. Is there written documentation? Are there video or audio tapes? Other electronic support?
11. Are there letters, phone calls or other data that support the accusation?
12. Have these been submitted to your overseer (elder, district leader, superintendent, bishop)?
13. When and by whom was the bishop, superintendent, district leader and/or elder told?
14. Has the accused been approached? When? By whom? How?
15. Has there been a record of the accused person's response?
16. Has the MEGB/MCC been apprised of the accusation? When? How? By whom?
17. Has the accused met with the MEGB/MCC? When?
18. Is there a record of the meeting? Has the record been sent to the overseer?
19. Has the accused been disciplined? How?
20. Has a covenant of restoration been established? When? By the MEGB/MCC?
21. Has the accused signed the covenant? When? Were witnesses present? Who?
22. Has the restoration process been established and agreed upon by all parties?
23. Does the case, by its nature, require legal counsel?
24. Is physical, psychological or legal counsel needed? How do you know?
25. Are there any federal or state laws that must be followed in this case?
26. Are the accusers and the accused being treated fairly? How do you know?
27. In what ways are these treatments being documented?

28. If the accused admits guilt, has a written statement from him/her been signed?
29. Has such a statement been dated and witnessed?
30. Was the statement signed without coercion?
31. Has there been a time and place set for the accused to make public confession that is appropriate to the case?
32. If abuse of another person or persons has occurred, is effort being made to provide support and help to that person(s) and their family? How? By whom? When?
33. Is there evidence that overseers are presuming innocence of both accuser and accused until evidence in either direction has been verified?
34. Does the case, by its nature, require formal proceedings?
35. Has the MEGB/MCC drafted written accusations of breach of church order? Have the accusations been provided to the accused? How? By whom? When?
36. Has the MEGB/MCC appointed a person to represent it in any formal proceedings? Has a person been appointed to assist the representative?

# Rules of Procedure for Review Boards

These Rules of Procedure for Review Boards fulfill the mandates established in Chapter VII, Church Order, in the latest edition of the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America (FMCNA). The general principles, purposes, and goals of responding to disorder are set out in Chapter VII. The directives and the spirit of Chapter VII take precedence over any procedure set forth in this Procedure Manual. The process set forth for Review Boards is to strive to arrive at the truth and, in light of the facts presented, an outcome that is just. Consequently, considering all of the precepts in Chapter VII, the presiding officer at any Review Board proceeding, or by agreement of all the parties with the consent of the presiding officer, can develop a procedure that is best suited for the circumstances. Those involved in Review Board proceedings can use as a reference the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, Chapter XX, Disciplinary Procedures.

After overseers and the MEGB/MCCs have processed all breach of church order accusations by following both the detailed checklist and the principles of restoration found in the *Restoration Process – A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards*, and the matter proceeds to a formal Review Board hearing, the following apply:

1. **Presiding Officer.** The Board of Administration will appoint a presiding officer who will ensure that the Review Board hearing proceeds in an orderly manner. The presiding officer is not to have prior knowledge of the details of the matter and is to act impartially. The presiding officer may request the presence of legal counsel who may provide advice to the presiding officer only in matters related to the Review Board hearing.

The presiding officer has authority to impose time limits on presentations and cross examinations and may restrict the raising of objections during presentations. The presiding officer may also allow the Review Board to ask questions after each presentation by either the representative of the MEGB/MCC or the accused. A suggested order for conducting Review Board hearings follows (see page 10).

2. **Grounds for Challenge.** At least 14 days prior to the beginning of the Review Board hearing, both the MEGB/MCC representative and the accused will receive a list of Review Board members and will have the right to challenge, for cause, the selection of any member of the Review Board. The presiding officer will rule on the validity of the challenge. Any member of the Review Board who cannot sit because of a successful challenge or conflict of interest will be replaced by a reserve member. An equal number of elder and lay members shall be maintained.
3. **Rules of Evidence.** The Review Board will adopt rules of evidence prior to the commencement of the Review Board hearing that will guide it in ascertaining the

truth and determining the rights of the parties involved. The presiding officer of the Review Board hearing will decide on the admissibility of evidence. It is generally difficult to obtain legal proof of facts. To get to the truth at a Review Board hearing, hearsay evidence may be admissible, and the decision of the Review Board may be based on such evidence after the Review Board gives such evidence whatever weight it is entitled to — based on relevance, conditions surrounding the evidence, the individuals involved and indicators of trustworthiness.

4. **Testimony.** No one will be barred as a witness on the grounds that they are not a member of the FMCNA. If circumstances make it impossible for a witness to appear, a proper affidavit from the individual may be presented at the Review Board hearing, provided that both the MEGB/MCC representative and the accused have had an opportunity to review the affidavit and to question, with witnesses listening, the person signing the affidavit about its contents.
5. **Accusations of Breach of Church Order.** It is not required that an accusation be written in any particular legal form, but it is recommended it be written in the standard form as provided in the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.
6. **MEGB/MCC Representative.** The MEGB/MCC with authority over the accused shall appoint a representative to represent the MEGB/MCC during the Review Board hearing. The representative is responsible to prepare the accusation(s) of breach of church order in final form and to present the accusation(s) at the proper time and place to the Review Board hearing. Both the MEGB/MCC representative and the accused have the right to receive advice or guidance from any elder/member of the FMCNA and to have that individual serve as his/her respective assistant at the Review Board hearing. Neither the MEGB/MCC nor the accused is entitled to, and in fact are precluded from, retaining professional legal counsel to participate in the Review Board hearing.
7. **Participants.** Only those who are members of the FMCNA will be allowed to participate in the Review Board hearing, with the exception of witnesses. Only those participating in the Review Board hearing and the spouse of the accused are permitted to attend the hearing.
8. **Confidentiality.** All deliberations of the Review Board will be considered confidential. All participants in the Review Board hearing will not discuss the proceeding with anyone not participating in the hearing during or following the hearing. (See *Book of Discipline*, ¶7160, ¶7170, ¶7180, Confidentiality.)
9. **Withdrawal.** If, during the Review Board hearing, the accused submits a letter requesting to withdraw from membership in the FMCNA, the request will be granted and the proceeding will end.

10. Records. The presiding officer will appoint a secretary, not a member of the Review Board, who will be responsible to keep complete and accurate records of all proceedings, testimony, evidence, documents admitted, together with accusations, specifications, notices, citations and findings of the Review Board. Consideration may be given to obtaining the services of a transcribing service, similar to a court reporter, to record the proceedings in full and produce a transcript. The presiding officer will be the custodian of such records until the case is finished and then will deliver the records to the secretary of the Board of Administration for permanent filing.
  
11. Disposition. The Review Board will deliver a decision within 30 days of the conclusion of the Review Board hearing. The Review Board, by a majority vote, may affirm, modify or reverse the accusation(s) found by the MEGB/MCC. An accusation can be amended to conform to facts brought out in the Review Board hearing, but not in such a way as to find the accused responsible for a charge not wholly included within the accusation(s) contemplated at the Review Board hearing. An accused cannot be found responsible for a breach of church order that is more serious than the breach contained in the MEGB/MCC's accusation. If the accusation is not substantiated, there are no further proceedings. If an accusation is affirmed or modified to a lesser included breach of church order, the Review Board will set a final disposition of the proceeding following the principles of restoration as set out in the *Restoration Process — A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards*.
  
12. Expenses. The accused is responsible for his/her own expenses, for the expenses of the person chosen to assist with advice or guidance and for the expenses of witnesses required by the accused to be present at the Review Board hearing. Other expenses are the responsibility of FMCNA.

## **Order for Conducting Review Board Hearings**

1. Members of the Review Board are seated and introduced by the presiding officer.
2. The presiding officer, or his/her designee, opens the hearing with devotions and prayer.
3. The presiding officer appoints a secretary.
4. Roll call. If the accused is not present, the Review Board will proceed with the hearing, but the accused will not have a right to appeal the decision of the Review Board.
5. Reading of the accusation(s) of breach of church order by the presiding officer.
6. Response of the accused.
7. Statement of the case and of the line of evidence by the MEGB/MCC representative.
8. Presentation of evidence by the MEGB/MCC representative and cross-examination by the accused.
9. Statement of the case and of the line of defense by the accused.
10. Presentation of defense by the accused and cross-examination by the MEGB/MCC representative.
11. Presentation of rebuttal evidence by the MEGB/MCC representative and cross-examination by the accused.
12. Presentation of rebuttal by the accused and cross-examination by the MEGB/MCC representative.
13. Cross-examination, re-direct examination, and re-cross examination of witnesses is permitted and witnesses can be recalled for further testimony if necessary.
14. Summing up of the case by the MEGB/MCC representative.
15. Summing up of the case by the accused.
16. If the presiding officer deems it proper for the MEGB/MCC representative to reply, the accused shall also be permitted to reply.
17. Instructions by the presiding officer to the Review Board on the format of the decision.
18. The Review Board is excused to deliberate and prepare a decision.
19. A member of the Review Board should vote to find a breach of church order if he/she is morally convinced that the accused committed such conduct, on the basis of the evidence presented at the Review Board hearing.
20. If the accusation(s) of breach of church order are substantiated, the Review Board sets a disposition by following the principles of restoration found in *Restoration Process – A Manual for Superintendents and Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards*.
21. The presiding officer announces the Review Board's decision, including disposition. In the case of a finding of breach of church order by the accused, the presiding officer shall advise the accused of his/her right to an appeal.
22. The presiding officer concludes the hearing in prayer.

## Appeal of Review Board Decision

The grounds for appealing a decision of a Review Board are limited to the following:

- a. New and important testimony exists and has become available, and satisfactory reasons are given as to why it was not presented at the Review Board hearing.
- b. The minutes of the Review Board hearing are so inaccurate that the true merits of the case cannot be determined from them.
- c. The proceedings were contrary to Chapter VII of the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America.
- d. There was incorrect adherence to proper procedure by the presiding officer and/or the Review Board.

Notice of intent to appeal, containing the grounds for the appeal, must be made as set out in Chapter VII of the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America.

An appeal of the Review Board's decision shall not be granted on the grounds that questions of fact and the weight given to facts were decided against the accused. The Review Board has the exclusive authority to decide questions of fact and to decide what weight to give to facts. An appeal shall not be granted to an accused who was voluntarily absent from the Review Board hearing.

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Upon proper request for an appeal, the secretary of the Board of Administration will, by registered mail, inform the parties of the date of the appeal hearing at least 45 days in advance. No person will be allowed to serve on the Court of Appeals who participated in the underlying Review Board hearing or who is in a position of conflict of interest. The Chair of the Board of Administration will ordinarily preside over the Court of Appeals (*Book of Discipline*, ¶4320.M.1), but when the accusation is brought by a MEGB against an elder or conference ministerial candidate, the Chair should consider appointing a bishop or bishop emeritus to preside at the Court of Appeals.

At such time as any notice and grounds for appeal, statement, rebuttal, and reply is filed with the secretary of the Board of Administration, a copy of the document shall simultaneously be mailed to the other party(ies). The secretary of the Board of Administration will distribute to members of the Court of Appeals all documents submitted by the secretary of the Review Board and parties to the appeal. An order for conducting appeals follows (see page 13).

The Court of Appeals is responsible to assess only the grounds for an appeal and to render a decision within 30 days of hearing the appeal. In the event of a tie vote, the presiding officer will vote to break the tie. The Court of Appeals must confine itself to the grounds of the appeal, but it is entitled to all relevant information that is pertinent to the appeal. If the decision of the Review Board is not affirmed, a new Review Board hearing will be con-

ducted by the Court of Appeals using the Rules of Procedure as outlined for Review Boards. The date for the new Review Board hearing will be set and communicated to the parties at least 45 days in advance by registered mail.

# Order for Conducting Appeals

## Pre-Appeal Conference

The presiding officer convenes a pre-appeal conference with the appellant, his/her assistant, and the MEGB/MCC representative and his/her assistant to determine whether the requirements for appeals, as set out in Chapter VII of the most recent *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America, unless waived in part in writing, have been met by both sides. If the presiding officer determines that the requirements have been met, arrangements for the Appeal Hearing will be decided upon, including the date and location. At the presiding officer's discretion, the pre-appeal conference may be conducted by telephone.

## Appeal Hearing

1. Members of the Court of Appeals are seated and introduced by the presiding officer.
2. The presiding officer, or his/her designee, opens the hearing with devotions and prayer.
3. The presiding officer appoints a secretary.
4. Roll call.
5. The presiding officer asks members of the Court of Appeals:  
“Have you discussed any fundamentals of this case with anyone involved in the Review Board hearing, including any member of the involved MEGB/MCC, its representative, the appellant, the appellant's spouse or assistant, or the presiding officer?”

If any member of the Court of Appeals answers “yes” to the above question, that member is dismissed from serving on the Court of Appeals and a reserve elder/member, who is able to answer “no” to the above question, is seated. An equal number of elder and lay members shall be maintained.

6. The presiding officer shall give instructions from Chapter VII, of the most recent *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America, this *Review Board and Court of Appeals Procedure Manual* and any agreements made by the parties at the pre-appeal conference. The instructions shall include:  
“The Court of Appeals must confine itself to the grounds of the appeal but is entitled to all relevant information pertinent to the appeal as presented.

“The grounds for appealing a decision of a Review Board are limited to the following:

- a. New and important testimony exists and has become available, and satisfactory reasons are given as to why it was not presented at the Review Board hearing.
- b. The minutes of the Review Board hearing are so inaccurate that the true merits of the case cannot be determined from them.
- c. The proceedings were contrary to Chapter VII of the *Book of Discipline* of the Free Methodist Church of North America.
- d. There was incorrect adherence to proper procedure by the presiding officer and/or the Review Board.

“While it will be important for the Court of Appeals to consider each of the basis for the appeal, it will not make a decision on any of them individually.

“The Court of Appeals’ deliberations must result in answering only the following question:

‘Are there grounds for the appeal?’

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“If the answer to this question is ‘no,’ then the appeal fails and the Review Board decision is affirmed and the matter is closed.

“If the answer to this question is ‘yes,’ then the Court of Appeals will hear the appeal.”

7. The presiding officer reads the accusation(s) of breach of church order from which the appeal is taken and a statement of the final decision of the Review Board.
8. The presiding officer reads the appellant’s written statement of grounds for appeal.
9. The appellant and/or his/her assistant present arguments (limited to 45 minutes).
10. Recess will be taken at the conclusion of the appellant’s arguments.
11. MEGB/MCC representative and/or his/her assistant present arguments (limited to 45 minutes).
12. Recess will be taken at the conclusion of the MEGB/MCC representative’s arguments.
13. Rebuttal by appellant and/or his/her assistant (limited to 10 minutes plus any time not used during the 45 minutes allotted for the original arguments).

14. Rebuttal by MEGB/MCC representative and/or his/her assistant (limited to 10 minutes plus any time not used during the 45 minutes allotted for the original arguments).
15. Each party will be given a 5-minute warning and a 1-minute warning prior to the termination of the allotted time, at which time the arguments or rebuttal must immediately stop.

The members of the Court of Appeals may ask questions of the parties, assistants, or appellant's spouse at any time.

16. The presiding officer may repeat the instructions if requested.
17. The presiding officer will lead a prayer to conclude this portion of the hearing and dismiss all present who are not sitting on the Court of Appeals.
18. Immediately following the appeal, the Court of Appeals is excused to determine whether the decision of the Review Board is affirmed or not affirmed.<sup>1</sup> Testimony may be re-read in whole or in part. Deliberations shall continue until all are able to make an informed decision. If necessary, the Court of Appeals shall reconvene for further deliberations so as to be able to present the decision of the Court of Appeals within 30 days.
19. The presiding officer shall conclude the proceedings in prayer.

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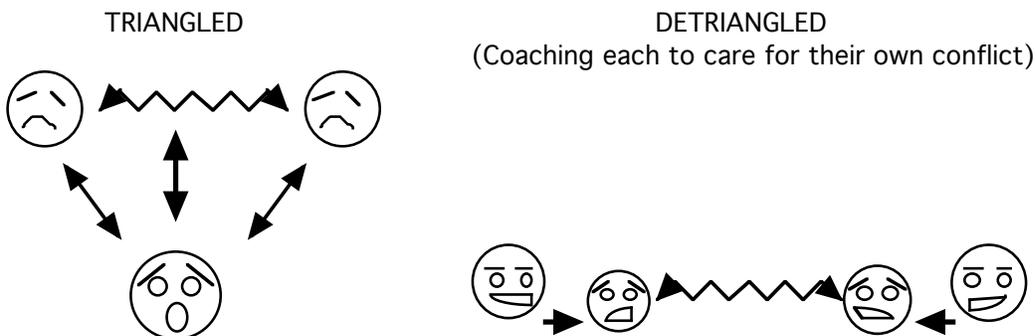
#### Footnote

- <sup>1</sup> If the decision of the Court of Appeals is to affirm the decision of the Review Board, the appeal fails. If the decision of the Court of Appeals is not to affirm the decision of the Review Board, a new hearing will be conducted by the Court of Appeals sitting as a Review Board.



# TRIANGLES

Perhaps the most common experience of a pastor or conference leader is when a person attempts to triangle them into a difficult relationship the person has with their spouse, child, neighbor, fellow member, (or in the case of a conference leader - their difficulty with their pastor), etc. In such a situation if the pastor or conference leader allows this, the conflict between the two original people will now be on the pastor's shoulders to solve and it is more likely to become long-term, in addition to causing the pastor or conference leader to carry the weight on his/her shoulders.

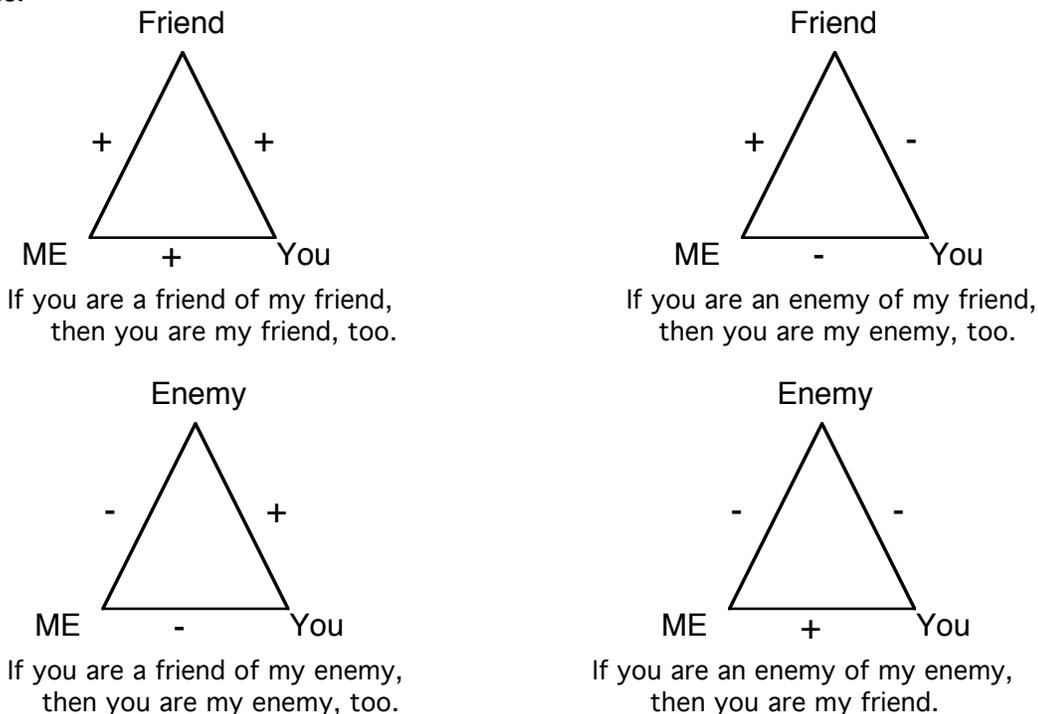


## “TANGLED WEB”

Taken from: Life in a Glass House, by Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick

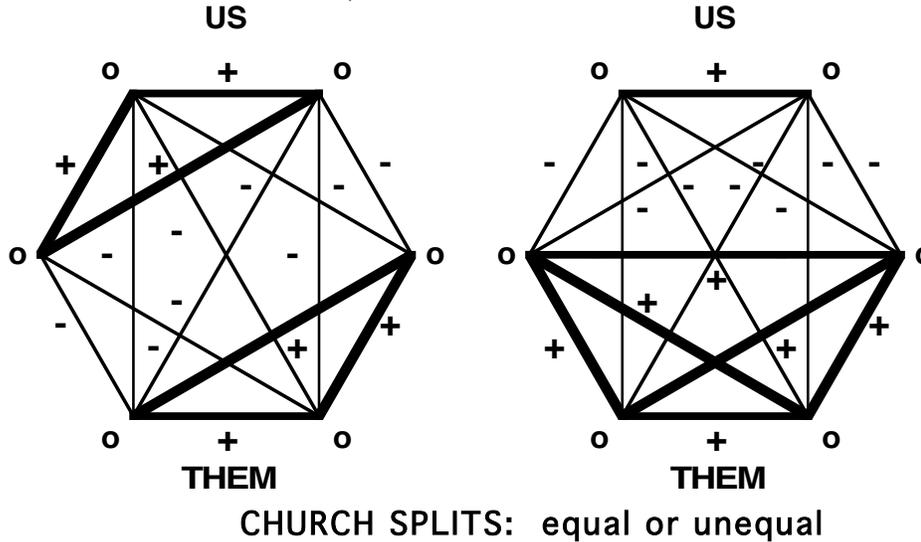
The basic building blocks of church splits are triangles. Lee and Balswick call this dynamic a “tangled web.” They state, “Triangles are a form of deceit. They are ways to steer around the truth about a relationship. And like lies, triangles are capable of producing tangled webs of relationships, a network of interlocking triangles, held together by a common desire to avoid facing the truth.”

There are four rules which define how divisions are created in a church. They have the consequence of either ousting the pastor or splitting the church in two. This is how it works: rather than each person having their own differentiated relationship with everyone else, they form a web of undifferentiated triangles basing their friendship with others on how others are related to their friends or enemies. In other words, everyone has to choose sides.

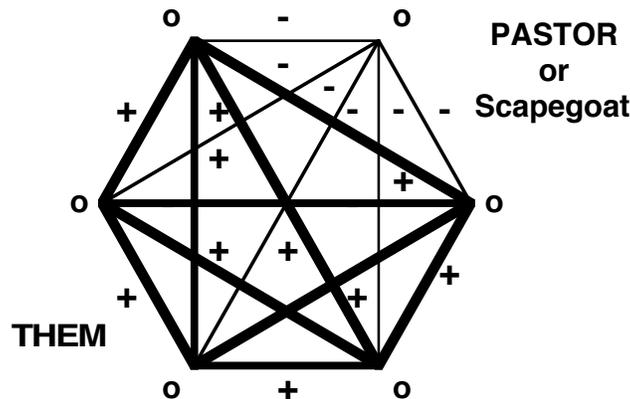


What these undifferentiated, or emotionally-fused triangles do is begin to coalesce together into coalitions. The first, which seems at first to be desirable, is to simply all be friends, there are no enemies. But since difficulties or conflicts are not allowed, soon the group begins to only PRETEND to like each other. The unconscious motto of the group is: "Let's put a good face on it," or "Smile, even if it kills you!" This pattern seldom lasts for long unless it is a small church with one or two families and the people remain in the church as a way of remaining in the family. Intimacy is seldom possible in such a congregation.

The second pattern is the CHURCH SPLIT, where there becomes an US and a THEM. The graphic is like this:



The third pattern is called the SCAPEGOAT, but in church life it is usually the "AGAINST THE PASTOR" fusion:



The pastoral care needed in such a fused and undifferentiated group is the SLOW (or you will be scapegoated) but deliberate untriangling and the encouragement of differentiation. The kinds of things which could be done are to deliberately help people of different sides get to know one another and share their lives, dreams, hopes, and hurts, as brothers and sisters of God's church. At times, though, there may need to be either a shutting down of the church and beginning anew, or an intervention from outside the local church by bringing in the Superintendent and elders of other churches to help bring about changes. If this is done while protecting the dignity of both sides, then perhaps it would be effective. But any outside presence will be less powerful than the people already a part of the system.

## WHAT IS A PERSONALITY DISORDER?

[from *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition*, 1994, commonly referred to as *DSM-IV*, of the American Psychiatric Association. European countries use the [diagnostic criteria of the World Health Organization](#).]

**An enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectation of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment.**

A personality disorder is a pattern of deviant or abnormal behavior that the person doesn't change even though it causes emotional upsets and trouble with other people at work and in personal relationships. It is not limited to episodes of mental illness, and it is not caused by drug or alcohol use, head injury, or illness. There are about a dozen different behavior patterns classified as [personality disorders](#) by DSM-IV. All the personality disorders show up as deviations from normal in one or more of the following:

- (1) cognition -- i.e., perception, thinking, and interpretation of oneself, other people, and events;
- (2) affectivity -- i.e., emotional responses (range, intensity, lability, appropriateness);
- (3) interpersonal functions;
- (4) impulsivity.

## WHAT IS NORMAL?

What's normal varies from time to time and from place to place. There are fads in psychology as well as everywhere else, and only time will tell what's just a passing fad and what's actual progress. What I mean by normal is this: capable of loving, working, and adapting constructively to changing conditions and different people. Here is a list which shows how various "normal" personality styles can step over the fine line into a "pervasive and inflexible" disorder which causes stress and impairment.

Personality Style	Personality Disorder
-------------------	----------------------

Conscientious <i>"The Right Stuff"</i>	Obsessive-Compulsive
Self-Confident <i>"Star Quality"</i>	Narcissistic
Devoted <i>"The Good Mate"</i>	Dependent
Dramatic <i>"The Life of the Party"</i>	Histrionic
Vigilant <i>"The Survivor"</i>	Paranoid
Sensitive <i>"The Homebody"</i>	Avoidant
Leisurely <i>"California Dreaming"</i>	Passive-Aggressive
Adventurous <i>"The Challenger"</i>	Antisocial
Idiosyncratic <i>"The Different Drummer"</i>	Schizotypal
Solitary <i>"The Loner"</i>	Schizoid
Mercurial <i>"Fire and Ice"</i>	Borderline
Self-Sacrificing <i>"The Altruist"</i>	Self-Defeating
Aggressive <i>"Top Dog"</i>	Sadistic, Depressive
Serious <i>"The Realist"</i>	

## How They Appear When Clustered

**The DSM-III-R groups the personality disorders into three clusters:**

**Cluster A: disorders marked by odd or eccentric behaviors.**

schizoid  
paranoid  
schizotypal

**Cluster B: disorders characterized by dramatic, emotional or erratic behaviors.**

antisocial  
borderline  
histrionic  
narcissistic

**Cluster C: disorders characterized by anxious or fearful behaviors.**

avoidant  
dependent  
obsessive compulsive  
passive aggressive

## **NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER**

Diagnostic criteria for 301.81

A pervasive pattern of **grandiosity** (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

- (1) has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements)
- (2) is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
- (3) believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)
- (4) requires excessive admiration
- (5) has a sense of entitlement, i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations
- (6) is interpersonally exploitative, i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends
- (7) lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others
- (8) is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her
- (9) shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes

## **BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER**

Diagnostic criteria for 301.83

A pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and **affects**, and marked impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

- (1) frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment.  
**Note:** Do not include **suicidal** or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.
- (2) a pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation
- (3) identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self
- (4) impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., spending, sex, **Substance Abuse**, reckless driving, binge eating).  
**Note:** Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.
- (5) recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior
- (6) affective instability due to a marked reactivity of **mood** (e.g., intense episodic **dysphoria**, **irritability**, or **anxiety**)

usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days)

- (7) chronic feelings of emptiness
- (8) inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights)
- (9) transient, stress-related **paranoid** ideation or severe **dissociative symptoms**

## **OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER**

Diagnostic criteria for 313.81

A. A pattern of negativistic, hostile, and defiant behavior lasting at least 6 months, during which four (or more) of the following are present:

- (1) often loses temper
- (2) often argues with adults
- (3) often actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules
- (4) often deliberately annoys people
- (5) often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
- (6) is often touchy or easily annoyed by others
- (7) is often angry and resentful
- (8) is often spiteful or vindictive

**Note:** Consider a criterion met only if the behavior occurs more frequently than is typically observed in individuals of comparable age and developmental level.

B. The disturbance in behavior causes clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning.

C. The behaviors do not occur exclusively during the course of a Psychotic or **Mood** Disorder.

D. Criteria are not met for **Conduct Disorder**, and, if the individual is age 18 years or older, criteria are not met for **Antisocial Personality Disorder**.

**DEPRESSION:** 9 defined forms in DSM IV: **Major Depressive Episode**, **Manic Episode**, **Mixed Episode**, **Hypomanic Episode**, **Major Depressive Disorder**, **Dysthymic Disorder**, **Bipolar I Disorder**, **Bipolar II Disorder**, **Cyclothymic Disorder**

### **Criteria for Major Depressive Episode**

A. Five (or more) of the following **symptoms** have been present during the same 2-week period and represent a change from previous functioning; at least one of the symptoms is either

- (1) **depressed mood** or
- (2) loss of interest or pleasure.

**Note:** Do not include symptoms that are clearly due to a general medical condition, or **mood-incongruent delusions** or **hallucinations**.

(1) depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day, as indicated by either subjective report (e.g., feels sad or empty) or observation made by others (e.g., appears tearful). **Note:** In children and adolescents, can be

irritable mood.

(2) markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day (as indicated by either subjective account or observation made by others)

(3) significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain (e.g., a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month), or decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day. **Note:** In children, consider failure to make expected weight gains.

(4) Insomnia or Hypersomnia nearly every day

(5) psychomotor agitation or retardation nearly every day (observable by others, not merely subjective feelings of restlessness or being slowed down)

(6) fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day

(7) feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt (which may be delusional) nearly every day (not merely self-reproach or guilt about being sick)

(8) diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness, nearly every day (either by subjective account or as observed by others)

(9) recurrent thoughts of death (not just fear of dying), recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or a specific plan for committing suicide

B. The symptoms do not meet criteria for a Mixed Episode

C. The symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

D. The symptoms are not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., a drug of abuse, a medication) or a general medical condition (e.g., hypothyroidism).

E. The symptoms are not better accounted for by Bereavement, i.e., after the loss of a loved one, the symptoms persist for longer than 2 months or are characterized by marked functional impairment, morbid preoccupation with worthlessness, suicidal ideation, psychotic symptoms, or psychomotor retardation.

### **HISTRIONIC PERSONALITY DISORDER**

#### **Diagnostic criteria: 301.50**

A pervasive pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

(1) is uncomfortable in situations in which he or she is not the center of attention

(2) interaction with others is often characterized by inappropriate sexually seductive or provocative behavior

(3) displays rapidly shifting and shallow expression of emotions

(4) consistently uses physical appearance to draw attention to self

(5) has a style of speech that is excessively impressionistic and lacking in detail

(6) shows self-dramatization, theatricality, and exaggerated expression of emotion

(7) is suggestible, i.e., easily influenced by others or circumstances

(8) considers relationships to be more intimate than they actually are

### **PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE PERSONALITY DISORDER**

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, pp. 634-635), for research purposes, describes **Passive-Aggressive Personality Disorder** as a pervasive pattern of negativistic attitudes and passive resistance to demands for adequate performance, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by four (or more) of the following:

- passively resists fulfilling routine social and occupational tasks;
- complains of being misunderstood and unappreciated by others;
- is sullen and argumentative;
- unreasonably criticizes and scorns authority;
- expresses envy and resentment toward those apparently more fortunate;
- voices exaggerated and persistent complaints of personal misfortune;
- alternates between hostile defiance and contrition.

The disorder does not occur exclusively during Major Depressive Episodes and is not better accounted for by Dysthymic Disorder.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE CRITERIA**

A. A maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by one (or more) of the following, occurring within a 12-month period:

(1) recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home (e.g., repeated absences or poor work performance related to substance use; substance-related absences, suspensions, or expulsions from school; neglect of children or household)

(2) recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous (e.g., driving an automobile or operating a machine when impaired by substance use)

- (3) recurrent substance-related legal problems (e.g., arrests for substance-related disorderly conduct)
- (4) continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance (e.g., arguments with spouse about consequences of **Intoxication**, physical fights)

B. The symptoms have never met the criteria for **Substance Dependence** for this class of substance.

### **DEPENDENT PERSONALITY DISORDER**

#### **Diagnostic criteria for 301.6 Dependent Personality**

A pervasive and excessive need to be taken care of that leads to submissive and clinging behavior and fears of separation, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

- (1) has difficulty making everyday decisions without an excessive amount of advice and reassurance from others
- (2) needs others to assume responsibility for most major areas of his or her life
- (3) has difficulty expressing disagreement with others because of fear of loss of support or approval.  
**Note:** Do not include realistic fears of retribution.
- (4) has difficulty initiating projects or doing things on his or her own (because of a lack of self-confidence in judgment or abilities rather than a lack of motivation or energy)
- (5) goes to excessive lengths to obtain nurturance and support from others, to the point of volunteering to do things that are unpleasant
- (6) feels uncomfortable or helpless when alone because of exaggerated fears of being unable to care for himself or herself
- (7) urgently seeks another relationship as a source of care and support when a close relationship ends
- (8) is unrealistically preoccupied with fears of being left to take care of himself or herself

### **AVOIDANT PERSONALITY DISTORDER**

#### **Diagnostic criteria for 301.82 Avoidant Personality**

A pervasive pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by four (or more) of the following:

- (1) avoids occupational activities that involve significant interpersonal contact, because of fears of criticism, disapproval, or rejection
- (2) is unwilling to get involved with people unless certain of being liked
- (3) shows restraint within intimate relationships because of the fear of being shamed or ridiculed

(4) is preoccupied with being criticized or rejected in social situations

(5) is inhibited in new interpersonal situations because of feelings of inadequacy

(6) views self as socially inept, personally unappealing, or inferior to others

(7) is unusually reluctant to take personal risks or to engage in any new activities because they may prove embarrassing

### **SCHIZOTYPAL POERSONALITY DISORDER**

#### **Diagnostic criteria for 301.22 Schizotypal Personality**

A. A pervasive pattern of social and interpersonal deficits marked by acute discomfort with, and reduced capacity for, close relationships as well as by **cognitive** or perceptual distortions and eccentricities of behavior, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

- (1) **ideas of reference** (excluding delusions of reference)
- (2) odd beliefs or **magical thinking** that influences behavior and is inconsistent with subcultural norms (e.g., superstitiousness, belief in clairvoyance, telepathy, or "sixth sense"; in children and adolescents, bizarre fantasies or preoccupations)
- (3) unusual perceptual experiences, including bodily illusions
- (4) odd thinking and speech (e.g., vague, circumstantial, metaphorical, overelaborate, or stereotyped)
- (5) suspiciousness or paranoid ideation
- (6) inappropriate or constricted affect
- (7) behavior or appearance that is odd, eccentric, or peculiar
- (8) lack of close friends or confidants other than first-degree relatives
- (9) excessive social anxiety that does not diminish with familiarity and tends to be associated with paranoid fears rather than negative judgments about self

B. Does not occur exclusively during the course of **Schizophrenia**, a **Mood Disorder** With Psychotic Features, another Psychotic Disorder, or a **Pervasive Developmental Disorder**.

**Note:** If criteria are met prior to the onset of Schizophrenia, add "**Premorbid**," e.g., "Schizotypal Personality Disorder (Premorbid)."

### **SCHIZOID PERSONALITY DISORDER**

#### **Diagnostic Criteria**

A. A pervasive pattern of detachment from social relationships and a restricted range of expression of emotions in interpersonal settings, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by four (or more) of the following:

- 1. neither desires nor enjoys close relationships, including being part of a family

2. almost always chooses solitary activities
3. has little, if any, interest in having sexual experiences with another person
4. takes pleasure in few, if any, activities
5. lacks close friends or confidants other than first-degree relatives
6. appears indifferent to the praise or criticism of others
7. shows emotional coldness, detachment, or flattened affectivity

- B. Does not occur exclusively during the course of Schizophrenia, a Mood Disorder With Psychotic Features, another Psychotic Disorder, or a Pervasive Developmental Disorder and is not due to the direct physiological effects of a general medical condition.

**NOTE that these PERSONALITY DISORDERS are distinguished from PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS (Mental Illness).**

PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS INCLUDE:

- [Adjustment Disorder](#)

**Anxiety Disorders**

- [Acute Stress Disorder](#)
- [Panic Disorder](#)
- [Agoraphobia Without History of Panic Disorder](#)
- [Social Phobia](#)
- [Specific Phobia \(formerly Simple Phobia\)](#)
- [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder](#)
- [Posttraumatic Stress Disorder](#)
- [Generalized Anxiety Disorder](#)

**Childhood Disorders**

- [Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder](#)
- [Asperger's Disorder](#)
- [Autistic Disorder](#)
- [Conduct Disorder](#)
- [Oppositional Defiant Disorder](#)
- [Separation Anxiety Disorder](#)
- [Tourette's Disorder](#)

**Eating Disorders**

- [Anorexia Nervosa](#)

- [Bulimia Nervosa](#)

**Mood Disorders**

- [Major Depressive Disorder](#)
- [Bipolar Disorder \(Manic Depression\)](#)
- [Cyclothymic Disorder](#)
- [Dysthymic Disorder](#)

**Cognitive Disorders (Delirium, Dementia, Amnesic Disorders)**

- [Delirium](#)
- [Multi-Infarct Dementia](#)
- [Dementia Associated With Alcoholism](#)
- [Dementia of the Alzheimer Type](#)
- [Dementia](#)

**Schizophrenia & Other Psychotic Disorders**

- [Schizophrenia](#)
- [Delusional Disorder](#)
- [Brief Psychotic Disorder](#)
- [Schizophreniform Disorder](#)
- [Schizoaffective Disorder](#)
- [Shared Psychotic Disorder](#)

**Substance-Related Disorders**

- [Alcohol Dependence](#)
- [Amphetamine Dependence](#)
- [Cannabis Dependence](#)
- [Cocaine Dependence](#)
- [Hallucinogen Dependence](#)
- [Inhalant Dependence](#)
- [Nicotine Dependence](#)
- [Opioid Dependence](#)
- [Phencyclidine Dependence](#)
- [Sedative Dependence](#)

## **DEVELOPING A HEALTHY CHURCH STAFF**

**By Denny Wayman, D.Min., and Doug Ranck, M.A.R.**

The power of God working through a healthy church staff is an undeniable force in our world. It is also true that an unhealthy church staff will not only impede this powerful tool of God, but also will hamper what ministry each individual pastor could have accomplished on his or her own. The purpose of this curriculum is both to affirm and improve healthy staff relations as well as to identify and begin the healing of unhealthy staff relations.

As members of the pastoral staff of the Free Methodist Church of Santa Barbara, we have worked together since 1984 – over 20 years. At that time, Denny had been “solo” pastor since 1976 and the church had grown such that he needed staff help in caring for the needs of the congregation, as well as to staff for future growth. Doug came on staff in 1984 as the first associate with primary responsibility for students. Since that time, their ministry together has seen a steady increase in congregants as well as an increase in pastors. Currently, in 2005, there are four pastors on staff with additional paid full and part time Directors in Counseling, Women’s and Parish Health Ministries, Children’s Sunday and weekday programs, as well as a praise band director, Accountant, Administrative Assistant, Communications, IT (Information Technology) staff person, in addition to weekday teachers and counselors in our various weekday social ministry programs.

This curriculum is written cooperatively between Denny and Doug with deliberate attempts to explore the major ingredients of healthy church staff dynamics through the eyes of the Senior or lead pastor and that of an Associate or staff pastor. Knowing that communication is the lifeblood of good staff relations, this curriculum is designed to be used in weekly staff meetings. This is done not only to encourage those who do not have weekly staff meetings to begin a habit of doing so, but also to enrich existing staff meetings with a thirty-minute curriculum for continuing education.

The curriculum has eighteen specific modules. Though we recommend that they be completed in order, different church staffs may find specific modules are needed immediately and so choose to prioritize the sequence according to need. The curriculum is in the form of a written manual so that it may be downloaded easily.

In addition to our guidance, each module includes research to further explore the topic being studied. Internet based, this research is only a sample of the information available on these subjects. See the endnotes for more information.

Each module focuses on a specific aspect of staff relations and ends with a case study for discussion. The case study suggests how a senior pastor might see the situation, then a staff member, from a positive perspective, then a negative perspective, and finally asks the staff to create a solution for the case study and their own staff from a redemptive, biblical perspective.

We want to thank Cheryl Wayman for her many hours of editing and helpful feedback in creating this curriculum!

**What follows are the Eighteen Qualities of a Healthy Church Staff.**

## Chapter 1 COORDINATION, COMMUNICATION and COOPERATION

The expectation that a church staff will work together is considered not only to be godly but also to be indicative of a healthy community. Yet there are often dynamics present in a staff that not only keep communication and coordination at a minimum, but cooperation as well. These are due to several misunderstandings:

1. That staff members can lead a church without having staff meetings.
  - a. This is not true. For communication to occur, the staff must regularly come together face-to-face and discuss not only the coordination of their areas of responsibility, but also the cooperation of their mutual responsibility for the well-being of the entire ministry.
  - b. The synergy that is created as one person sharpens another (Prov. 27:17) is vital to personal, professional and pastoral growth.
  - c. The importance of community in which each person becomes mutually known and mutually accountable to one another strengthens the trust necessary to work together in the increasing complexity of a larger church.
  
2. That each person is a unique professional in a joint practice requiring little coordination.
  - a. This is also not true. Although it is important for each leader to know who they are in terms of their gifting and call and what their unique responsibility on the team involves, the ministry is a whole made up of many parts. (1 Cor. 12:12) When any one part of the ministry begins to act independently or with disregard for the other areas, then damage occurs to the whole. The entire church lives as a unity that is best served when all parts are working together for their mutual growth.
  - b. The opinion that other professionals would not understand our area of ministry and so we do not inform them of our successes and failures, let alone our concerns and needs, is isolating and unhealthy. With increased isolation, the unity of the ministry is not only damaged, but our own enjoyment in being a part of the staff is lost as well.

The ingredients that naturally create a synergistic staff with individual and corporate health and growth focuses on four things:

1. Regular staff meetings to communicate with one another
2. Regular prayer times to lift one another and the ministry to God
3. Shared continuing education, training and growth experiences
4. Genuine enjoyment of and care for one another

These experiences increase the level of trust, understanding and mutual support that can withstand both the disappointments as well as the inevitable attacks that come with ministry. When the staff has “given up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing” (Hebrews 10:25), the spiritual and personal mechanism for unity built on trust and understanding which results in mutual support is missing.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research go to the endnotes.) <sup>1</sup>

**Companions in Ministry: Youth Workers and Pastors in Partnership**  
*by Will Penner and Dan Sanders-Wooley*

Seven years ago, a new church-planting pastor met a struggling graduate student who was looking for a place to live. Today this senior pastor and youth minister are friends, colleagues, coworkers, and, most importantly, companions in ministry....

## **Companions...**

We've both heard the nightmare stories about staff relationships in churches (and have some experience in being parts of dysfunctional staffs ourselves). Most of those negative experiences seem to result from churches developing business models, instead of biblical models, for their staffs. But it's the model of companions in ministry that seems the most appropriate for staff relationships.

Ultimately, we get along so well together for that very reason—because we're companions in ministry. And because we get along well, working together is enjoyable. In the seven years we've worked together, we've had plenty of difficulties in our church environment; but our interpersonal relationship has held fast—something that's been a saving grace in times that might have caused a great deal of conflict in other staff situations.

When conflict has arisen, we've problem-solved together. As our relationship has grown, we've found a bedrock of mutuality that undergirds everything we do. Mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual appreciation are evident in all of our interactions.

## **Mutual Trust**

Trust is the cornerstone of any relationship....The youth pastor/senior pastor relationship is no different. When we trust each other, we edify one another. We show appreciation to each other—in private and in public. We don't criticize each other behind the other's back—the emotional equivalent of marital infidelity. Trust is built on being committed to each other and standing by that....

Because of this continually deepening trust, we also share information. Communication between companions in ministry is vital. It's important that the senior pastor never be blindsided by something that's gone awry (of course, we know nothing ever goes awry when it comes to youth!). The youth pastor needs to let him know upfront rather than wait for him to find out from someone else. If he has already been informed from the youth pastor, when it comes to him from another source, he doesn't look ignorant of what's going on. When the pastor sees the youth pastor about to stick his foot in quicksand with the elder board or parents (and we know that never happens either—just theoretically speaking, you understand), the youth pastor will appreciate hearing about it ahead of time. Perhaps it can keep him from having to dig himself out of a hole that he could've avoided.

## **Mutual Respect**

The key to a healthy spiritual life is humility. And the key to long-term successful ministry is to never get to the point where you think you know everything. Or think that just because you're the boss, that means you are in charge. The only one in charge of the church laid down his life for her....

As much as possible, we integrate our youth ministry into the life of the church-at-large.... Just as the goal of mature adulthood is not complete independence but healthy interdependence, the goal of youth ministry is a healthy interdependence within the community of faith....A senior pastor who trusts and respects the youth minister and who has all necessary information can significantly aid parents in this part of their journey.

## **Mutual Appreciation**

We're one body with many parts. Any time we begin to devalue the work of another part, we're setting ourselves up for failure. No body can fully function without the parts doing what each is specifically called to do.

One of the quickest ways to hamstringing a good youth minister is for the pastor to micromanage....

One reason that we've gotten along so well is that we each know the other has valuable insight into the lives of people and situations in our congregation that we do not. We each see from a different perspective simply because of where we're standing. We're able to share our insights freely, appreciating the different perspective the other brings.

We also trust that God has called each of us to our specific areas of ministry, which means that the youth pastor cannot do the senior minister's job as well as he can, and vice-versa....

Along with trusting God's call, we find power in praying for one another. Continually lifting up your ministry companion in prayer connects people in ways nothing else can.... We need to share creative ideas, insights, and resources—which may mean we spend a lot of time helping the children's ministry look good, and no one sees the fruit directly for the teens. That's good biblical servanthood, because we're not worrying about who gets the credit.

## **CASE STUDY**

When John became associate pastor at First Church, he was excited to become a part of this historic congregation and work with Steve Johnson, the long-time senior pastor. He had heard of the great work the church did with the poor and felt his heart being pulled to pour his life out in this inner-city neighborhood. Although he knew there had been several pastors in this associate position before him and no one had stayed for more than a couple of years, he told himself it was because they had been called by God to move on to another church and he didn't call any of them.

When he arrived with his family in their moving van, John was amazed that Steve met him at the house they had rented to welcome him to the city. A warm and friendly man of about 50 years of age, John liked him immediately. They joked and laughed and both felt this partnership was going to be great.

But the frustrations began almost immediately. Shown to his office by the church secretary and filling out all of the necessary paperwork, John felt at a loss that there was no more orientation than a written job description. Looking forward to talking with Steve, he found Steve to have an open door but not an open schedule. There were no regular staff meetings, and Steve seemed impatient when John sought him out for guidance or counsel. His responses seemed curt and he would rather meet while standing up. After a while, John realized he was on his own.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Steve: "I knew John was a young, well-trained professional and I needed someone like him to help shoulder the load. I didn't feel a need to micromanage him. He knew what to do and I wanted to give him the freedom to do it. If he ever wanted my opinion, I was glad to give him my opinion even as I struggled to keep up with the many responsibilities on my plate. I have to admit, I didn't want to take time away from my ministry to answer questions that I think John should have been able to handle himself."

Denny: "It is easy to become overwhelmed with the responsibilities of the entire congregation. Unlike a staff pastor where there is a beginning and an end to the responsibilities of their job description, for the senior pastor, everything that happens is on our watch, including the actions of all staff. It is tempting to try to insulate ourselves from this reality by isolating ourselves from the staff and then having them to "blame" when they do something wrong. Or, on the other side, it is easy to just try to do everything ourselves and pick up all the pieces the staff members drop. Both approaches are a recipe for disaster. The best way to care for the increasing responsibility of a growing church is to delegate areas of responsibility to a staff pastor, while training them and holding them accountable. This dual role of mentoring and supervising is sometimes difficult and it is easy to cross the line by becoming codependent or micromanaging. But with a strong, trusting and healthy relationship, both the senior pastor and staff person can work out where that line is at any given moment. It changes over the years as both continue to grow in their ministry abilities."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

John: "I wanted to work with Steve because I knew he was a successful, journeyman pastor. I was looking forward to being his apprentice. When I realized that he did not have the time or interest or maybe skill to teach me, I realized I had made a mistake. I needed to either get someone else to become my mentor and provide guidance in my ministry, or I needed to find a senior pastor at another church assignment who would want to spend time developing me as a pastor."

Doug: "I clearly remember interviewing for a position just out of seminary. I specifically asked the senior pastor of that thriving church if he led regular staff meetings. His answer then was 'no' but that it could be a possibility. I realized then IF I were to be hired and IF I decided to go there, that I would likely be the one to initiate regular staff meetings. At best, this would be an awkward and unusual situation. Though the church was healthy and provided a great ministry opportunity, I ultimately chose to not go there. At the time, the absence of staff meetings was just one of the factors but in hindsight, I can see that it was a significant one."

Staff meetings are not just important to an associate (in the early years) for mentoring, but they are also critical to clear and healthy communication among all the staff. Many pastors see meetings as 'necessary evils.' This is not the case. Staff meetings are key to an accountable, smooth-running, communicative and rewarding team ministry."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "It is not true that every staff has to have staff meetings or pray together. I think it depends on the individuals on the staff. Some staffs don't need to take the time to have meetings and they work better as individuals who happen to be on the same team. The coordination is done by God and the ministry moves forward. I see the church staff as more like a cross-country team with each person doing their personal best than a basketball team with everyone working together."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "When things are not going well between the members of a staff, it is better for them not to get together and make things worse. It is better for them to keep their disagreements to themselves and simply make the best of what they can. After all, we're all fallen creatures, yet God can use us in our weakness."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 2 A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S CALL

As we participate in a staff ministry, it is important to clearly understand God's call on our lives. Paul reminds us it is God "...who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." (Eph. 4:11-12) It is clear from this description that not only are various types of ministries needed but also that God has gifted each of us in unique but complementary ways. It is also clear that it is not our choice as to our gifting and which area of ministry we fill. It is God's call and we respond. However unworthy or inadequate we may feel, when we obediently answer God's call, we begin a journey that fulfills our sense of purpose and leads us to ministries that match our gifts. For increasing numbers, this calling and assignment by our Lord is to serve on a church staff with other pastors who are also obedient to Him. These assignments are not the result of our selfish ambition or self concern, but rather the product of God's unique gifting within each of us which, when brought together with others' gifts, creates a team far more effective by our cooperation than any of us could have accomplished alone.

Whether we use the analogy of a body with various parts (Romans 12:4-5) or a team with various players, staff ministry works best when pastors focus their energies on ministries which other members of the staff would find overly challenging or not as rewarding. Though equal in spiritual importance, the relationships of the staff members to one another depend on the responsibility Jesus has assigned them to fulfill. This calling then is not one of competition or power, but more like the five fingers of one hand working together to do what any single finger or thumb could not do on its own.

Therefore, within the context of God's call on our lives, we seek not only the education and training necessary to fulfill our calls, but we also strive to respect and honor the call of the other members of our staff just as they do our own. As we will see in the weeks to come, there are many things within each of us that work against our effective cooperation, but there is none more foundational than understanding our own unique call which defines our place on the team.

Therefore, clarifying our understanding of God's call on our lives will help us to be competent, cooperative and caring members of a united and effective staff.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research go to endnotes)<sup>2</sup>

The word **vocation** means a call, or summons. According to James Fowler, "Vocation is **not** our job, our work, or our occupation. It may, of course, **include** our job, our work, or our occupation, but it should not be limited to . . . one's source of livelihood. . . . Vocation is not to be identified with one's career. It is not the trajectory of successes or failures of the sequence of jobs, professions, or occupations to which one has given oneself."

"What is vocation, then?" Fowler asks. He proposes the following: "Vocation is the response a person makes . . . to the address of God and to the calling to (be in) partnership (with God)."

"The shaping of vocation as a . . . response to the address of God involves the orchestration of our leisure, our relationships, our work, our private life, our public life, and the resources we steward, so as to put it all at the disposal of God's purposes in the services of God and the neighbor."

DESTINY The response a person makes with his or her self in directing their own future.	VOCATION The response a person makes with his or her total self to the address of God and to the calling of partnership. (p.75)
Gives advice: - “Be sure to major in something marketable.” - “Get a background that combines business and computer technology.” - “When you join your first company, keep your resume always ready.” - “If you are going to get to the top, you have to be in striking distance by 35.” - “Don’t stay with one company too long.” (p.117)	Gives invitation: - “What seem to be your gifts?” - “What kinds of things do you do well?” - “What kinds of activities and ambitions really give you a sense of worthiness?” - “What kinds of things do you find most challenging and fulfilling to do?” - “In what kind of activities do you feel that you are most yourself?” - “What kind of people do you most admire and would you particularly like to count among your associates?” - “Do you feel an inner nudge or call that seems to be pointing you in some particular direction?” - “What kinds of things do you feel that you and God can do with your life that will make a difference for good in our own world?” (p.117-118)
Self Grounded Person – “We have all the resources out of which to create a fulfilled and self-actualized life.” (p.82)	Covenant Relationship – Move from “Who am I?” to the question, “Who am I in relation to the Creator, Ruler and Redeemer – Liberator of the universe?” (p.75)
Self-Fulfillment - the goal – depends almost entirely on the resourcefulness, courage and resoluteness of the actor. (p.82)	Invited to personhood in relationships – we find ourselves by giving ourselves. (p.83)
Individualism (p.90)	Community (p.90)

In addition to Fowler’s work, Banks and Stevens have an excellent article on the call of God and its complexity noted in the endnotes. Here are just two paragraphs relating to some of the difficulty of knowing that we are where we should be on this staff and the problems that arise spiritually within each of us on staff:

“The chief cause of a vocational mismatch is not being in the wrong location but yielding to the lust of the spirit. We should be living contentedly within our calling, but joy in service is not a matter of location as much as spirit. Drivenness is a symptom of something wrong inside. The lust of the spirit is the desire for something other than what God deems best for us. If we do not judge that the particular calling in which God has placed us is the best of all callings for us, we will yield to discontentment, as did Absalom, the sons of Zebedee and Cain. (Perkins, p. 756)

To counteract this pernicious lust, Perkins offers several practical measures: (1) discerning the initiative of God in our lives so that even in times of crosses and calamities, we may rest certain that God has placed us in this calling (p. 760); (2) repenting if necessary for the wrong reasons we entered a calling (be it marriage, career or ministry) but refusing to forsake our place and so continuing with diligence and good conscience (p. 762) - a strategy that is crucial for those who feel they entered marriage for the wrong reasons. Further, Perkins advises (3) seeking sanctification both of the worker and the work by the Word of God and prayer (p. 766); (4) resisting the temptation to covetousness by laboring to see our particular situations as a providence of God no matter how difficult it may be and by resolving in our hearts that God - not a perfect situation - is our portion (Psalm 16:6); (5) turning our affections from this world to better things by not seeking more in this world than we actually need and setting our mind on heaven (p. 770; compare Ephes. 1:18); (6) persisting in our calling by pruning our lives of ambition, envy of others placed in "better" callings, and impatience, all of which incline us to leave our calling when trouble comes. On this last measure Perkins uses a medical image from the days before anesthesia that is superbly graphic. He says we must continue in our callings as the surgeon who continues to cut his patient even through the patient is screaming a lot (Perkins, p. 773)!"

### **CASE STUDY**

Pastor Sean has been senior pastor at a middle-class suburban church for ten years. Sean came to serve this church directly upon graduating from seminary. Through the dedication of faithful lay people and a supportive superintendent, this once struggling church began to turn around and gain health. In the middle of Sean's tenth year, the church felt ready to bring on an associate pastor in discipleship and Christian education and so hired Beth.

After four years of being on staff, Beth completed her ordination and became an ordained elder, equal to the ordination of her senior pastor Sean. The church had continued to grow slowly and staff relations were happy during Beth's ordination process. However, now that Beth has completed her ordination, tensions have begun. Struggling with her specific calling, Beth has begun a low simmer of discontent. Questioning the vision and direction of the church, she finds herself increasingly on the "other side" of Sean's leadership. This is even evident in board meetings where she would sometimes challenge the opinions of supportive board members who were following Pastor Sean's vision for the church.

With the growing "heat", Pastor Sean has found himself on the defensive and, with Beth's increasing resistance, has found himself having to do some of Beth's work occasionally as well.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Sean: "Beth has been a great addition to our church staff and I am happy to have a teammate in ministry. The burden of this growing ministry was more than any one person could carry. I know Beth is a sincere person and I know she wants to see the church continue to grow, so I welcome her input. However, I would like to see her have better ways of inserting her ideas. Bringing them up for the first time in a public forum catches me by surprise and communicates a lack of dialogue on our part, and it opens up the unhealthy environment of 'taking sides' on the part of the board members. I am beginning to wonder if it is time for her to be a senior pastor of her own congregation."

Denny: "Beth is experiencing inevitable coming-of-age emotions. This happens to most of us whether or not we put it into these words: "Now that I am (ordained, educated, titled, etc.), I am important and people should listen to me." The pride that seduces the newly-arrived person needs the gentle guidance of a trusted mentor. If Beth does not have such a person in her life, then Sean needs to help her understand the seduction of pride and the cure of humble service. The purpose

of her life is not becoming important and getting others to like her ideas better than Sean's. If she continues down that path, she will find herself having caused deep damage not only to Sean and the congregation, but also to herself. Instead, she will want to humble herself and accept God's call on her life. If her call is to be a staff member accountable to a lead pastor's vision and responsibility, then she can begin here within Sean's care and suggest her ideas in a supportive dialogue rather than in a contradictory or challenging manner. However, if her call is to be a senior pastor and take the responsibility for an entire congregation rather than serving a defined portion of the ministry, then she will not want to destroy this congregation in order to take that responsibility away from Sean. She will want to discuss this with Sean and the superintendent and seek to find a congregation to serve who needs a lead pastor."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Beth: "I am now an ordained elder and on equal footing with my senior pastor. I want to be trusted and respected in the same way. I believe the church and God's kingdom can benefit from my younger and fresher perspective."

Doug: "Though Beth's feelings are valid, she has answered a call. She answered the call to become an associate pastor. Becoming an associate pastor means one has willingly chosen to submit to a senior pastor's care. While education and ordination speak volumes about a person's experience and competencies, they don't change the fact that the senior pastor is the one who guides the congregation. Though most senior pastors will solicit input from staff, when the feelings of an associate become strong against the direction given by a senior pastor, then this is a good time to evaluate one's calling. What is God's calling on your life? Is it to a staff position or is God now calling you to move on to a senior pastor position? All things considered, is your calling more toward specific ministries or toward shepherding the entire church? If the answer is to a staff position, then the question becomes: do you continue to serve on this staff with this senior pastor or is it time to go to another church and serve on their staff?"

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "Beth is just going through a phase. Our board members always give priority to the input of the Senior Pastor so we shouldn't worry about it. Just give her space."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "Beth is trying to cause division among the leaders. She wants the leaders to assess her ideas as being better than Sean's. She is implying that she is closer to God and receives God's guidance for this church better than Pastor Sean does. If the senior pastor won't confront her privately, then it is time for the board or superintendent to confront the situation."

### **REDEMPTIVE PERSPECTIVE**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 3 SEMINARY TRAINED

Seminary . . . the mere mention of the word stirs a variety of thoughts in our minds. Some have jokingly called it “cemetery.” Others have playfully quipped that they spent three years in the wilderness. And still others have said that there was so much about ministry for which their seminary never prepared them. So what about it? Is seminary only a requirement for ordination or an indispensable preparation for ministry?

The answer to that question, in part, depends upon your call and who God calls you to serve. The truth that ministry is very complex and becomes even more so the larger the church is undeniable. Some describe this complexity as varying in levels by comparing it to the skills needed to move from little league to major league baseball. In both leagues, the rules are the same and the goals are the same, but the skills change dramatically. The abilities it takes to get a hit off a major league pitcher, let alone score a run on the fielders, increase exponentially in difficulty. The same is true of a church that is large enough to need a pastoral staff. The expectations of the larger congregation increase as do the complexity of the logistics of every activity, from leading a worship service to providing pastoral care to scheduling and advertising events to expanding and maintaining facilities.

Our experience in having both seminary trained and college-only trained staff is that we identify not only the acquiring of additional knowledge, but also a deepening of soul as the pastor is able to spend hours with professors, mentors, authors and fellow students honing skills and acquiring knowledge as well as developing personally. It is in the cloistered halls of the seminary that doubts can be expressed without fear or concern. It is there that the spiritual disciplines and classical studies can become part of one’s journey toward maturity and wholeness. It is also at seminary that a pastor becomes a life-long learner and is given the study skills to seek out knowledge in an increasingly complex world.

It is true that there are many situations one encounters on the front lines of ministry requiring skills that are simply not taught in seminaries. If we evaluate the need for graduate level education based on the accumulation of practical knowledge only then there may be a valid argument against it as a requirement for pastoral ministry. However, the quality seminary education offers much more than a body of knowledge. It offers a solid Biblical and theological grounding for the prospective pastor. It offers opportunities for spiritual formation in a setting where others are seeking the same. It offers an environment where new resources are presented and the learner acquires wisdom and insight into how to use them in the church setting. It offers practical supervised ministry experiences where students get a taste of front line ministry and the opportunity to reflect and problem solve with a skilled mentor.

One of the realities of staff ministry is that we often raise up our own pastors from within our local congregation. It is not expected that they would be seminary trained when they first come on staff as part-time workers in the harvest. But it is expected that they will be diligently working on their seminary degree and becoming life-long students of God’s truths.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>3</sup>

In an article that is written by a seminary professor, R. Scott Clark answers the question: “Why A Pastor Needs A Seminary”.

## “Face to Face is Best

Though there are many benefits to be had through the Internet...*it can never replace the sort of community which exists between professors and students in the classroom, lunchroom and the office.* The word community is the right one in this context....

## Would You Trust Your Heart to a Mail Order Surgeon?

At WSC we are still old-fashioned enough to believe, however, that a seminary education comes only one way: through hard work. Therefore, we believe that self-sacrifice is a part of ministry. Ask yourself this question: Would you choose as your heart surgeon one who learned his skills via satellite and video tapes? Even with the assistance of a seasoned physician nearby, such training would clearly be inadequate. There is something about knowing how deep to cut which can only be learned through hands-on, tactile, face-to-face training.

Your soul, as our Lord Jesus taught us, is of infinitely more value than even your heart muscle. . . . Seminary is not just a vehicle, a means to an end. . . . By challenging, praying with, and lecturing to students, we believe that we are preparing them to serve in churches by providing them with the tools they will use every day for the rest of their lives in their pastoral ministry.

What we think about seminary is important because, ... the Bible is, to quote J. I. Packer, a "very big book". More than that, it was written in three languages in several cultures over quite a long time. It takes a certain amount of learning to get to grips with the history, theology, background and proper application of God's Word. Nor is the Bible read in a vacuum. The Church has been thinking about and interpreting the Bible for a long time. So we need pastors who are not only trained to read God's Word as it was written, but who are trained in the Christian tradition. This is not something done quickly, easily, or cheaply. It is not something which is done well by distance (electronic) education to large groups without access to a Seminary library or faculty....

## Why Seminary Indeed?

One might say, "who cares if seminary professors know the latest scholarship, is it not all a waste of time anyway?" The answer is "no, it's not a waste of time." To use the medical analogy again, do you care if your physician reads the *New England Journal of Medicine* or are you prepared to do without antibiotics? Certainly there is much foolishness in Modern scholarship. Yet it will make its way into the Church and our pastors and elders must be ready to address it....

## Seminary and the Church

It is wrong to assume that a local congregation or even a Classis can replace a seminary. Which of our local congregations, or any combination of them has the necessary time, money, human and capital resources to train men (and women) for ministry? The [seminary] library holds tens of thousands of books and dozens of journals and thousands of back copies of magazines and journals. Few local congregations could support such an endeavor. This list doesn't even mention the computer hardware and software (which needs upgrading almost constantly) and the valuable resources constituted by a learned faculty, all gathered in one place.

## Seminary: A Place for Reflection

The home-grown-do-it-yourself-learn-as-you-go model neglects another very important fact of

education: time. Seminary is a time to come away from the typical schedule of ministry demands to *think*, learn, reflect on the Scriptures and pray. Any pastor will tell you that if there is one thing he misses from his days at Seminary it is the luxury of time away from the telephone (or email), and access to the latest journals and books, or even access to some of the very oldest books and time to read and meditate on them.

### No Easy Way

All this is to point out that there is no easy route to the ministry and we delude ourselves if we say that there is. It is the Church's obligation to make certain that the seminaries to which she sends her young (and older!) men (and women) is worthy. What constitutes a worthy place? One which continues to confess the historic faith, which not only keeps up with the questions and criticisms offered by the culture, but which offers biblical and intelligent answers to those criticisms. That is, a worthy seminary is one which understands the times in which we minister and who equips her students to face those times, which equips her students to stand in the pulpit week after week and tell the truth, all of it, regardless of the consequences...."

### CASE STUDY

Pastor Bill came to his church fresh out seminary. Moving into his first office, he began unloading his books and looking for a place to hang his Masters of Divinity diploma. He had worked long and hard to achieve this degree. His wife had also sacrificed much by working full time while Bill went to school.

As the church continued to grow, more staff members were added. An Associate Pastor of Adult Ministries and an Associate Pastor of Children's Ministries were also hired right out of seminary.

The time soon came to hire an Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries. The board found a good candidate after a lengthy search. Dave was brought in for an interview. The board was aware he did not yet have any seminary training. They liked this college graduate's enthusiasm and vision for their youth. After much discussion it was decided to bring Dave on staff with the agreement that he would complete his seminary education with their help.

The addition of Dave to the staff was a blessing. Pastor Bill enjoyed the luxury of having partners in ministry with pastoral leadership for children, youth and adults. He allowed Dave to take a year to get settled before encouraging him to begin his seminary education. At the end of the year, Pastor Bill noted that Dave had not initiated a conversation about going back to school or starting the application process. In one of their staff meetings Bill asked Dave for an individual meeting and asked about his intentions. Dave said that after a year of being in active ministry and consultation with other youth pastors in the city, he did not see the need to rush into a seminary education and wondered if he would really need it at all. This, of course, took Bill by surprise and created the need for some difficult but necessary discussion with staff and board leadership.

### Senior Pastor Perspective

Bill: "In most denominations, a seminary degree is required for ordination and pastoral level positions. With a seminary degree comes a depth of Biblical and theological learning helpful to the pastor in all situations. The seminary degree also brings professionalism to the position. Leaders of the church can respect their pastors as ones who have diligently and carefully prepared for their work."

Denny: "As a senior pastor, I have two primary concerns. The first is for Dave and his development as a pastor, something for which I am directly responsible to God, and the second is for the young

people who will be cared for in our youth ministry. It is true that a gifted young leader can come directly from college and supply an energy and a vitality that will draw teenagers to him. But the purpose of a youth program is not to have a pied piper who draws kids to himself. Dave has not had the opportunity to learn what is needed in a young person as they come out of the developmental stages of elementary school and begin to think in adult patterns. The need is not only for fun and energetic events, however cool Dave may be and however attractive is his draw, the need of our youth is to be drawn to Jesus and to navigate the teen years and develop into mature adults who have a life-long relationship and adoration of Jesus, not Dave. Obviously, if Dave provides only a program based on his age and energy and “coolness,” then as time goes by he will not only age and be far less cool, but he will begin to look back over the lives of the young people who have grown under his care and realize that they are not following God. He will realize that his youth program was nothing more than a social club to meet friends. This will not only be a deep discouragement within him, but the parents and board will also notice this and raise questions about his ministry. No, the deepening of ministry that produces grounded and mature disciples is best gained in a seminary formed for that purpose.”

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Dave: “I said I would complete my seminary education after I began here. Look, though, at this first year. We have seen many great things happen in the life of our youth. Leaders are being deployed, kids are coming to Christ, and parents are excited. Going to seminary now would force me to take time away from the ministry and things would begin to fall apart. Besides, I have talked to some other successful youth pastors who said they went to seminary and it taught them nothing helpful for their present ministries. They haven’t looked at their notes in years.”

Doug: “Any pastor would admit there are many things seminaries did not or cannot teach. Ministry is never boring and brings with it a spectrum of experiences way beyond one’s imagination. Serving as an associate pastor in specific ministries then brings the temptation to believe that seminary could never offer training helpful to these fields. The seminary I attended, at the time, offered very little specific youth ministry training. Was it a waste of time for me? No! I knew I was training to be a pastor of students and I knew those students would have parents and I knew I wanted those students and families to be connected to the church. Seminary developed me as a “whole pastor”. Through my seminary training, I became far more useful to the Kingdom of God not just as somebody who loved youth but also as someone who could love youth and be a valuable ministry teammate in helping to grow an entire church.”

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: “Maybe Dave really doesn’t need a seminary degree. The product of his work over this last year shows his exceptional skills and gifts as a pastor. The other staff members and church leaders will understand that and see this as a viable exception. And when he is too old to be cool any longer, then he can go on and do something else.”

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: “Never bring on a staff member based on a condition. We should have seen this coming. There is only one choice: Dave gets the degree or Dave moves on. His integrity is at stake now.”

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this would be?

## Chapter 4 ENCOURAGING THE HEALTH OF EACH STAFF MEMBER

Each pastor is responsible for their own physical, emotional and relational health. However, the nature of ministry is such that trusted staff relationships can help hold one another mutually accountable for increasing our health. This encouragement is needed in three interactive areas:

1. When pastors and staff do not have healthy self-care:

As pastors, it is easy to place the needs of others before our own. The end result of such a lifestyle can be poor physical and emotional health as we burn out our hearts as well as our bodies. Since each congregant is usually aware only of their own requests of pastors to care for them in times of need, there is no way the congregation can know the extent of the congregation's demands upon the pastors, protect pastoral health or provide care for the pastors. This is where the staff can be extremely important. Rather than creating a culture where each staff person is expected to outdo each other by overworking, the staff needs to hold one another accountable to care for themselves by taking their weekly day off and regular vacations, as well as protect any one person from being in the position of never being free from the workload. Because there is a staff, there will be days when the pastors not only take off from work entirely, taking their Sabbath rest, but there will also be days when pastors can rotate the "on call" responsibility of responding to emergencies. When this is coordinated with a parish health volunteer team of nurses and trained peer counselors, then the "on call" weight is even more evenly distributed.

Though most pastors are aware of the inevitability of burnout when a Sabbath rest is not experienced weekly by observing a protected day off, some pastors have a workaholic addiction that must be confronted by the staff. On the opposite side, when there is a staff member who is not carrying their weight of responsibility, then an honest confrontation is needed as well.

2. When the staff allows staff members to behave in immature or undifferentiated reactions: One of the gifts of Bowen's Family Systems theory in counseling has been a helpful understanding of what immature or undifferentiated reactions are. An undifferentiated person is someone who is dominated by their emotions and reacts from a place of self-concern. No matter what the issue being discussed, this person takes others' comments personally and experiences everything as being about them. A differentiated person can identify such feelings when present, but knows the difference between what they feel and how they are going to choose to respond. Their response is based on the ability to see the larger picture and think about how others are being affected by the circumstances.

When a staff allows undifferentiated reactions to be expressed, immature interpersonal communication will characterize the staff interactions. Since these reactions have their roots in the family of origin which cannot be addressed or resolved in the staff setting, the communications will be unhealthy and will not rise above emotional outbursts and self-protective or defensive reactions. This will not only be difficult in staff relations but also in ministry as a whole. If able to get reactions from a staff pastor, the more undifferentiated people will go to them and seek an alliance for issues, creating triangles and coalitions.

Each pastor brings their own level of emotional maturity to the staff. The ability to respond to life with a well differentiated sense of self not only is advantageous in staff relations but also in ministry as a whole. The truth that we usually develop to the level of our family is then mirrored as we reproduce that level of maturity in our church family and pastoral staff unless individuals seek private professional counseling for these issues.

There needs to be a safe and trusting environment where each member of the staff is helped to see their reactions and given opportunity to respond from a higher level of maturity and differentiation. When the entire staff encourages a high level of responsiveness, then every member becomes increasingly able to make thoughtful rather than emotion-driven responses.

When this does not occur, then the staff member needs to be given the opportunity to be cared for by a professional Christian counselor who can help identify and heal the family of origin experiences which have truncated their emotional growth.

3. When the staff allows the formation of triangles and coalitions:  
When a staff allows triangles to be used or coalitions to be formed in the church, the result will be what researchers call “tangled webs,” the creation of church divisions and leadership scapegoats. This unhealthy relational disease will not only divide the church but it will also inevitably divide the staff as various factions of the church are able to find a champion on the church staff.

A persistent discussion of the possibility and identification of the reality of triangles and coalitions must be a part of the safe and trusting culture the staff creates and maintains. This is a mutual accountability as each situation is explored not only in terms of the dynamics of the situation itself, but also in how it impacts the relationships between the staff members.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>4</sup>

***Basic Systems Concepts*** by Prof. Jim Ollhoff of Concordia University.

### **“Differentiation**

...People who are well-differentiated have good, healthy boundaries....They can separate the intellectual and the emotional. They know where they stand on a given issue, and can live with others who don't agree with them.

...Poorly differentiated people have trouble keeping secrets; they share private information about themselves too easily; they can be invasive and nosy; they can pry into other's affairs because they have few boundaries.

A well-differentiated person can be autonomous, even when the others around are saying, "we should all believe the same thing." A well-differentiated person can enter relationships and not have life governed by the relationships. A well-differentiated person will make a conscious choice to have a life based on intentional principles and goals, and not be ruled by emotional reactivity.

Poorly differentiated people frequently operate with a high emotional reactivity. They react emotionally to everything.... As anxiety increases, so does the tendency to react emotionally—and to lose sight of the big picture....

Families that are poorly differentiated tend to become more symptomatic (they end up in therapy more often). Organizations that are poorly differentiated tend to become mediocre, because

members become less concerned with excellence and carrying out the mission of the organization, and more concerned about hurting someone's feelings.

## Emotional Triangles

A triangle is ... when two people can't get along with each other. Their fighting is uncomfortable because of its unpredictability. It produces anxiety in both partners.... So, what frequently happens is that the two fighting partners triangle in a third person. Both can relate to this third person, and this stabilizes the relationship. Initially, the anxiety decreases (however, in the long run the anxiety simply shifts around the triangle).

When two people are calm and comfortable, they don't need to triangle anyone into their relationship. However, when the anxiety between two people grows, the "natural" thing is to triangle in a person, place, or thing.

So, triangles are always about anxiety. And, the process of triangling is so familiar to us that we frequently triangle and get involved in triangles without even knowing it.

Here are a few examples...

- I know a married couple that doesn't particularly enjoy each other's company. So, they continue to have children (they have five so far) so they won't have to deal with the anxiety in their marriage.
- In a church where Jim was formerly a member, the pastor didn't know how to manage a large congregation, and the congregation knew he was a poor leader. So, they manufactured a budget deficit, so that when they came together, they could discuss the budget rather than discuss the fact that the pastor was an ineffective leader. Discussing the budget was more comfortable than discussing the pastor's abilities. Notice here that it is not necessarily a person who becomes triangled. In this case, the two parties triangled in a thing—a budget deficit that they manufactured. This manufacturing process was beneath the level of awareness—no one knew that they were manufacturing a budget problem.
- Sometimes, scapegoating [Identified Patient] is a way people create triangles. Two parents bring a youth to the office of a therapist. The youth has green hair, studded wristbands, a wide assortment of facial jewelry, and leather clothes. The parents demand that the therapist "fix" their child. Chances are it is the parents, not the youth, who has the problem. Their anxiety had become intolerable, so they elected their child to be the problem. They, in fact, manufactured their child's rebelliousness so that they wouldn't have to deal with their anxiety.
- Frequently congregations have conflicts between the pastor and the people... and rather than deal with the conflict, they hire a DCE.

The more undifferentiated the people are and the more anxiety is present, the more likely it is that a triangle will form.

So what do you do when you find yourself in a triangle?

In the long run, it is usually most helpful to detriangle. This involves setting up your boundaries. It means no longer rescuing and perpetrating the anxiety of the other two. It means no longer playing the game (but being ready for intense pressure by the other two to "get back in the game")."

### **CASE STUDY**

When Steve became pastor of Elm Street Church, he was surprised to find the congregation to be extremely affirming. So affirming, in fact, that he soon began to question the sincerity of the compliments he received after his sermon each week. His suspicions that this high-affirmation was actually high emotionality and high reactivity was confirmed when he attended his first board meeting and found the group was divided into two equal factions. The division was not over any specific issue, but rather it was seen in every decision that needed to be made – the group was divided. He decided he needed to help the congregational members become more connected and differentiated, so with some finesse he was able to get them to hire John as his associate to develop a small group ministry.

John seemed to be the perfect person for the job. Having come from a difficult childhood, he had learned how to work with people to get them to do what he wanted. Having been extremely successful in a sales position, his call to ministry had cost him and his family a huge reduction in pay, but he was a sincere and faithful Christian.

At first, the ministry exploded with new groups. John got several leaders from both sides of the division to join together in this new ministry. But soon Steve began hearing complaints – about him! He wasn't as approachable and available as John. He wasn't as strong of a leader. He was a good preacher but, outside of the pulpit, he didn't really have pastoral skills. Steve ignored it, thinking John would protect him from these accusations until, one day, the board called a special meeting and when Steve entered the boardroom, he found John sitting in his chair.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Steve: "I don't understand what I did wrong. I knew the problem was low differentiation and high reactivity and I knew that small group ministry can help develop emotionally mature people, so why didn't it? What happened that I didn't see?"

Denny: "The creation of safe small groups is far more difficult than Steve realizes. It begins with a safe and mature staff where trust has been developed and training is ongoing. This modeling of safe and mature behavior that does not allow triangles or coalitions on the staff level is then taught to small group leaders who learn how to create safe groups where the interaction produces maturity rather than continuing tangles in the web of triangles and coalitions. The solution is not just in multiplying the small groups but in disciplining safe, edifying small groups."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

John: "I didn't want to be a part of this at first. I still don't. But I think God brought me here to help this church move forward. And I have sadly come to believe that Steve is the impediment to our growth. I was thankful that Steve believed in me and invited me to be on his staff. But as soon as I got here, I could see the division. And Steve wasn't able to unite them. I was. I got both sides agreeing with me about the direction of the church. It soon became clear that I was the leader the congregation needed. I am so sorry that Steve will have to leave, but I know God has a plan for his life and will not let him down."

Doug: "Associate pastors are often on dangerous ground. They most often have come to a church a few to several years after their senior pastor. They are often younger. They are often take more risks, at first, because they are new to the ministry. They come in as a fresh face and the people of

a church at first find this attractive. I remember listening to the Paul Harvey radio show years ago. He was talking about pastors and how every week they preach a sermon. He reminded listeners to appreciate their pastors who so faithfully prepared and presented the Word of God on a weekly basis. He reminded the listeners to not compare their pastor with those special speakers they heard on the radio or saw at an event. Those speakers, he reminded the listening audience, are presenting their best work and if they were heard on a weekly basis, they would also have the occasional 'so-so' sermon.

We come to the associate position knowing we are not the senior pastor and that one of our roles is to be his/her support and encouragement. It is not our place to single-handedly turn the church around through participating in a coalition of any kind.

If I were to find myself in serious disagreement with the direction of the church, then I would first talk to my senior pastor. If I still disagreed, and all other appropriate options have been explored, the healthiest action I could take is to consider moving on to another church or submitting my name to become senior pastor of another church.”

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: “All churches have problems because every church is formed from people and people have problems. It has always been that way. But God uses problem people and He will here as well. Sure, Steve has to leave, but God will bless both this church and the church he will be going to. Or if he even leaves the ministry, God will work it together for His good.”

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: “This is what happens when you bring an associate on staff. They will undermine the leadership of the senior pastor almost every time. It is best to not trust an associate and keep them at a distance with a clear expectation that they will be moving on soon. Don't get too attached to them.”

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 5 LOVE PEOPLE

W.T. Handy, a former bishop of the United Methodist Church, would say in his wonderful southern drawl, “the key to ministry is simple -- preach the Word and love the people.”

Although there are other professions where a person may be a competent practitioner without love for the people they serve, this is not true for a pastor. We have all sat in classes with grouchy teachers or been under the care of a doctor with very few people skills, but when we enter a sanctuary and the pastors do not warmly reach out with love then we intuitively know something vital is lacking. Pastors are to love their people as Christ loved the church and laid down His life for her.

But in the real world we all know that “ministry would be easy if it weren’t for people.” All of our teachings, our programs, our ideas might look great in staff meetings and on paper. But when these great programs are put into play among our people, they may begin to look different or not work as we had planned. This can cause discouragement for us if we are only focused on the program and not the person.

Pastors who do not truly love people and do not give them priority over ideas and programming exhibit some of these characteristics:

1. In staff meetings, they will make negative comments about people in the church.
2. When called on to visit somebody “outside” their specific ministry, they will balk at the idea or try to defer to somebody else.
3. Events or meetings are planned based only on the pastor’s schedule and not taking into account the schedules of lay people.
4. General lack of awareness is shown concerning the feelings and needs of people in the congregation.
5. Little attempt is made by the pastor to learn and use the names of people.

Although we recognize that God calls all types of personalities to pastoral ministry, including introverts who do not naturally gravitate to social encounters, the truth is that all members of the staff need to cultivate their ability to love and actively seek God’s love for the people. This love is the first fruit of the spirit, (Galatians 5:22) and is not so much a human response as a God-given agape love which is willing to lay down our lives and comforts for those within our care.

The attainment of such love as a fruit of the Spirit can be gained not only by the spiritual discipline of prayer, where we daily intercede for the people, but also by the surrender of self to God. This surrender is the daily willingness to move beyond our comfort zone and into the zone of God’s love. This is done in a multitude of ways every day:

1. When someone stops by, we stop our tasks and make the time to care about them and why they came. Most often such encounters become a God-appointment for the person as they seek a pastor’s care.
2. When we are together with the congregation in worship, we extend ourselves, walking up to people we don’t know, asking people about their lives (remembering what we were told the weeks before – because we were praying for them and long to see God’s answers to their needs), exhausting ourselves in the active listening and loving of gathered times. It is true that though introverts will need to go into a time of solitude to recover from this while extroverts will be more energized, this personality difference does not change the necessity that all pastors on staff love their people.

3. Make lunch and coffee appointments to get to know the people. Although the more naturally extroverted are usually the staff members who have the job description of assimilating new people, staff pastors need to get to know those who are within their area of responsibility and care.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>5</sup>

Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster write in The Godbearing Life: “My supervising pastor in seminary was a seasoned Southern parson name Sam Stanley. Sam pastored a little chapel in Arlington, Virginia, and people packed it to the gills every Sunday. You could easily underestimate Sam because of his laid-back style and bone-deep gentility. He wore his considerable clout like an undershirt, unconscious of it. Yet Sam was both the strongest and most subtle pastor I have ever known. Despite his determined opinions, he seldom spoke at meetings. He made himself available for appointments or counseling or coffee. He was an ace preacher; worship was memorable and moving. He and his wife Ruth ate lunch together every day.

But Sam had an ear to the ground like a Cherokee warrior. The vibration in the grass sent him flying to his Volkswagen Rabbit, which had about four million miles on it. A minute’s time would find him standing at a parishioner’s front door (unannounced) to “check in,” as he put it. “There’s really only time for two things in ministry,” he drawled one afternoon as we zipped around the beltway to “check in” – without warning – on the fifth or sixth person that afternoon. “Lead fine worship. Visit the people. The program leave, leave to volunteers and gung-ho seminarians.”

**David Hansen in his book The Pastor’s Soul Volume 1: The Power of Loving Your Church,** writes an excellent section on the danger of an improper love and its true form of agape.

“The church acknowledges the proper place of *eros* in life and it regulates it. But we state unequivocally that *eros* has absolutely no proper role in the relationship between pastor and parishioner, and it has no proper place in the relationship between the pastor and the corporate body of the church. The result of erotic involvement is always some form of *thanatos*, for the parishioner and his or her family, for the pastor and his or her family, and for the whole church.

At least part of the problem is, however, that *eros* thrives in the environment of the true pastoral loves: *hesed* (loyalty, bonding), *racham* (compassion), *phelos* (delight and friendship), and *agape* (sacrificial love). Frankly, bonding to a person of the opposite sex with compassion, delight, and sacrifice is for most humans an aphrodisiac. Pastors who show real pastoral love can, without great care, become ecclesiastically aroused. Believe it or not, pastors can love the whole church erotically.

When pastors build the church on the basis of erotic love for the organization, the next (perversely logical) step is for the pastor to love a parishioner erotically. Often pastors who do this don’t see anything wrong with it until they are confronted. The reason that loving parishioners erotically doesn’t seem wrong to some pastors is because they have spent so many years loving the *church* erotically that loving a parishioner erotically is a perversely logical form of discipleship. It is shocking how many pastoral sexual affairs start out as pseudo-discipleship, and continue on that basis...

## Pastor Narcissus

The story is told that Narcissus, a son of a nymph, flirted injuriously with the affections of the nymph Echo. Echo eventually pined away to become nothing more than a disembodied voice. Narcissus, bent on further pseudo-conquest, messed with the mind of another nymph, who tattled on him to a powerful god named Nemesis. Narcissus' nemesis became his love for his own image. One day, wandering in the forest, he came upon a pool of water into which he glanced. Narcissus saw his own image, became fixed to it, and could not break away. He died beside that pool—in love with himself.

This story is told over and over in pastoral ministry: Pastor Narcissus is in love with himself; that is, he is erotically in love with his church, which he sees as an extension of himself. This is seen in two ways:

First, Pastor Narcissus is attached to his image in the pool of the church. Pastor Narcissus is attracted to the visage of the whole church as it is being built under his leadership. What great things he has done! These things reflect well on him. There is much yet to be done, but he is determined to continue to build the church according to his vision. Anyone who stands in the way is dispensable on account of a greater good, which is the enlargement of the pastor's image.

*Eros* may seem a strong or odd term to apply to a pastor's love for what he sees of himself in the church. But none of the other loves fits. *Philos* comes close, but *philos* for a church is love for what God has made the church to be; it delights in God's goodness for the sake of the church, not for possession, self-aggrandizement, or personal enjoyment.

Erotic love for a church, on the other hand, is a form of possession of the church. It is love for the aggrandizement of self in ministry and for the pastor's image, which he has foisted upon the church. It is to be tempted by possession, self-aggrandizement, and personal enjoyment to dearly hope our church will "make us proud."

Second, Pastor Narcissus lacks boundaries. He doesn't know where he ends and the church begins. By fixing his gaze upon the church as an image of himself, Pastor Narcissus sees the church as, at the very least, an extension of himself. He sees the church and its individual parishioners as something he wants and as something he cannot live without. He is attached to it and to them as if by an umbilical cord. The line between what Pastor Narcissus *makes* and what nourishes him simply disappears. If Pastor Narcissus takes the credit for making the church, then most surely he takes credit for the fact that the church provides for him. Eventually he cannot imagine life apart from the church he has made and its nourishment.

If Pastor Narcissus thinks he needs or wants sexual attention, he simply takes it. He takes it from himself for himself. After all he built it—it is his, he needs it, he deserves it. This is bogus *eros* and has nothing to do with adult sexual love. Pastor Narcissus is not looking for love or adrenaline; he seeks death. Sex with a parishioner is an escape into certain death....

But ministry can't be done without some kind of love....The pastor uses the tools of ministry to affirm, regulate, and bless the sex-and-death drama of parish life: the Word and the sacrament. To the extent the pastor's exercise of these tools represents genuine pastoral love and the desire to bring men and women to obedience to Christ, they are the logical but objective extension of the pastor into the sex-and-death drama of the parish.

But there is a line pastors cross, where they stop exercising the ordinances modestly. They get cute, original, and personal with the biblically ordained tools of ministry. They inject themselves into the ceremonies they perform, the sermons they preach, and their calling. This is a crossing of personal boundaries into the sacred arena. Whenever a pastor performs ministry in a way that makes it seem like his personal involvement is more important than the ceremony itself—as if without his vital, personal input this sacrament is flat and ineffective—I wonder if Pastor Narcissus isn't at work.

When the pastor stops ministering Christ and the love of Christ and ministers himself and his own love, the pastor's life is no longer the parable of Christ; the pastor's life is the "thing" itself. When the pastor/parishioner relationship becomes the parish cult, Narcissus' invasion of the parish is complete; all that remains is for Pastor Narcissus to dive into the bottomless pool and die.

As vital as they are to pastoral ministry, personal relationships between pastor and parishioner are not actually the pastoral ministry. The pastoral ministry is the communication and administration of Christ in Word, sacrament, and in the pastoral relationship, which is indeed personal but is much more and much different than merely a personal relationship. The pastoral relationship is a specific kind of personal relationship that exists within the community of the church, is governed by its order, and, by various ordained means, communicates the transforming love of Christ.

This brings me back to the importance of *agape* to ministry. Pastoral relationships that are not governed by the *agape* love of Christ for the parishioner and the *agape* love of the pastor for Christ will always degenerate into a destructive form of personal love, which is not pastoral love. The pastor's *agape* love for God is the free, transcendent decision of the pastor to love the church sacrificially for the sake of Christ and not for the pastor's own glory.

The pastor's *agape* love is first and foremost love for God. We must love God first, and then our church and our parishioners for the sake of our love for Christ. Only in this way can Christ stay at the center of the church, instead of the pastor moving to the center of the church. The church must be the body of Christ. It must reflect His love, project His image, and be His witness to the world. The pastor is the servant of this love, this image, this witness.”

## **CASE STUDY**

Pastor Bob had been at Community Church for seven years. In that time he had the privilege of overseeing a paid staff of two full-time and two part-time associates. For many years, their church had scored high on a standardized test in the area of loving relationships. This environment had been nurtured by Pastor Bob since his arrival.

Lately he had begun to observe an unsettling attitude in the Associate Pastor of Music/Worship. Jim seemed to be more and more defensive about input given him regarding the worship services. He complained that certain people were limiting the creativity and authenticity of worship by their negative comments and lack of commitment. Lately in staff meeting, his non-verbal cues were signaling he wasn't happy to be there. These cues caused Bob to pay closer attention to Jim's work and he noted there had been several changes in the printed worship team rotation over the last months and, digging a little deeper, he found out that those changes had been made arbitrarily by Jim.

Early one Monday morning Bob received two emails from different worship team members expressing concern about Pastor Jim's leadership and pastoral care.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Bob: "I care deeply that people feel a sense of love and belonging in this church. I have given much time and attention to this and modeled it before my staff. God has called us to shepherd our people and to care for their needs. To have one staff member who does not share this priority is disturbing and undermines the community we are continuing to build."

Denny: "It is easy to allow the contrary nature of people to slowly choke out our love for them. This most often motivates us, either consciously or unconsciously, to try and replace them with different people. Jim's arbitrary removal of some people from the worship team rotation reveals this desire. But what Jim will soon discover is that the next group of people who come to the church and join his ministry team will also be humans, with imperfections and needs. The solution to this is to love God and pray for people. This combination of putting God first, not our own egos and opinions, and praying for people, not praying for new people to replace the ones already in our church, brings about a well-spring of joy and loving acceptance. When we find ourselves irritated with people, it is usually not them but us who are the cause. Bob will want to sit down with Jim, and the entire staff, and talk about how we keep God's agape love vibrant in our pastoral hearts."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Jim: "God has called me to lead His people in worship. Some people are happy with the status quo. They don't want to learn new songs, they don't like it when we do contemporary hymn arrangements and they seem to always have some better idea. Jesus said when people don't listen to you to shake the dust off your feet and move on. God has a vision for this church and I don't think He would want people to limit it."

Doug: "Jim struggles with the conflict between programming and people. Programming, ministry strategy and mission statements all look great on paper and are exciting in the planning stages but on the 'field' can quickly change their appearance and focus. An associate who puts the love of people first will adapt and understand that logistical excellence is secondary to the eternal well-being of souls.

When our people feel heard and loved they are most ripe for change and following the leadership of their shepherds. Associates often spend a lot of time in programming. It is a large part of their role. A daily prayer requesting God to remind us of the reason behind the programming (the priority of showing God's love to our people) keeps our work in perspective and helps us to focus on what is most important."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "Jim is a visionary leader and these types of leaders can sometimes overrun people on the way to reaching the goal. When Jim learns to also pray for his people then, in the long run, we will reach our goal and God's kingdom will move ahead."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "Jim does not like people. He is only in this for his agenda. Like most musicians, he is too emotional and takes everything too personal. I don't think he'll change. We probably will have to look for a new pastor of worship."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 6 LOVE BEING ON A STAFF

It should go without saying that a pastor who is a part of a staff needs to enjoy teamwork. Not all do. Some pastors enjoy being the only shepherd with a smaller flock and there is nothing wrong with that kind of husbandry, it often fits the call and multiple-gifting of the pastor. The problem occurs when a person who doesn't really like teamwork chooses to be on a team. There are several reasons why this could occur, and the solution needs to be tailored to the cause:

1. The senior pastor creates a congregation so large that it is impossible to care for their spiritual well-being without additional pastoral leaders. The pastor reluctantly hires an additional pastor, but resents being unable to "do it all myself" and resents the other pastor's presence, let alone his or her efforts to help. Even if the pastor decides to be the only trained professional and create a volunteer team, or a lay-leader team, it is still a team with all the dynamics of shared leadership.
2. The pastor could find no other employment and so decided to accept a position on a ministerial team, hoping that he/she will learn to enjoy team ministry.
3. The pastor didn't realize he/she did not like team ministry until he/she had already accepted the position or hired an additional pastor. Now the commitment has been made and they are trying to "make the best of it."
4. For those in an appointment system, the conference leadership assigned them to a staff position. Afraid to communicate his or her disagreement for whatever reason, the person is now in a team ministry against their will.

When a person does want to serve on a staff but finds they are having difficulty enjoying the experience, then it would be helpful to discern the source of the unease or struggle. In a general analysis, it could be at one of three levels:

1. At the spiritual level, it could be that the call on their life is not team ministry and the uneasiness with being in the position is the increasing conviction that they are not serving where Jesus, the Lord of the church, wants them to serve.
2. At the relational level, it could be that the dynamics of this particular team are not working and either a change to another church is necessary or intervention from a superintendent or consultant is needed. For example, a team cannot have two leaders. If an associate pastor competes with the senior pastor in casting the vision and providing direction, then this two-headed staff will always be in tension. Another example would be if a member of the team has experienced a traumatic childhood, (ie., raised by a parent or parents who were alcoholic, addicted, mentally ill, workaholic, etc) and have an impaired ability to trust, create healthy boundaries, let go of control, take care of themselves in healthy ways, etc. This impairment will affect virtually every aspect of their involvement on the team but can be healed by personal Christian counseling addressing their past and present as an "adult child of trauma."
3. At the personal level, it could be that the staff person has a personality disorder. For example, the Narcissistic Personality seeks the spotlight and yet is unable to take criticism or direction, so they are found to not be teachable. The Borderline Personality will be a confusing mixture of reactions that are indefinable but work together to harm their ministry. The Paranoid Personality will find it difficult to trust others and will experience board decisions and supervision as personal threats. Though not a personality disorder, the depressed person will experience the inevitable disappointments of ministry as personal traumas and become a prisoner of their depressive emotions. In all of these, though usually the result of being raised in a family which provided the genetic or environmental cause of the disorder, the solution is psychiatric or psychological care.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>6</sup>

## **Personality Disorders** by Linda Lebelle

“The character of a person is shown through his or her personality -- by the way an individual thinks, feels, and behaves. When the behavior is inflexible, maladaptive, and antisocial, then that individual is diagnosed with a personality disorder....

Personality disorders are not illnesses in a strict sense as they do not disrupt emotional, intellectual, or perceptual functioning. However, those with personality disorders suffer a life that is *not* positive, proactive, or fulfilling. Not surprisingly, personality disorders are also associated with failures to reach potential.

The [DSM-IV-TR: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders](#), published by the [American Psychiatric Association](#), defines a personality disorder as an *enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectation of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment.*

Currently, there are 10 distinct personality disorders identified in the DSM-IV:

- **Antisocial Personality Disorder:** Lack of regard for the moral or legal standards in the local culture, marked inability to get along with others or abide by societal rules. Sometimes called psychopaths or sociopaths.
- **Avoidant Personality Disorder:** Marked social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and extremely sensitive to criticism.
- **Borderline Personality Disorder:** Lack of one's own identity, with rapid changes in mood, intense unstable interpersonal relationships, marked impulsivity, instability in affect and in self image.
- **Dependent Personality Disorder:** Extreme need of other people, to a point where the person is unable to make any decisions or take an independent stand on his or her own. Fear of separation and submissive behavior. Marked lack of decisiveness and self-confidence.
- **Histrionic Personality Disorder:** Exaggerated and often inappropriate displays of emotional reactions, approaching theatricality, in everyday behavior. Sudden and rapidly shifting emotional expressions.
- **Narcissistic Personality Disorder:** Behavior or a fantasy of grandiosity, a lack of empathy, a need to be admired by others, an inability to see the viewpoints of others, and hypersensitivity to the opinions of others.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder:** Characterized by perfectionism and inflexibility; preoccupation with uncontrollable patterns of thought and action.
- **Paranoid Personality Disorder:** Marked distrust of others, including the belief, without reason, that others are exploiting, harming, or trying to deceive him or her; lack of trust; belief of others' betrayal; belief in hidden meanings; unforgiving and grudge holding.
- **Schizoid Personality Disorder:** Primarily characterized by a very limited range of emotion, both in expression of and experiencing; indifferent to social relationships.
- **Schizotypal Personality Disorder:** Peculiarities of thinking, odd beliefs, and eccentricities of appearance, behavior, interpersonal style, and thought (e.g., belief in psychic phenomena and having magical powers).

According to Dr. Sam Vaknin...individuals with personality disorders have many things in common...

- **Self-centeredness** that manifests itself through a me-first, self-preoccupied attitude
- **Lack of [individual accountability](#)** that results in a victim mentality and blaming others, society and the universe for their problems
- **Lack of perspective-taking and empathy**
- **Manipulative and exploitative behavior**
- **Unhappiness**, suffering from [depression](#) and other mood and [anxiety disorders](#)
- **Vulnerability to other mental disorders**, such as obsessive-compulsive tendencies and panic attacks
- **Distorted or superficial understanding of self and others' perceptions**, being unable to see his or her objectionable, unacceptable, disagreeable, or self-destructive behaviors or the issues that may have contributed to the personality disorder
- **Socially maladaptive**, changing the rules of the game, introducing new variables, or otherwise influencing the external world to conform to their own needs... “

### **CASE STUDY**

When Steve was a child, he was raised in a congregation that only had one pastor. His image of ministry was that of a beloved pastor whose selfless lifestyle included always being available for his small flock and doing everything from preaching the sermon to hiding the Easter eggs for the children’s parties. But now in his own church, Steve’s congregation had grown to about 150 and the work was overwhelming. He knew he needed help. Without seeking guidance on how to build a team with clear vision and complementary gifting, Steve hired Mary as his associate pastor for Christian Education. Though he wrote a job description, he ended it with the sentence: “And whatever else the Senior Pastor might assign.”

At first, the addition of Mary to the pastoral staff was a tremendous release. Steve did not have to recruit Sunday School teachers, unlock the education area, or worry when the toilets overflowed because of a kindergartner’s antics. In fact, she was so capable that Steve kept giving her more to do, and Mary would gladly accept the assignments. However, Steve was so busy with the growing congregation that he did not notice the increasing stress on Mary’s face until one day she exploded at the first grade Sunday School teacher and then walked out in the middle of the morning service.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Steve: “I was stunned. I didn’t know what had happened and I had never known Mary in the year we had worked together as being so volatile. I know I didn’t spend as much time with Mary as I should, but I was busy with my own work. I loved having a partner who could take care of things without my having to think about them.”

Denny: “It is difficult to care for a staff without having regular meetings and prayer times. The probability that Mary was a person of such willing capability was because of her codependent tendencies. In his childhood, Steve had modeled for himself a workaholic pastor who had no boundaries. When he repeated this lifestyle in his own ministry, the unhealthy but obvious solution was to find a codependent partner to help in his workaholic ministry, much as an alcoholic finds a codependent partner to cover for them. This unhealthy union was not a healthy team with fulfilling complementary gifting, but a symbiotic unit that increased both Steve’s and Mary’s unhealthy tendencies.”

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Mary: “I was so excited to assist Steve in his wonderful ministry. I have never known a pastor who loved his people so much as Steve. He was tireless in his visitation, preaching and teaching, and there is nothing he would not do for God. I felt compelled to help him, especially since he reminded

me of my loving father who worked so hard to provide for his family. I tried, but it seemed like the more I tried to help the more there was to do. I started getting so tired that I could not sleep at night. I don't know why I got so angry that Sunday. I guess I'm just not capable of being on a pastoral staff."

Doug: "Mary is capable of being on a pastoral staff but she has naively 'bought in' to the role of an associate as one who 'fills in the blanks.' During college, I interviewed for a summer associate position. While discussing the job description, the senior pastor announced to me that I would not be his 'junk man.' I have never forgotten this word picture. It was helpful to me, coming out seminary, in carefully studying the job descriptions offered to me by various churches and ministries.

There are times where we will need to roll up our sleeves and do things that are not in our job descriptions, but this is a part of team ministry. Through our work together, God is glorified. Denny has modeled this well on our staff. There are occasions when he senses one of us is overwhelmed and he is quick to ask what we (as a staff) or he can do to help. This attitude provides healthy support and empowers each pastor to do what God has gifted them to do. In this way each one may do their work without fear of being the one who gets the jobs nobody else wants to do."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "When two sincere and hardworking people give their all to God, then it will work. Steve and Mary just need to have a time-management consultant help them with their schedules. They are surely wasting time somewhere and once that is identified, then they can work smart and everything will be fine."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "The load of a growing church will inevitably get everyone down. This is to be expected. Mary just had a momentary reality check and realized what she is up against and exploded and left. Ministry does that to people."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 7 FLEXIBILITY

“Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken.”

When pastors are being interviewed for a staff position at a church, they are usually handed a job description. This job description defines the boundaries one can expect in their working relationship with the senior pastor, other staff pastors, the church and its people. However, in the dynamic life of a growing congregation, job descriptions are never adequate.

For the inexperienced staff pastor, this usually comes as a sense of betrayal or misrepresentation. Remembering our first days in pastoral ministry, we can all recall how we approached ministry with the idealistic view that we will do only what we were hired to do and certainly only that which clearly fits within God’s call upon our lives or at least what we feel comfortable doing. This idealism is soon compromised. In the real world of pastoral ministry, there are times we need to do tasks we neither like to do nor necessarily have the skills to accomplish, but they nevertheless have come to our plate. This is especially true in most medium to small sized churches where there is only one associate pastor. This pastor can expect to do tasks outside the job description, for it comes with the territory.

The key to this reality is becoming a flexible staff member who is willing to step in and find a solution to the need of the congregation. This flexibility brings healthy appreciation to a staff because it is encouraging to the other team members as they experience our coming-alongside. Just as in our physical bodies where one member is sick, the whole body becomes sick, so when one staff member is overwhelmed or struggling in a particular area, the whole team attacks that problem together and rallies around to help. This support and encouragement changes not only the experience of the staff member, but also that of the entire staff as they support and encourage one another in the difficult times. It is hard to describe how this support and encouragement brings joy. Who of us would not want to hear the following question asked: “What can we do to support you?”

It is also true that too much flexibility can be expected from us. When we are constantly needed to move into areas where we have less ability and training, then our flexibility can become taken for granted and we can begin to feel like a limp noodle. We must stand up to requests for too much flexibility. This is done by asking the more systemic questions:

1. Is this request a pattern or the first time? If it is the second or third time this has happened, then there is a systemic change that needs to be made.
2. If this is a systemic problem, then what kind of problem is it? Is it an area of responsibility for which no one is the pastor-in-charge? Is it too much responsibility for the pastor-in-charge? Is the pastor-in-charge not creating a lay-team and delegating to responsible lay leaders?
3. If these questions have been asked and guidance has been given, yet the pastor-in-charge continues to struggle, then does this pastor need more training, do they need to be held accountable, or are they the wrong pastor to have this responsibility?
4. Finally, if this area of ministry no longer has the support of the lay leaders, or never did have their support, then is it something that the pastors should be struggling to keep doing?

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>7</sup>

In the *YouthWorker Journal*, Joe Neil teaches:

### **Learn to be a team player**

Looking back on my past "second banana" roles, one of my regrets is not paying more attention to the strengths of everyone else on the team—especially those who were leading. In his interview with the reporter, my high school basketball coach used these words, "He knows he's along to help...He does a nice job in his role." I'm glad he was so kind. I was often too preoccupied by my own position. I was watching the stat sheet and not the scoreboard. I was focusing on weaknesses of other players instead of ministry successes that were being produced by the team. Learning to be a team player means knowing your role on the team. Clearly not everyone will be a star, but without the "second bananas" there wouldn't be nearly as many wins.

John Maxwell, in his *17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* says, "Teams that win have players who continually ask themselves, 'What's best for the rest?' They continually set aside their personal agendas for the good of the team." Unfortunately, it's pride that stands in the way of our asking that question; as a result, our teams suffer from our ministry inferiority complexes. Jesus consistently lived out an example of servant leadership, yet we still repeatedly seek to be served rather than to serve.

### **CASE STUDY**

Pastor Ken found himself in a quandary the day before his much needed and deserved vacation. Jane, Associate Pastor of Children's Ministries, called in tears to announce her father had just died suddenly of a heart attack. Ken, of course, quickly released Jane to meet with her family across the country. She would be gone for at least five days, if not more. Unfortunately, Vacation Bible School was due to begin the next day, to be directed by Jane. Without her in leadership, the quality of the VBS would be compromised. Ken thought about the other staff members: Pastor Jon in Youth Ministries and Pastor Helen in worship. Given the suddenness of Jane's departure and his vacation the next day, he quickly picked up the phone to call Jon and Helen into his office. There he explained the situation and asked them to share the leadership of the VBS. It was understood they were not "Pastor Jane", but their pastoral presence and confidence among the VBS leaders would be important. How they chose to divide the responsibilities was up to them.

Jon and Helen both responded negatively. Working with children was not their gift. Why hadn't Pastor Jane prepared a leadership team that could run more capably without her presence? What would they do with all of the scheduled events and responsibilities already on their plates?

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Ken: "Letting Jane go to be with her family was indisputably the right decision. Taking my vacation on schedule is also right because not only are my travel plans in place with non-refundable plane tickets but the other staff vacations have already been scheduled for the remainder of the summer as well. I have been working long hours to prepare for this vacation of spending time with my grown children and I'm burned out. Anyway, it is my prerogative as senior pastor to assign team members for this temporary task. This is for the good of the ministry and the growth of God's kingdom. We are a team."

Denny: "Like a family in crisis over a teenager's rebellion, the causes of Ken's problem started long before this moment. To raise a willing and thoughtful teen, the family must begin when the teen is a toddler to teach the lessons of respect and cooperation, of understanding and flexibility. It is true

that this death in Jane's family reveals a weakness in her ministry, in that she should have created a VBS team to which she has delegated leadership. But this crisis also reveals a weakness in Ken's ministry, as he should have created a pastoral staff team in which the members recognize the unpredictability of life and of ministry and are more than willing to help one another in these crisis events. Ken will want to use this as a teachable moment in all of their lives and change the culture of the staff such that they not only are there for each other in a flexible, willing spirit, but also ask the systemic questions and put in place ministry practices which will make the ministry part of the crisis increasingly infrequent. This two-pronged solution will help make shared ministry more supportive and caring as well as wise and prepared."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Jon and Helen: "While we fully support Pastor Jane going to be with her family, we wish there could have been a more natural 'Plan B.' We wish Pastor Jane had recruited a qualified assistant leader rather than have us who know little of VBS to come in and direct the program. We are now put in the tough position of shelving many of our priorities to take on this ministry. We wish there had been more discussion about the solution."

Doug: "When other staff members must take leave, for one reason or another, we as team members must often come in to support. It would not be our first desire to do so, but we would hope they would do the same for us. Remember that the Senior Pastor has a job description with no boundaries. He/she is ultimately responsible for the care of all ministry in the church. With that in mind, he must make decisions for the good of the whole ministry. Having a healthy Vacation Bible School will have a positive impact on children's ministries for years to come, and ultimately impact the youth and worship ministries. God is much bigger than my little "kingdom." When I am flexible and willing to be a team player, He gets the glory and I grow deeper in my understanding of servant leadership."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "Any pastoral staff member will be ready and willing to take on additional or different assignments as they are needed. We are all called by God to do the work of ministry – this means we are to joyfully jump in where there is a need in the ministry and be thankful that we are needed and have the opportunity to serve."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "Staff pastors called to specific ministries don't function well outside their gift mix. Arbitrarily assigning them to do outside temporary ministries only hurts morale and erodes trust in the Senior Pastor. They will begin to wonder: what will he/she assign us to do next?"

### **Redemptive Perspective**

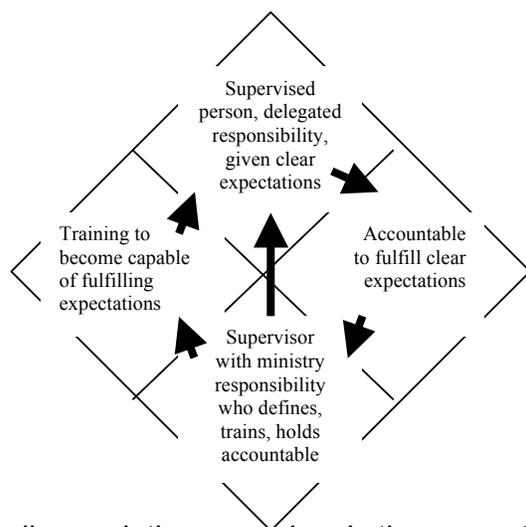
What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 8 WILLING TO GROW IN NEW AREAS OF MINISTRY

A pastoral staff must grow along with their church. Although we noted in Chapter Two that a clear understanding of one's call is a vital ingredient of complementary staff ministry, it is also true that this calling includes not only continuing our education and training in our unique ministry areas but also our willingness to gain expertise in new areas that are needed as the congregation grows. This is perhaps one of the most important ingredients for long-term staff employment. As the church grows, our professional growth occurs in two interlocking ways: growth in our ability to supervise others and growth in a specialized area of ministry.

1. Growth in our ability to supervise others: It could be said that supervision is a unique ability of its own but, in a growing church, all pastoral staff must become at least adequate supervisors of both paid and volunteer staff. Most pastors will find it necessary to attend professional seminars on supervision and some will find formal education vital to their mastery of this art. We have found the one-day seminars offered by business training organizations to be invaluable. Dealing with such topics as "supervising the problem employee" or "creating a team" or "holding people accountable" can easily be translated into the life of the church because the basic principles of clearly defining expectations, training toward those expectations and then holding a person accountable to fulfill those expectations are as necessary in ministry as they are in business.

The goal of servant leadership in supervision has caused some pastors to avoid supervision. The end result is that the pastor is continually picking up the pieces that other staff, either paid or volunteer, were responsible to complete. They did not do so either because they did not clearly understand what was expected, or they were not trained to do what was expected, or they were not held accountable when expectations were not met. One helpful tool to use in assessing what is needed in supervising a person who is not fulfilling their expectation is what we call the diamond of training and accountability. Here is a graphic representation:



As can be seen in this diamond, the supervisor is the servant-leader helping those within their care to succeed in their area of ministry by not only clearly defining the area of responsibility and the expectations, but also by assessing when this responsibility is not fulfilled. The question the supervisor asks themselves which helps define the solution is to ask: "Where is the problem?"

- A. Is it because I did not clearly define the expectations?
- B. Is it because the person knows what is expected but does not know how to do what is expected and therefore needs more training?

- C. Is it because the person knows what is expected and has been trained to do what is expected but has chosen not to do what is expected? Is the choice a conscious choice revealing a disrespectful or even rebellious spirit, or is it an unconscious choice revealing a deeper block to the fulfillment of their ministry?

2. The second way that staff need to grow in a long-term staff relationship is by demonstrating a willingness to become specialized in areas needed for the growing ministry. This will again require education either in seminars or in formal education. This can be both a source of frustration and a source of personal and professional development. It can be frustrating because it may be to fulfill a need in the growing congregation which is not within our primary gifting. The question at this point is whether we are just being pulled beyond our comfort zone into an area where we can become trained and competent or whether we are truly not suited for this new area of ministry and a change in staff deployment or in employment may become necessary. An example of the former is: when Doug became a part of our pastoral staff in 1984, he was brought on staff in his primary area of call and gifting, Pastor of Youth. But as the congregation grew, he took on two other primary areas of ministry, one by the request of the church based on observations of Doug's abilities and the other by the passions of his heart. The request of the church came when we began blended worship. With a heart for worship and a competence in music, Doug began informal training in worship leadership and took over supervision of our paid director of praise bands, forming nine different bands with over fifty volunteer musicians who rotate in leading the worship music in our services. The second area of expansion for Doug came from his passion for missions. Doug is now not only the Pastor of Students and Worship, but also of Missions as he has led many teams on missions trips and has even helped open the new mission field in Antigua. Both of these expansions of his original responsibilities have stretched Doug personally and professionally, and also brought new life and fulfillment into his ministry.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>8</sup>

In an excellent website for the Christian Reformed Church titled "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence", there are many helpful topics addressed, including the importance of accountability and mentoring.

<http://209.200.88.167/pages/analysis.cfm>

In one of their sections speaking to this issue, they write on "Lifelong Learning".

### **"Lifelong Learning**

It has never been more important for pastors to be lifelong learners. Sustaining pastoral excellence involves continual learning—for intellectual, personal, spiritual, and professional growth. Several factors make such education especially crucial now:

The rapid rate of change in our culture requires ongoing education and adaptation to new realities.

The great variety of ministry contexts also calls for lifelong learning. In pastoral ministry, no longer does "one call fit all." Pastors need continuing education that takes the principles learned in seminary and applies them to particular situations.

Seminaries cannot "do it all." Seminaries never could; but in the past, the church often has assumed that the pastor's education was finished upon seminary graduation. What seminaries must do is instill in students a passion for lifelong learning, an openness to learning from different sources, and the important priority of study and thoughtful reflection....

Local congregations often do not understand the need for continuing education and consequently do not support such possibilities for lifelong learning. Especially in congregations with few college-educated or professional members, pastors often have difficulty getting the support they need for continuing education, in terms of time, money, as well as encouragement. In sum, successful programs to enhance pastoral excellence in our context need to promote vital spirituality, highlight the importance of emotional and

interpersonal intelligence, teach well-grounded models of leadership, insist on relationships of accountability, and promote lifelong continuing education.”

A second example we give is that the need for both formal and informal continuing education is universal in virtually all areas of professional life. Here are some thoughts from the field of Forestry. If you simply replace *Forestry* with *Ministry* and *Foresters* with *Pastors* in the following, the lessons are obvious:

### ***Terraces of experience:***

“At first glance continuing education appears to be a diagonal line climbing up throughout a career. Closer examination reveals a terrace of experience at every stage after each course of education or training, as the recipient consolidates and absorbs the points that he has learned into his own employment. Eventually he becomes ready in experience and outlook for the next stage, and if he is fortunate he receives another course of instruction and continues to climb the career ladder, rising from the terrace again...”

There are several ways of implementing this lifetime of progression by education and training, some formal, some informal. The obvious way is by on- and off-site training, particularly at the lower levels. ...

Similarly, fairly regular attendance at local or regional meetings, seminars, and discussions as in earlier years, will help a [pastor's] man's technical ability as well as his [or her] personal development to some extent, but it is the organized courses that will give the most satisfactory results.

One great advantage - as Ovington says - is that if these courses are held at forestry schools [seminaries] and colleges the opportunity is provided for young students to meet advanced foresters [seasoned pastors] who are also studying, which gives them better motivation and provides a better sense of direction...”

### **CASE STUDY**

When John was hired as the first associate pastor, he had just graduated from seminary and was considered a capable student. But when the board had asked him what his gifting was, John was at a loss. He didn't seem to be focused in any one area. He felt his face blush as he stammered out the thought that he didn't really think he had any special gifts. He seemed only adequate in all the various subjects he had encountered, but he was not a standout in preaching, or teaching, or administration, or anything.

Steve, his senior pastor, and the board wisely saw in John something that he did not yet see or understand, but the next ten years would teach him: he had the gift of “helps.” He was capable of playing almost any position on the team with an adequacy that was blessed by God and bore much fruit. In fact, the church grew tremendously as John very willingly stepped into new areas of ministry, helped identify gifted lay and paid leaders for those ministries and, after placing them in charge, would then move on to develop another area of ministry.

Though the growth of the congregation was as much a result of John's gift in helps and ability to reproduce himself with trained, capable, accountable leaders, he was nevertheless plagued with feelings of inferiority and incompetence. After ten years of ministry, he looked back and saw how he had “been replaced” in everything he had tried to do. He considered leaving the ministry and trying to “find his place.”

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Steve: “I was not surprised when John came and told me he was considering leaving. For many years, I had held his hand and tried to help him find fulfillment. I'm tired of holding him up. I'm not sure he will ever realize that he is doing a fine job. I'm happy with his work. The Board is happy with him. The people he has identified and put into ministry point to him as the single most

important person in their life. Why John can't see that, I don't know. I think maybe he needs to try something else and maybe he will see things with different eyes.

Denny: "In our culture of glorifying gifted pastors of large churches, it is easy for us to compare our abilities with theirs and find ourselves lacking. This can be hard on our sense of worth, especially if we come from a home where we either were not valued or where our value came from our accomplishments. But when the gifting of a person is one of helps, the utility player that every coach dreams of having on the team, the tendency to compare can be debilitating. What John needs is God's clear affirmation that He made him a capable person in all the ways the church needs help, that God's power is working through him in whatever ministry he is doing, and that He will bring good results. John needs to look at ministry not as that which he himself accomplishes, but what God accomplishes through the people John has helped."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

John: "I have struggled my whole life with feeling average. Everything in our culture points to the stars, and I've never been a star. I always seem to be the "run batted in" and not the one who hits the home run. Sure, I seem to be liked by everyone, and no one really complains about my work, but I know the difference between a lesson I teach and the lesson of a gifted teacher. I can spot the gifted teachers a mile away and that's why I invite them to replace me. I'm just tired of always needing to be replaced."

Doug: "When a person moves from one ministry to another, two conflicting feelings converge. Both feelings focus on what happens at the former place after the staff member has gone. On the human side, an associate may find his or herself wishing the ministries would fall apart, thus showing how much he/she was really needed. On the more spiritual side an associate would be sad to hear if the ministries had fallen apart after he/she left because this would be symptomatic of their failure to build a healthy foundation of ongoing leadership.

John has been doing the right thing. He has a good perspective on who he is and who he is not and this has moved him to get the right people in the right positions. John the Baptist had to get this perspective. I am guessing that he too struggled with feelings of insecurity. Servant leadership is key to healthy ministry and teaming with others for the glory of God's kingdom. Through prayer, affirmation and the reward of seeing leaders step into ministry, John the associate will hopefully come to see the significance and faithfulness of his work in service to the King."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "God created every person with spiritual gifts and John is no exception. He just needs to accept the gift that God has given him and accept the fact that he is going to be a helper of others and find fulfillment in that. He'll be fine then."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "Feelings of inadequacy are extremely hard to change. Even if every person in the congregation were to tell John how much he has impacted their life, John would find a reason with each one of them why it wasn't really anything he did and why he shouldn't feel fulfilled about it. John could go to counseling, but this is such a pervasive personality thing that it would take a miracle for him to feel fulfilled."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 9 ENJOYING YOUR STAFF

When a staff pastor is recruited by a senior pastor and/or church leaders, the church's ministry needs and the ways that these needs line up with the recruited staff pastor's calling, educational qualifications and experience usually head the list of factors most considered. How staff members might relate to one another in the ministry setting, though still recognized as important, is often farther down that list. Perhaps the reason for this is that this factor is not easily measured. The interview process can reveal some helpful verbal and non-verbal cues, and personality tests can shed some light, but the ultimate test will be the actual working relationship with others.

In the professional world, there are two ends of the spectrum concerning personal relationships between team members:

a. **PROFESSIONAL DISTANCE:** Be friendly, even caring, but keep professional distance to insure objectivity in the professional ministry setting. When hard decisions need to be made, these can be handled without personal bias or interference.

b. **BUDDIES:** For the best working relationship, it is important to enjoy being friends, "hanging out" together. Our working relationship need not be formal if we trust each other to get the job done.

While either of these may sound good, depending on one's personality profile, they each carry unhealthy liabilities. For example, when a staff only keeps a professional distance, then some of the pleasure, support and encouragement of being on a team is missed. It is fun to share ministry and share life. Whether it is the enjoyment of watching one another's children grow up or whether it is sharing experiences of retreats and times of prayer, if the relationship is only professional then the emotional support and personal fulfillment is lessened by distance in the relationship.

On the other hand, when the relationship is only one of being buddies, the familiarity can often cause a disturbance in the work environment. Becoming more like a family, the staff pastors can react like siblings to one another with the inevitable resulting unsafe teasing and sibling rivalry, while at the same time act like children of the senior pastor by taking their "father" or "mother" for granted and expecting them to sacrifice their lives and needs to take care of their "kids." In a variety of unhealthy ways, church staff relationships can easily become like a dysfunctional family.

Striking a balance so that we are a family of professional pastors working together for God and His church is a helpful goal and provides some language for achieving this balance. This balance will obviously be negotiated differently for different staffs but overall there should be a pervasive joy in being able to work together. If this joy is missing, then it may be time to get an outside person to come in and observe the interactions of the staff and provide helpful feedback to the entire team.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>9</sup>

From the *YouthWorker Journal* article: "Senior Pastors, On What It's Like Working with You."

Following are the responses to one question taken from an interview with a panel of six former youth workers—who are now supervisors, heads of staff or senior pastors (Matt Condon, Barb LeFever, Steven Mabry, Kevin McClure, Malcolm McQueen, and Greg Tucker)—to summon up their objectivity now that they're on the other side of the desk and give us their views of pastoral relationships as they are and as they could be.

**“On the appropriateness of socializing with your senior pastor:**

**LeFever:** I consider myself friends with the youth staff. We enjoy each other. We have very open communication. They keep me informed about the ministries. They involve me as they need me.

**Mabry:** I see it both ways. The first head of staff I worked under, I went to lunch with once in six years. I had a good time with him, but he didn't give friendship.

My second pastor and I went to lunch together twice in 10 days.

My personal style is to give my staff friendship because I want to be their colleague, not their boss. Yet my church stipulates that I in fact be the boss to every staff member. So it depends on whether your head of staff can feel okay about challenging you on some stuff, and whether you're the kind of person who can hear that from a friend.

Whether or not your head of staff reaches out to you like this, I think you can reach out as well and see what kind of response you get.

**Condon:** A lot of senior pastors feel they must keep a distance. They rarely have a relationship outside of the church office. But I think a relationship can open up over time. In one of my youth ministry positions, it took the pastor a while to open up to me. But I kept trying, and eventually we became close. Over time you'll be able to tell if he does or doesn't want to relate on a personal level.

**McQueen:** Socializing is appropriate, but with limits—as in most work environments. Some socializing and friendship is appropriate as colleagues in ministry. At the same time, however, you have to maintain a professional working relationship. Personally, I've never felt it's appropriate for me to have the other associates or heads of staff as best friends, because then the professional and personal roles blur too easily.

I get together for fun with my youth staff about once a quarter. But I don't tell everything there is to know about me. I'd encourage a youth worker to go ahead and initiate that kind of relationship, but still watch for the signs.

I've come to appreciate that a head of staff has a whole lot more worries and is involved in a greater range of situations and ministries than a youth worker is. As paternalistic as it may sound, I think a youth worker will never understand some things about the head of staff. And that's okay. So if a head of staff is reluctant to be very personal, take it as a boundary. Enjoy what you can, but know boundaries will exist.

**McClure:** A pastor needs to be talking to his staff. You don't have accountability if you don't have a relationship with someone. To me the issue is not accountability, but friendship. I think what we have today in most churches are sincere, well-meaning, paid professionals who love Jesus—but who are so afraid to let people know the real them that they don't talk to each other. It's no wonder there's so much fallout. God called people to stand together in the church, and that's an issue that I think youth pastors and senior pastors really need to talk about. We need to get close to each other instead of sitting in meetings and giving our reports—and then going off our separate ways again until the next staff meeting. That's not a real team in my book.

I'm going to look for someone who wants to be close to me and who wants me to be close to him. That's more than just hiring someone to do a job.

**Tucker:** I worked at one place for 11 months. One day the pastor there said, "I heard you're having a dance contest." He didn't know me well enough to know I wouldn't do that, because it's no secret that dancing is a big taboo in that denomination. In those 11 months, I never saw his house. We never met, other than professionally, and because of that he didn't really know me.

I think a certain familiarity needs to exist between the two in order to really sense one another's heart and recognize we are on the same team.

By the way, that no-dancing pastor—I called him "pastor" because I felt removed from him. The next senior pastor I had, I called by his first name—even though we weren't best buds and didn't do a lot together. Yet I felt we were on the same team. Still, in socializing I think youth workers need to remember their place in the hierarchy."

### **CASE STUDY**

Pastor John had been senior pastor at his church for almost ten years. Previous to this church, he had been a senior pastor at four other churches over the period of 20 years. In all of his churches, he had not only been the senior pastor but also he was the only pastor.

At his present church, growth had begun to take place and, in the last two years, two additional full-time staff pastors were hired. John treated his associates with great respect, demanded high accountability, was friendly but very careful to keep professional distance. He had been schooled in this philosophy by several other well-respected and seasoned senior pastors.

Jill and Jeff came to the church as recent seminary graduates and were almost 30 years younger than Pastor John. They had great respect for him and were looking forward to learning much from this wise and experienced pastor.

After a year of work with Pastor John, both associates realized they had accomplished a lot in their ministries but, outside of the regular staff meetings and board meetings, they were having no social contact with Pastor John. They knew very little about him as a person except for what they read and, while they felt free to express their emotions and personal events, it seemed that Pastor John had no interest in letting them into his life. The lack of fellowship was beginning to affect their working relationship. Pastor John, though a godly pastor, had become only their "boss."

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

John: "For best results with associate staff, I must not become personally attached. I want to be objective in my supervision. If transitional decisions need to be made, then I can make them without also "hurting" a friendship. Professional distance assures this quality control."

Denny: "I can understand the tension to be both a friend and a professional supervisor. Intuitively, it seems like it would be easier to keep a professional distance so we can provide the necessary leadership, including confrontation, as a supervisor with less emotional investment. But this is not true. Emotional distance actually increases reactivity in supervision. When we deeply love and are connected to a staff pastor, we think long and pray hard about those moments when confrontation is needed. In those moments, our goal is to "truth-it-in-love" (Ephesians 4:15) and create not only a more effective staff pastor but also a more loving professional relationship. The key is to be a healthy church family applying healthy systems training (chapter 4) within a professional setting of shared ministry such that everyone is effective, growing and experiencing joy."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Jill/Jeff: "We understand Pastor John is the senior pastor, he is our supervisor and we willingly submit to his authority. We can only imagine how difficult some of his decisions must be on a day-to-day basis. We recognize that he wants to treat us fairly and respect us as professionals, but we feel a need for something more personal: we want to like each other. We respect him, but if he would share his feelings occasionally or tell us how we can pray for him or take us out to lunch and ask us about our families we would also know he cares for us."

Doug: "There is a place for professional distance on a pastoral staff. Associate staff who want to be respected as professionals must also mutually respect their senior pastor as a professional. He/she truly is our mentor and supervisor. A healthy amount of professional distance keeps the relationship accountable and workable. However, too much professional distance creates an "all work, no play" culture and unpleasant work conditions. When ministry becomes only a job, then in time, team members mostly think about the church as a place where they show up to work. Healthy ministry happens in relationship. We work hard in shepherding our people through relationship. What better place to model this than on the pastoral staff. Our people will see that the pastors love, fellowship and care for one another and be inspired to do so in their marital, family and work relationships as well."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "Staff meetings, one-on-one supervision meetings and board meetings are sufficient for working with staff. There are plenty of opportunities in those settings to create a healthy ministry relationship. Some senior pastors don't even have staff meetings or mentoring relationships and this young staff should appreciate what they do receive from John."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "We work well together and our relationships do not need to go beyond our teamwork. Work environments are only complicated by dual relationships, which are difficult to avoid anyway within the church. We show up, we talk about ministry, we pray and we do our work. Anything beyond this could lead to an over-familiarity that might breed impropriety as well as unhappiness if not contempt."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 10 SHARED VISION

It is vital to shared ministry that all pastoral staff members share the same vision, mission and ministry philosophy. This may seem obvious and logical, but in the dynamics of a growing congregation and multiplying ministries, the creation of competing visions are common. These can come from a staff member who sees what God could do in their area of ministry and begins to draft a tangential mission statement that not only confuses the congregation, but also can create a two-headed organization with one too many leaders. A divergent vision can also come from a lay leader who is a visionary businessperson and, when given responsibility for an area of ministry, brings their visioning capability to their new work and begins to create their own kingdom. A divergent vision can also come from a conference or denomination which is not a large enough view to incorporate the mission and work of the local congregation and so imposes an ill-fitting programmatic approach upon the local church rather than enhancing that local church's vision.

The creation of a shared vision requires a process that not only envisions what God wants the church to become but also needs to be of biblical proportions. When a vision is of human origin, it is usually inadequate in scope, parochial in impact, and glorifying of someone or something other than God. When a vision is inspired by God, it is an expression of the Great Commission, begins locally but impacts globally, and the praise is given to God for the great things He has done.

In creating a shared vision, the following aspects are helpful:

1. Ask God to give you a "picture" of what the congregation is to look like in the "larger picture" of God's work within the world. This vision will allow you to not only see where you are going but also where you fit within the larger vision God has for your city, conference, denomination and world Christendom. Our vision, which has been our guiding light for over thirty years, is to create a "just, redeeming community" where Jesus Christ transforms human beings into His likeness. This vision of what our congregation would be like was written in 1976 and is available at: [http://www.cinemainfocus.com/church\\_as\\_a.htm](http://www.cinemainfocus.com/church_as_a.htm)

2. Involve the leaders of the congregation in creating the mission statement to fulfill this vision. Though we have had several mission statements over the years, our current one was developed as a result of our continuing education and with input from congregational leaders in a seminar setting. Doug became trained in Sonlife (<http://www.sonlife.com/>) and, in my doctoral program at Fuller Seminary, I became trained in the Drucker Foundation Self-assessment (<http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/sat/index.html>). We created our current mission statement with the involvement of members from our leadership team: "Our mission is to: Win people to Christ, Establish them in their faith and Equip them for ministry."

3. Use the mission to guide the methods of ministry. Just as Denny leads the staff and Boards to consider how we are implementing each of these aspects of our mission in the overall ministry, Doug leads the youth team, Colleen leads our small group leaders and assimilation team, Dennis leads our Spanish-language ministries, Cheryl leads our Women's ministries, and so on throughout the life of the church as we use the same vision/mission language to implement diverse methods in various ministries. We organize our reports around these three areas of responsibility and used it to create the pictogram of our vision.

4. Communicate the vision often. We place our mission statement on the cover of our weekly bulletin. We place it on our website, in our monthly newsletters and we use it in worship when presenting an area of ministry.

But even when the vision statement is clear, there are moments when other visions of who we are and what we are becoming insert themselves into our congregation. In those moments, the art of leadership is needed as the senior pastor must discern whether this is an entrepreneurial leader (I call them a “thoroughbred” leader) who needs to be gently brought into the leadership of the church and whose vision can become complementary or even incorporated into the overall vision of the church, or whether this is a maverick leader who is wanting to create a different vision with conflicting goals for his/her own purpose which will eventually divide the congregation.

When the leader is a thoroughbred, often the senior pastor can become threatened by this person and make them uncomfortable as well as communicate verbally or nonverbally that they are unable to be incorporated as a leader within the congregation. This causes a real loss to the congregation and the larger conference and denominational work. A secure senior pastor can come alongside and partner with a thoroughbred and not “manage” them or “fight against” them, but rather join with them in doing a greater work that neither could have done on their own. This involves protecting the initiative of the leader to bring their gifts to the ministry and it involves the leader knowing the non-negotiable boundaries of the shared ministry. When mutual respect is present and the shared vision is large enough, (meaning it is of biblical proportions), then this high-quality leader can become a vital part of the work God is doing.

When the divergent vision comes from a leader who is a maverick and is not respectful of the leadership of the senior or other pastors, then a loving but firm boundary must be put into place. Depending upon the maturity and character of the leader, this will either bring about a growth in their understanding of shared vision or they will leave and find another place to fulfill their vision. If this vision is of God but different from the shared vision of the church, then it will be blessed in another church and the kingdom will move forward in different ways in both ministries. If it is not of God and comes from a self-glorifying rather than a God-glorifying place, then we leave it in God’s hands.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research go to the endnotes.)<sup>10</sup>

On the excellent website “Building Church Leaders”, we find this article:

### **Developing a Vision:** *What kind of church would we like to be?*

By Aubrey Malphurs

“Vision is essential to a church.... Over time, the vision must be renewed, adapted, and adjusted to the cultural context in which the congregation lives....The vision provides us with a picture of what the mission will look like as it is realized in the community....

**The Importance of a Vision** ...vision is of utmost importance to leaders and their ministry. Here are seven reasons why.

#### *1. A Vision Encourages Unity*

... The ministry’s vision encourages and allows people to come together and work together. It creates a common identity in two ways. First, it signals to all where the ministry is going... Second, it fosters the retention of congregants and staff....

#### *2. A Vision Creates Energy*

Not much happens without an inspiring, compelling vision.... Visions are exciting and they energize people. They strike a spark—the excitement that lifts a ministry organization out of the mundane....

### *3. A Vision Provides Purpose*

The right vision creates meaning in people's lives. It gives them a sense of divine purpose in life. They are a part of something great that God is accomplishing at this time and place in history...

### *4. A Vision Fosters Risk Taking*

...When the point person or lead pastor casts the vision, everyone knows what needs to be done. That is not the question. The question is, How will we do it? Sometimes we know the answer, but most often we do not....

### *5. A Vision Enhances Leadership*

... A leader is a godly servant who knows where he or she is going and has followers.... They know where they are going and where they are leading their ministry. They have a dynamic mission and, most important, a clear, energizing vision that paints a picture of the future....

### *6. A Vision Promotes Excellence*

... A shared organizational vision promotes a standard of excellence. Deep down, people want to do a good job, to have a sense that they are effectively and powerfully advancing God's program through their ministry in the church. The vision casts a picture of what that looks like...

### *7. A Vision Sustains Ministry*

Ministry can be very difficult, even painful. Discouragement and disappointment often lurk.... What has sustained Christians from the beginning of the church in the Book of Acts up to today? One answer is a biblical, compelling vision. It encourages people to look beyond the mundane and the pain of ministry...."

"Shared Vision: A Key to Project Success" By Donna Fitzgerald  
A second area of research comes from the business world.

".... [There are] two different perspectives on shared vision. The first is the explicit concept of shared vision that focuses on capturing, communicating, and reconciling our goals and our methods for achieving those goals. The second perspective is that all organizations have an implicitly shared vision, which manifests itself as what is most often referred to as the corporate culture...

### **Creating the initial vision**

... there are two ways to create it. The first and preferred alternative is by asking the right questions at the first meeting of your steering committee...The second ...would be to have a series of meetings with the appropriate individuals and elicit the information....

### **Translating the vision**

... we can now gather our team around us and figure out the specifics of getting it done...

### **Selling the vision**

This is one area where many ... stumble. We get too caught up in the day-to-day management of the details ... and don't spend enough time ... selling the project: Status meetings, e-mails to stakeholders, and a well-designed and informative project Web site all are things that will help.

### **Holding true to the vision**

From the perspective of the nimble project manager, the art of holding true to the vision comes down to the decisions that you make when you've just suffered a sneak attack ....

## **Implicit shared vision**

Most of the work that has been done on corporate cultures centered on matching culture to business objectives in order for the company to thrive in its marketplace... our ... goal is to establish what the culture is and then determine how we can best manage our projects without violating any unwritten rules. [See figure A in endnote.]

The second component of corporate culture is the rule vs. achievement culture. ... In a company that is aligned with the power/rule quadrant, most project managers will find that they have almost no influence on how their project gets done. The team and the stakeholders will all be looking to do things first the way they've always been done and second the way the "power holder" says they should be done. In a collaborative/rule-based culture, the nimble project manager will be confronted with "meetingitis," analysis paralysis, and lots of people saying that their opinions are not being taken into account....

... in either of these two environments involves accepting the validity of the culture as an implicitly shared vision. It absolutely doesn't matter that the project might take longer and cost more than you think it should. It doesn't matter that you might have to fill out what you consider a few extra reams of unnecessary paperwork. If you accept that the culture is right, you are then free to see what latitude you might be allowed within it.

I've found that power/rule cultures often tolerate what I refer to as the loyal opposition...it is critical at the outset of a project in this type of culture to be clear why you've been chosen to run it. If the answer is that it's because management thinks you're crazy enough to risk failure in order to do something impossible, then you should find that your executive sponsor will give you the explicit authority to break the rules (which usually means to conduct a low-ceremony, rapid-results project that flies under the radar of the rest of the company). If the answer is that the project is a mainline project and you've been assigned through luck of the draw, then minimal compliance and a respectful attitude should keep you enough on the right side of the culture to allow you to build a slightly more nimble project team. The absolutely hardest culture ... is the collaborative/rule-based culture...In these cultures the journey is much more important than the destination....

## **Self-organizing behavior**

Up to this point, we've explored the concept of both explicit and implicit shared vision. In the case of an explicitly shared vision, we've discussed how to articulate it, sell it, and maintain it. An implicitly shared vision (i.e., company culture), on the other hand, isn't something we can shape or influence quite as easily....the nimble project manager has developed the conscious ability to tailor that project vision into a language or context that can be accepted as congruent with the company's implicitly shared vision."

## **CASE STUDY**

When Mary became senior pastor of First Church, it was clear that the congregation had no sense of mission. Maintaining a program which had over a decade ago become obsolete, the good-hearted people knew that they were a dying church, especially as their own children were choosing to worship elsewhere. Having been an associate in a large church before coming to First Church, Mary knew experientially the biblical truth that "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18 KJV) She had seen her former mentor create such a compelling picture of what their church was to look like, act like and be like, that people could see themselves being a part of that picture. But she also knew from her studies that all churches have a vision, or image of themselves, and that she would need to discover how the people of First Church saw themselves before she could help them accept and morph into a new image.

What she discovered scared her. They saw themselves as the most important church in town with the best pastor/preacher/leader in their denomination. The fact that this was the real picture of this historic congregation thirty years earlier but was no longer true hadn't seemed to sink into their awareness. In fact, the associate pastor for worship and music, Mark, was keeping that vision alive by trying to maintain the music program over years of dwindling attendance. Due to this vision, the board had quickly removed every pastor when they didn't "fit" this vision they had of themselves.

This discovery reminded Mary of a true story one of her seminary professors had told. He told of a church body that had repeatedly decapitated its own head by removing any real leader who came to guide them. Not realizing that this left them a headless terminal body that was only in the last stages of gasping, frantic movement, they never realized what their problem was until they could no longer be revived. Mary knew she needed God's intervention to not only stop this deadly vision of the past as well as to seek God's vision for the future.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Mary: "I knew when I accepted this position that this was not going to be an easy task. The congregation was not only stuck in the glory days of the past but were also difficult to lead. We would need to make a major change in ministry if we were to survive, let alone thrive in the years to come. I sought the help of my mentor, took time to get to know the congregation and build trust in me as a person and as a leader, and together we sought God's vision for who we could become by His power. I then developed a five-year plan to morph the congregation into a vital body with a new identity and self-image. I knew this would not be easy, but I am looking forward to the days ahead."

Denny: "The key Mary is missing is the presence of an entrenched staff member who is also the keeper of the old vision. Mark not only is a part of the old picture, but he also has a vested interest in keeping the church focused on the past and supporting a music program that is no longer viable because it is not connecting with the grown children of the congregation or attracting new seekers/believers. Mark will need to be retooled and become a person who shares and supports the new vision, or be retired with honor for past ministry. The fact that Mark is in his fifties, having come to the church when he graduated from seminary and rode the wave of the glory days, will make this difficult in either way. It is probably true that he has not been interested in transforming his area of ministry into a new worship and music program, or he would have done so. Perhaps by investing in him and retooling him by more education and training or by spending a sabbatical in a vibrant music program in another church would work. But Mary will not be able to transition this congregation without Mark either being a full supporter of the change and working hand in hand to see it come about, or being removed with premature retirement as an impediment to the necessary transition. This forced early retirement will use up many of Mary's leadership chips as this losing this beloved musician and his style of music will probably leave a deep sorrow in the hearts of the people of the congregation."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Mark: "I know that we've been having a problem - for many years. I've done my best to keep the music program at the same level of excellence it has always been, but I'm not the senior pastor. I can only do so much. Even though our choir is now only a third of what it was and the members are all older, we can still produce a good choral anthem each week and my ability as an organist has actually improved over these years. I am frustrated that we don't have the finances to buy new robes or hire young, professional soloists for each section as we once did, but I think we do a good job for nonprofessionals. I am committed to helping Mary succeed by keeping this program going."

Doug: "Mark is polishing a 'sacred cow' and is not looking at the larger vision of the church. As Denny mentioned in an earlier chapter, associates have the occasional 'luxury' of focusing more on specific ministries. While this can be good it also offers the temptation to be 'ruler' of our own 'kingdom.' The truth is that our ministries are very much related to all the ministries of the church. As an Associate Pastor of Students, I have come to realize that the health of the youth ministry is directly related to the health of the Children's Ministries and the Adult Ministries. If families visit our church and find one of these areas weak, they are likely to look elsewhere, even if two of the three are doing well. This is just one example. There are many other ministries that relate very directly with the Youth ministry. If I choose to operate in a vacuum I may be able to do so, in a successful manner, for a short period of time. Soon, however, my lack of willingness to share the vision of the larger church and care about the effectiveness and success of other ministries will come into play. Those who have been called and chosen to be associates are also called to adapt and to daily seek the vision of God and His church."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "There are many people who love this church. Over the years we get many cards and letters of how much this church has impacted their lives. That is what a church is, a community of faithful people over time doing God's work. It will always be that way. Mary won't have a problem transitioning this congregation and getting new people to become members. She just needs to trust God. This church can and will rise to what it was in the past."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "We are living in a post-Christian world which no longer values the traditions and worship styles of the past. But people now also don't care about the new and trendy worship bands of the present. So we should lead worship and enjoy music that speaks to us who are here and not try to be what those who are not yet Christians might like. We just need to be faithful people doing what we do best and leave the rest to God. Maybe we're not meant to grow."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## **Chapter 11**

### **DEFENDING EACH OTHER: “Handling Criticism”**

In Chapter 4 we discussed the danger of triangles. When we are out on the “front lines,” there is the ever present danger of being brought into conflicts which others are having with staff members. Most often our church people are not trying to provoke us into speaking ill of one another, but even their most innocent statements may occasionally tempt us toward agreeing with an opinion or making a statement that lessens the stature of our teammate. These landmines are to be expected in team ministry as people bring their own dysfunctional ways of relating into the church.

The decision we make in these moments will set into motion a chain of events with either positive or negative consequences. Like a train that gathers steam as it finds more and more people to jump on board, it becomes increasingly difficult to stop once started. The decision to not defend our ministry partner will result in negative consequences, wasted hours of sorting out motivations, questions of accuracy and an erosion of trust not easily repaired.

Such coalitions and triangles are described as a “tangled web” by Jack Balswick and Cameron Lee. Researching the phenomenon of church splits and frequent pastoral changes, they discovered that the primary cause of these was the willingness of people and pastors to engage in coalition building and triangle creation.

In relating this finding to staff pastors, the primary goal of a coalition is to get someone on the pastoral team to become a champion, or at least a supporter, of some criticism or cause. Rather than working through issues in the healthy manner of Matthew 18, the coalition is not as interested in solutions as it is in exoneration. Wanting to be right and wanting to impose their views on others, the coalition creates a split between pastors that divides the church.

The division comes from the creation of ongoing triangles in which people choose sides and then intensify common scapegoats or even enemies for what is perceived to be wrong with the church.

The solution to these ever-present temptations is to not yield to the temptation and not join in any coalition or triangle creations. This requires the power of the Holy Spirit to keep our motivation pure, as well as the mastery of the art of communication. Direct communication with one another, listening, having no secret meetings or secret agendas, and saying the obvious are all protections of not only staff relations but of church unity as well. When a person comes to a pastor with criticism about another pastor, then the first pastor directs them to follow the Matthew 18 principle and talk to the other pastor in private first. If the person says that it won't help, they won't listen, or some other avoidant reaction, this smokescreen needs to be ignored and a gentle but firm requirement that they talk to that pastor be expected. Explain to them that this is Jesus' requirement and, if this private conversation doesn't resolve the problem, then and only then do we talk with someone else about it. That other person needs to be a mature and thoughtful person whose goal is to help resolve the issue and who will go with us to the pastor to help resolve it. If this does not work, then the issue needs to be brought to the board and discussed openly, with no secrecy or agenda. If this does not resolve the issue, then the employment of the pastor is at stake. It should be clear that these types of criticisms are important and have life-changing and career-impacting implications.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>11</sup>

David Marting wrote on *Effective Communication* taken “From Herding Cats to Becoming Family”:

“Communication can be my best friend or my worst enemy. Here are a few principles that’ll bring your communication ability out from behind enemy lines, so you can connect with the people around you.

**1. The art of listening.** Almost all college graduates take a speech class at some point, but I've yet to meet one who's taken a class in listening. None of us likes to share our innermost feelings with someone who isn't listening. Listening takes concentration and eye contact. Listening to people makes them feel important. It conveys a sense of care and concern. To insure you're listening, communicate back what you've heard. This helps you concentrate and gives confidence to others.

**2. The sense of sensitivity.** If you ever met me, you probably wouldn't think I looked like the most sensitive guy in the world. You might think I'm a professional wrestler. But contrary to first impressions, I'm more sensitive than an exposed nerve. I'm not referring to my own fragility; I'm talking about an ability to perceive the feelings of others. This hasn't come easily, and I've learned a few lessons the hard way. Being sensitive means that we don't ask questions that shouldn't be asked and we don't push beyond the line of trust. It's important to be aware of people's body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. We must always seek to understand the emotional state of those around us if we ever want to communicate effectively.

**3. Clarity is king.** Misunderstandings can be the bane of any team or family. Often we feel like we've communicated our message when nothing could be further from the truth. Repetition aids clarity. As you work with a team, state and restate your ideas. If your audience doesn't understand your message, then everyone has wasted valuable time.

### **John Cullipher**

Communication that lacks honesty will tear down the spirit of a staff. When the staff has to take a second (or third) look to see if they can depend on what's been said, they'll not want to stay very long. Times get tough enough without having to question the leader's honesty. The biblical challenge is to let our yes be yes, and our no be no. When we always speak with integrity, we strengthen our staff; it's freeing being able to trust what's said within a team.

This doesn't mean that we need to fire away whenever we feel like it. Timing and delivery are also quite important. Too many times we have no idea what's going on in the lives of those around us, and we have a "ready, fire, aim" mentality. You can be right on target in what you are trying to say, but if your timing and delivery are off, it'll discount what you're trying to say. I can't begin to count how many times I've said to myself, "I sure wish I'd said that differently."

Being misunderstood seems to come with leadership, but pausing to consider how best to say what we're about to say can save a lot of pain. We miss so many opportunities to build or mend bridges. Paul challenges us not to let the sun go down before we make the necessary connections with others. He speaks in terms of anger, but this also applies to praise as well.

### **Dave Sanders**

In the beginning, God walked with man and woman, and they talked and hung out. They communicated in the purest fashion—with body, soul, and spirit. Effective communication for us is an ever-present desire and need to get back to that. Within a staff team there are multiple communication styles, some open and some closed; but effective communication is far more than

just speaking to each other. The ultimate communication is shared lives and experiences interpreted together. Respecting the image of God in each individual is key.

Conflict and confrontation are natural and necessary. I've learned that my style is to come at adversity from the side in order to minimize the damage. This is a strength of mine; and it's a weakness, especially when it comes to confrontation in relationships. Delay in confrontation can be a seedbed for bitterness and isolation. With isolation, relationships die. Effective communication finds healthy ways to confront, but confront it must. Communication is also a two-way street. My 15 year-old daughter and I spent an hour and a half yesterday agreeing on breaking patterns that have developed in our communication style. I don't listen because I'm crafting my argumentative response, so she shuts down, so I demand her attention through eye contact, so she glares at me with a defiant focus and clenched jaw—and so on the pattern goes. The feelings and longings and underlying issues of a 15 year-old girl are all there, but I want to be right in crafting the argument. So I'm trying to rebuild effective communication by establishing a two-way street.

Communication happens best face to face. E-mail is for information, not communication. Effective communicators will sit face to face with folks, because there are a zillion different ways we communicate with others beyond words alone.

Effective communication is the bridge between the heart of the leader and the hearts of the people. Without it, the team is stagnant and progress halts. Jesus grafted His heart to the hearts of the people by speaking in parables, preaching with power, and teaching with authority. He listened; He wept; I bet He laughed, too. Effective communication holds people together and shapes them into a team. Without it, you'll find yourself trying to herd a flock of cats.”

### **CASE STUDY**

After the final worship service, Edna, a long-time church member, sought out youth pastor Jeff and began what he thought was an innocent conversation. Jeff had the opportunity to preach that day in the absence of Senior Pastor Scott. Jeff had enjoyed his opportunity to preach but was now relieved to have it over and enjoyed the many compliments he was receiving. Edna said many nice things and even made specific comments on parts of the sermon. Jeff was enjoying the conversation until Edna began to segue into a discussion about Pastor Scott. She began with the signal words, “While I have you here . . . “ She then began to detail a few of her criticisms of Pastor Scott’s sermons and even added a few negative statements concerning his overall ministry. In the affable moment of back door conversations, Jeff found himself nodding in agreement with her statements and enjoyed the feeling that he might in some ways be better than his senior. His recent minor and unresolved conflict with Scott fueled these feelings as well. While not adding anything to Edna’s comments, Jeff had also not redirected her or defended Scott. Later that afternoon, Jeff began to regret his response. When Scott returned from his trip, Jeff explained to him what had happened and together they discussed what, if anything, needed to be done.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Scott: “The body of Christ is always diverse while being united in Christ. As a pastoral staff, we model this. We each bring different gifts and talents to the team and the ministry. Our congregation will, according to their gifts and passions, appreciate each of us in different ways. It is inevitable then that we will each receive comments and input reflecting these differences. It is important that while we each retain our own individuality and provide the best sermons and teachings and counseling of which we are capable, that some may not like the way another pastor does their work. In those moments, we want to point out the good and not join in the criticism. This defense is not meant to be blind or untrue, but simply supportive. Where there are critics, we will direct them to the specific staff member for honest conversation and healthy dialogue.”

Denny: "I appreciate the deep sensitivity with which Jeff is doing his ministry. He did fall prey to a gadfly moment where a lady wants someone to join her in her negativity, but he also was convicted of that silent consent that very afternoon and talked with Scott as soon as he returned. Such a sensitive spirit and open communication will protect them from this type of insidious coalition and triangling temptations. I also appreciate the fact that many people like Edna are not wanting to cause trouble, it is just that they came from a family where bonds were created by finding a common enemy. She is simply wanting to get closer to Jeff and this is the only way she knows. She will probably tell Scott some negative comment about Jeff the next week in the same attempt to be close. This finding of a common enemy in order to be close is something the staff needs to be wary of joining, whether it is about politics or social issues or even the church down the street. Such "joining" is destructive to the life of a person or a congregation."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Jeff: "Edna caught me off guard. I was happy with my sermon that morning and pleased that God would use me in such a meaningful way. My gloating, though, got the best of me. I really began to believe it was through my effort that great ministry was taking place. My recent frustration with Pastor Scott and my perception of his lack of vision caused me to be "ripe" for this temptation. I sinned in quickly agreeing with Edna and forming an alliance with her against my supervisor. I now know I should have thanked her for the genuine compliments and directed her to a more personal conversation with Pastor Scott. I also knew I needed to have a direct conversation with him."

Doug: "Being an associate pastor can also bring with it feelings of insecurity. No matter how long one has been an associate, there can still be the perception by the congregation that you are in 'training.' Therefore, it is easy to assign too much weight to compliments you are given in the context of senior pastor functions, such as delivering sermons, visitations, astute leadership ideas at board meetings, etc. In those moments we begin to think more highly of ourselves than we ought and, if there are any competitive issues lingering between us and the senior pastor, we can count on them to "rear their ugly heads" at those times. We must pray daily for wisdom in responding to the well-meaning and not so well-meaning people of our congregation. They have come to us and it is our spiritual and pastoral responsibility to lovingly model effective communication as well as bring them to a deeper understanding of God's design for the healthy community of faith."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "My subtle agreement with Edna's statements will have no consequence. She is often one to speak freely and she is harmless. I am sure she has spoken to the other pastors already. She probably says things about me, too. I will learn from it and go on. There is no need to follow through with Pastor Scott."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

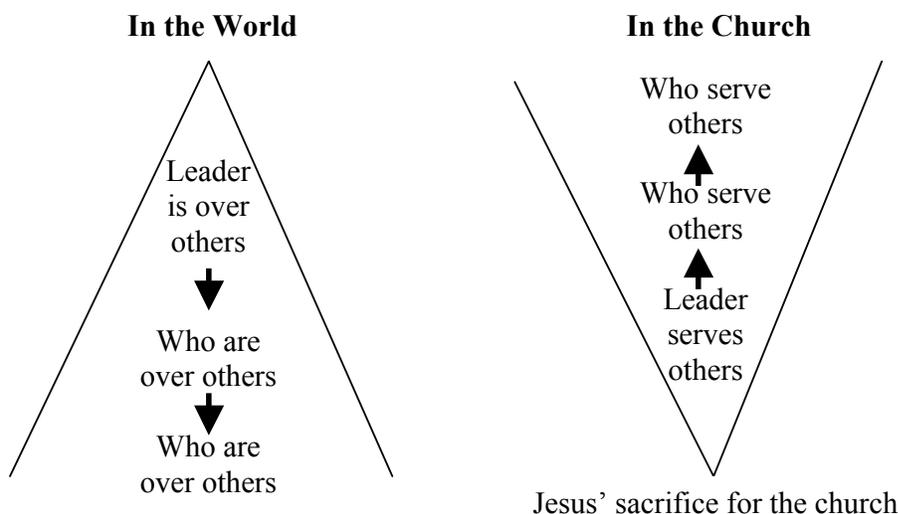
Pesty the pessimist says: "I've already blown it. Pastor Scott is going to be upset about this, but he does need to change his ways. I might as well tell him exactly what Edna told me. Actually Alice told me a few of the same things, so I will mention her issues too. It can't be any worse."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 12 CLEARLY DEFINED LINES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

In the mutually submissive relationships within the Body of Christ (Ephesians 5:21), accountability is sometimes misunderstood. Rejecting the hierarchical power in which a leader might “lord it over” the staff, Jesus teaches that we are to be servant leaders. We have understood this to mean that leadership is taking responsibility for the well-being and success of those we lead. Accepting leadership responsibility and serving those on our staff or in our ministry teams means that accountability is for the well-being of everyone involved: the person being led, the leader, and the people for whom the ministry is intended. Accountability, then, is ultimately to Jesus who empowers the leader who serves the staff, who serve the people in the church, who serve those who need Jesus outside the church. This servant leadership is most often portrayed as an inverted pyramid in which it is not how many people are “under us” in a pyramid of power, but how many people we put before us, as we serve them as their leader in an inverted pyramid of ministry. Graphically, accountability in the church flows downward to Jesus Who leads the church by the example of laying down His life for the church.



When a person attempts to hold a person accountable in a top-down institutional model rather than a servant-up biblical model, the appeal is made most often to institutional authority or positional power rather than to God’s teachings of what is just and moral and responsible behavior. Knowing Jesus to be the example of our lives, that He is accountable to God for the ministry given to Him and that He willingly obeys His Father’s will in His own life, so we have accountability to God through those leaders He has given the responsibility to lead our church or our area of ministry. The weight of responsibility that is on their shoulders is given by God (Titus 1:7) and deserves our sincere honor, respect and willing cooperation. If a leader has to appeal to the power of a board or resort to the power of their position to enforce his or her commands, then the relationship is changed and the nature of the ministry is one of power-over rather than service-under.

This accountability to God through our leaders means that both senior pastors and staff pastors have a point of reference that is outside of any of them. This point of reference teaches both leaders and those within their care how to behave in just, respectful, honoring ways that make it a joy to both lead and follow in the accomplishment of God’s will on earth through each individual and the ministry as a whole.

Though some might think this means that selfish ambition or willful defiance or rebellious individualism is excused, the opposite is true. Whether exhibited in the senior pastor, staff pastor, lay leader or volunteer worker in any level of church life, the accountability is to Christ and respect is due the responsibility/ministry of those with whom we work. The same is true of conference or denominational leadership, pastors share the call to willing cooperation, mutual respect and accountable partnership. In the church, each person fulfills the responsibility they have been given which produces a far more stringent expectation of accountability than the world knows by its power pyramids. It is an accountability that is present even when the supervisor is not present, for it is an accountability to the ever-present Master of our lives and our “work is unto the Lord.”

Accountability then is primarily to Jesus and His authority. All authority is given to Him and whatever leadership or organizational authority a pastor might have comes only from Jesus. If a leader uses any other power or authority, then it is no longer a just community of Jesus Christ, but it has become a worldly authority of rank and privilege. This allows the increasing levels of responsibility to be characterized by respect to those who are our leaders because they carry an increasing amount of the load.

However, it is true that there may be a person who is not a willing, respectful, cooperative, accountable pastor. When this occurs, the Matthew 18 principle is followed:

- Go to them in private – “just between the two of you.” (v.15) The goal of this encounter is to continue the willing, familial relationship of joint ministry as “brothers and sisters.” The private encounter allows us to “win our brother over” to the biblical way of being mutually accountable to each other and thus fulfill our responsibility.
- Take another member (or two) of the staff to meet with the errant pastor, “so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (v.16) The increase of staff presence is to help the person recognize that this isn’t a personal power trip or capricious concern, but the unwillingness, disrespect, uncooperative behavior is witnessed by others on the team and so all are holding one another accountable to behave as Jesus calls us to do.
- Bring it before the entire staff and board in one last attempt to retain the biblical relationship of accountability to Jesus’ call. (v.17)
- If this final appeal does not bring about a willing, respectful, cooperative partnership and accepting of their own and other leader’s responsibilities, then we “treat them as we would a pagan or a tax collector.” (v.17) This means we then must use the power of the Board to bring charges appropriate to the unrepentant, insubordinate, disrespecting person who is not behaving as a pastor and needs to be relieved of their pastoral responsibilities. But even in this situation, we are taught by Jesus to treat pagans, tax collectors and our enemies with Godly love and respect.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>12</sup>

### **The Servant Leader and the Exercise of Forgiveness in the Context of the Organization - Part III by Dr. Jeffrey D. Yergler**

“... Being a servant-leader who intentionally incorporates the work of forgiveness into the total milieu of relationships and organizations represents a holistic or complete response to the overall responsibility of leadership.

## The Servant Leader, Forgiveness and Accountability

The organization, besides being a just and redemptive community, must *also* be a place of performance accountability and proper stewardship of organizational resources and finances. There are three dimensions of the servant-leader and forgiveness that must be seen from the perspective of organizational stewardship.

**First**, forgiveness helps servant-leaders hold employees accountable for the stewardship of the organization in terms of production quality and the return on the investment of assets... Greenleaf (2002) held forgiveness and accountability in balance when he noted that "The servant-leader always empathizes, always accepts the person but sometimes refuses to accept some of the person's effort on performance as good enough" (p. 33-34). If forgiveness within the organization is not connected to personal and/or performance change, its application can be destructive to the employee, the servant-leader and the organization. ... In an organization, the work of forgiveness should *always* result in a changed attitude and improved performance....If forgiveness does not bring about changed behavior and performance, it becomes an expression of cheap forgiveness; while it is gladly received, there is no intent on the part of the recipient to change behavior patterns or performance levels. In this case, from the perspective of the servant leader's responsibility toward the person and organizational stewardship, the employee puts himself or herself in a very tenuous position.

**Second**, forgiveness keeps the servant-leader accountable for his or her own mistakes and errant behaviors. When servant-leaders seek reconciliation because of their own actions, they are choosing to sacrifice self-interest for the sake of service to the greater organizational community. In so doing they broaden and deepen the capacity of the organization to be a place where self-sacrificing service is not only accepted, but highly valued. In no way is this a small or easy step to take for the servant-leader. On the contrary, it is exceedingly difficult. When servant leaders pursue forgiveness, they are clearly "...willing to be deeply accountable without choosing to control the world...[this] requires a level of trust that we are not used to holding"....

**Third**, to be more specific about accountability, there are two primary areas where forgiveness and accountability come into play within the organization: the violation of core values and organizational processes. The *core values* of an organization are the organization's essential and enduring tenets. Often these core values include *relational* boundaries and expectations, how the work involves respect and justice between *human beings* whether they are internal colleagues or external vendors, clients or customers. When there is a serious infringement upon core values, when someone has failed to honor the injunction to provide respect and justice to people, the servant-leader must be especially insightful about the best course of action.... To retain a toxic employee, under the rubric of forgiveness, is foolish, dangerous and irresponsible....Because forgiveness is profoundly restorative, empowering and generative of the human spirit, it must be considered an unparalleled worth-and-esteem creating action that transforms the person at the deepest levels of self-identity, regardless of whether or not they stay with an organization...When it comes to our failures, what most of us know is the punitive nature of the law when, in actuality, what causes the greatest growth is truth coupled with grace.

## The Servant-Leader and the Transforming Organization

... Two final questions, more macro in nature, must be asked and answered: How do servant-leaders help create transformed organizations, and, how does the sustained and consistent work of forgiveness, when included in the repertoire of servant-leadership, create organizations that impact the global community? I would offer three answers in response.

**First**, forgiveness eradicates impersonal and dehumanizing treatment of people for which organizations are known. Because the act of forgiveness communicates value and honor, it connects the organization's vision and mission with the manner in which people are treated in the organization....

**Second**, the practice of forgiveness in servant-leadership can lead to just and fair human resource structures and processes. Because forgiveness places a high value on the inherent worth and well being of people, it leads to the establishment of internal processes, policies and training which recognize and honor that worth and well being....

**Third**, because of the potential size and global location of an organization, the practice of forgiveness can potentially exemplify the politics and practice of redemption, hope and alternative moral models to the larger international community....

### **A Personal Leadership Style that is Restorative and Empowering**

... to be a servant-leader, becoming a *practitioner* of forgiveness rather than merely a theologian who knows *about* forgiveness is a non-negotiable. However, the reality is that leading as a servant-leader and understanding how to exercise forgiveness is no simple task. Not only is this work complex, my own effectiveness as a servant leader who demonstrates forgiveness will *always require personal depth and self-awareness*. My capacity to authentically restore, redeem and empower others and to be vulnerable enough to allow others to restore me is contingent upon my own experience of restoration, redemption and empowerment. There is simply no other way....

**First**, I must always base my capacity to model forgiveness on *remembering my own propensity* toward hubris, arrogance, jealousy and selfishness. Leaders who do the most damage to those they lead lack self-awareness and deny their own broken humanity.... Greenleaf (1996) affirms this danger of focusing only on personal aggrandizement when he notes that "One may be conspicuously successful and at the same time may be destroying oneself and everything that is personally important" (p. 83). We do violence to ourselves, others and the organizations we serve when, as Merton (1958) describes, we choose to live in a world of unreality, blinded to our own identity, selfish ambition and success at any price.

**Second**, I will adhere to the belief that the exercise of forgiveness as a servant-leader releases individuals *from* the lethal, debilitating and immobilizing effects of their own anger, failure and shame....The transformational impact of such liberation is powerful precisely because it asserts that, despite biased self-talk, the onerous opinions of others and costly errors of judgment, one is *always* worthy of love and hope and the possibility of new beginnings.... Servant-leaders always search for the beauty through the tarnished image....

**Third**, I will seek to exercise forgiveness in order to release individuals to the redemptive actions that restore people and organizations and which seek justice in the larger global community. In other words, servant-leaders who live and model forgiveness release others *from* self fragmentation and ridicule so that they themselves can be released to works of liberation and redemption on a relational and organizational level....

... the work of forgiveness, when it is authentically lived in the life of a servant-leader, is an undoing or unraveling of the insidious and unrelenting damage caused by selfish human nature..."

## **CASE STUDY**

Steve first became aware he had a problem when his associate pastor, John, simply ignored his request that he visit Mr. Johnson in the hospital. Although they had been working together for about six months, this was the first time John had no real reason to ignore a request. It is true that after the first month, John often did not do as Steve had requested, but until now he had specific reasons why. But this time, Steve realized John had no reason and so needed to be held accountable.

Having served on two church staffs as an associate before becoming senior pastor at his current church, Steve had learned that the most effective and healthy church staffs were the ones where cooperation and teamwork was the norm. He thought back on his first church and remembered how his senior pastor had come to his office immediately after he had forgotten to do some minor task in his area of responsibility. His senior pastor had been kind, respectful and understanding, while at the same time using it as a “teachable moment” to explain how good ministry required each pastor fulfilling his or her responsibility with willing cooperation, no matter how important or seemingly unimportant it might be. Steve remembered that rather than feeling threatened, he felt a dignity about their partnership and realized that he did not want to let his senior pastor or the other pastors on the staff down. He realized that they needed him. Now it is his turn to teach a young staff pastor the same lesson.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Steve: “I know that I could come in with a hammer and pound on John. He certainly is asking for it. But I also know that will make our relationship all about fear and forced subordination rather than about respect and cooperation. I am not looking for a pastor who does what is needed to be done only because he will get fired if he doesn’t! I am looking for a pastor to partner with me – not only in doing the work that now needs to be done, but also by looking for ways to do more work as more people come to know Jesus and need to be taught God’s truth and ways.”

Denny: “It is easy to take a willful irresponsibility as a direct affront to our authority as a senior pastor. But taking it personally and then using the power of the supervisor to force compliance does not work in long-term ministry. What John needs to understand is that this ministry is God’s. It is not the senior pastor’s, or the board’s, or the conference’s, it is a great co-mission, in which God calls us and gives us the place of co-worker in cooperation with others He calls. In this ministry, Steve is responsible for the entire work and has delegated some of the responsibility to John, but both are accountable to God for doing their work. Part of what Steve is accountable to God to do is to teach John how to be an effective, responsible, respectful staff pastor. This requires a loving confrontation that speaks the truth, in love, so that John can rise not only to this occasion but also to the level of his ability as a pastor.

If John does not feel he can do some task in his area of responsibility, then he needs to talk with Steve about the workload and work out with him what Steve feels are the priorities of his ministry within the priorities of the larger, overall ministry of the church. This will help to make sure that John can be a responsible, respectful and cooperative member of the team of pastors.

If John is unwilling to change and become a cooperative partner with Steve, then the conversation will have to change from one of shared ministry to one of legal documentation of insubordination: verbal warning, written warning and termination. But the goal even of this “treating John as a pagan” is for him to repent and place himself willingly under the accountability of God for his place of ministry on the team. However, if he will not repent, then he will not be able to remain on the team and so he will be replaced.”

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

John: "I know that I should have visited Mr. Johnson, but I just didn't get around to it. Besides, I have enough to do without having to do hospital visitation. I know that Steve would like for me to do a lot of other things for him and I will if I have the time, but I have to establish my priorities and accomplish my tasks first. I've tried to help Steve understand that by doing the things I have to do first. In fact, I have spent the last few months trying to get that across. But he doesn't seem to realize that I don't have time to do other things, so I just told him "no." That should make it clear. Besides, I don't really answer to Steve. I answer to God."

Doug: "John is partly right. He is accountable to God but he is also accountable to his senior pastor. As an associate, he has made the choice to be in a role that requires being accountable to a direct, on-site supervisor. If he doesn't like that arrangement, it is time for him to request assignment as a senior pastor. Then he will have a whole new structure of accountability through the leadership board of his church and his superintendent. He may not find this better after all.

It is never okay to say to a senior pastor or church member that we failed to follow-up because 'we couldn't get around to it.' If we truly do not have the time to do a task then we should immediately request an extension or further options. Healthy senior pastors are reasonable in their requests of associates. In the event that they make a perceived unreasonable request, it is still incumbent upon the associate to talk about it then and there. The same procedures would apply for our response to lay people.

While we don't want to fall prey to the 'tyranny of the urgent', we must also realize that timely responses to requests go a long way in building accountability and trust.

Keeping our senior pastors and lay people aware of our ministries also helps in accountability and trust. I work hard to include Denny in my emails and mailings to parents, youth, worship team and missions team members. He knows what I'm doing, he prays for me, he supports me and, when it comes time for him to make a request of me, I can know it will be reasonable and considerate. This works equally well with lay people when I am faithful to publicize meetings, events and ministry opportunities in the newsletter and bulletin. Their requests and responses are directly related to my accountability to them."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "When you have a sincere pastor on staff who spends time daily in prayer, then God will correct him or her. You won't have to confront them about what they are or aren't doing, God will. Just be patient. They will change at God's prodding."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "It is easy for a staff pastor to negotiate a limit to the responsibility for which he is willing to be held accountable. The fact that a senior pastor has no such limit and is responsible not only for the well-being of the church but also of the pastors and staff, is his problem. If he can't handle the responsibility for the whole church, then he should go work for a senior pastor somewhere as his staff pastor."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 13 RESPECT FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

In the second chapter, we discussed the reality that a clear understanding of God's call provides us with our most effective deployment as a staff member. Our spouses may be supportive of us in our calling, but it is our calling and not theirs. Our spouses have their own gifts and deployment by the same Lord we follow, and it may be working with us in the church or it may be something different from that of church ministry.

In former days, pastoral spouses were often considered a part of the pastor's calling. Many spouses did not have employment outside the home and were therefore often available, willing and able to fill the vacant positions of the church. Stereotypically, pastor's wives were assigned the role of assisting by ordering flowers, playing the piano/organ, directing the Children's ministries program and assuming other supportive roles. This created expectations among some parishioners that spouses were to give most of their time to the church and were critical if they chose not to do so.

Additionally, the pastor's children were also seen as being "called" to be model children and to be present at every church event. This pressure to "be perfect" as they grew up within the watchful and often critical eye of the congregation was difficult for many "preacher's kids." The PK's were honored to experience God's presence in pervasive ways that opened their hearts to God, but they were also exposed to hypocrisy and forced to experience the demands and struggles present within the church as well. The danger of this dichotomy often had the impact of making our children "spiritually conflicted."

Thankfully, some of these perceptions concerning our spouses and children have changed, but even so, there can still be unwritten and sometimes unfair expectations assigned by church and other staff members to their teammates' spouses and children. These become difficult when a pastor's teenager won't attend the youth group, or a pastor's spouse won't come to the women's retreat – or to the men's retreat, as the case may be. It is also difficult when any problems occur within any pastor's family since it not only causes the entire staff to be in prayer as we are concerned about "our children," but it also takes the attention of the pastor from their work, meaning the rest of the staff has to step up and help out by being flexible.

Some of the greatest joys we have experienced are when our pastoral staff has been an extended family as well as a team of professionals in helping us raise our children. From the willingness of spouses to help teach our children in Sunday School classes, to the openness of our children to turn to our youth pastor when they are growing through the teen years, to the many prayer times we've shared as we've prayed for one another's families, marriages and children's lives – all build and support our families. The pictures we have on our refrigerators and walls are not only those of our own family but those of our staff's families as well.

One of the staff's primary responsibilities in this area is to protect one another's spouses and children from the unique pressures of ministerial life. This protection comes from not adding to the congregation's unrealistic expectations of "perfect children" or "perfect families." This protection comes through mutual prayer and support. And this protection comes by supporting one another when any staff pastor's family is being attacked at any level.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>13</sup>

Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick study the unique experience of being a family in ministry in their book: Life in a Glass House. They write:

“Edwin Friedman suggests that no other work environment functions more like a family than the ministry. The church is not just the place where the minister labors; it is not just another work system to which we may apply some dispassionate organizational theory. The church, the local congregation is a *family*, subject to the same emotional processes, the same joys and sorrows that all families must face. One minister’s son speaks of his home church as “an extended family of one thousand.” We must keep in mind that the clergy family lives and breathes in the midst of a larger, extended family: the congregation....

How might we understand this relationship? Our own research and a review of the literature suggest two broadly overlapping themes. The first of them is that intense and often emotionally charged *role expectations* are placed on members of the clergy family...The second theme concerns the ways in which problems of expectations are experienced at the different boundaries in the ecology of the clergy family....In particular we outline three stressful “boundary problems” that face the minister’s family.

1. The first is called *idealization*, in which superhuman expectations of members of the clergy family effectively prevent them from forming differentiated peer relationships with church members.
2. The second, which we call *impoverishment*, reflects the additional difficulty of forming supportive relationships outside the congregation.
3. Finally, the problem of *intrusion* deals with what is commonly called “the fishbowl syndrome.”

Cameron Lee writes directly about our children in PK: Helping Pastors’ Kids through their Identity Crisis. Noting the unique dynamics of the multiple staff experience he writes:

“...congregations are not the only ones who hold power. Where there is more than one pastor on staff, there is frequently a tangible hierarchy of power. Associate pastors may serve under a senior pastor who wields authority like a stick. In the end, of course, it is the associate who loses the power struggle and the family feels victimized...This is sad indeed. The church as a human organization can be so infected by power games and striving for position that it remains only a human organization instead of functioning as the body of Christ. Faced with worldly politicking and manipulation, many PKs learn to be wary of giving their trust.

Why should PKs be trusting? From their vantage point, they see a great deal of hypocrisy in the church: People who say they are Christians yet behave in very un-Christian ways. From the rank and file all the way to the pinnacle of church leadership, PKs see people who profess and then profane the faith...even among the church staff: [testimony of a PK] “The hypocrisy I saw was more with the leaders and church staff – a lot of back-stabbing or dealing under the table with certain issues.” [another] “There was another minister who was a hypocrite. He hated the church, worked on the side, but smiled every Sunday. It’s no wonder his kids turned out the same way. Perhaps this contributes to my ambivalence. I’m not set against the church, but I’m waiting to see a good one.”

## **CASE STUDY**

Pastor George is senior pastor at a large suburban church. He has been there for many years and has seen a good number of staff people come and go during his tenure. George is the son of a pastor. He was born in a parsonage and lived in parsonages all through his younger years. During that time, his dad led many smaller churches and overall seemed to be happy and encouraged in his ministry. During those early years, George also observed the active role his mom took in the life of the church. She was on several committees, the leader of the Women's Missionary organization and helped his dad with many administrative tasks, including putting together the weekly bulletin.

In George's present ministry, his wife Mary does not work outside the home and is also very active in the life of the church just like his mom. Mary appropriately and happily follows through on George's requests for assistance and is a tremendous emotional and spiritual support to him as they begin each day in a shared time of prayer. George's and Mary's kids also enjoy church life and can be seen anywhere and everywhere in church activities. They are very visible and overall the church seems to be proud of their pastoral family.

However, George's perspective on the pastoral family involvement has regularly spilled over into his expectations of staff. On the team with him are two full time and one part-time staff member. All are married and all have children ranging in age from newborn through sophomore in high school. Two of the spouses work outside the home for both financial and career reasons. The third is presently home on maternity leave but intends to go back to her career after a reasonable amount of time. These spouses are members of the church and serve in a few selected ministries but not nearly to the degree that Mary does.

Lately, it seems that the implications are becoming stronger, especially in staff meetings, that pastoral families need to be doing more to support the church. There is a shortage of volunteers in many areas and pastoral spouses have the gifts and talents to fill these roles. Although George realizes this is not appropriate at some level, his implied statements are now causing staff members to cast wary eyes toward one another. Private discussions about this attitude are becoming common-place in the staff offices as they begin to realize this unwritten expectation of their senior pastor and the congregational culture.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

George: "Ministry is a family affair. I accepted God's calling into ministry just as my dad and mom did. I greatly value the support and love of Mary in this calling. We are a team. There are times when she understands the need to stretch herself and fill an important role in the life of the church for the good of the ministry and for the sake of the kingdom of God. This is part of the package she accepted when she married me, knowing I was called into pastoral ministry. Our kids also accept their role to be leaders to the other children and youth of the congregation. They understand their visibility and the expectation we have that they will be joyfully active in the life of the church."

Denny: "The art of raising a pastoral family requires the full support of both staff and congregation. Since each family is unique, the staff and congregation need to be aware and expect that this will look different in each pastoral family. Some pastoral couples work together as a team. Others have dual careers. Still others have a spouse who focuses on caring for the family. All are not only acceptable but also celebrated. The primary concern is that staff look after one another - one another's marriages and one another's children. Praying for each other, providing supportive concern, covering for one another and standing together in the face of unwarranted or uninformed criticism are vital ways the staff cares for one another's families.

In this situation, the staff pastors need to talk with George and state the obvious: They are feeling pressure to live their family life in the same way George is. Stating the obvious allows everyone to talk about the feelings and thoughts they have and come to an open resolution that clarifies the expectations. Once clarified, then each pastoral couple can make adjustments that are consistent with both their own family and their church family.”

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Staff: “We are so thankful to have devout Christian spouses who support us in ministry and don’t have any conflict with us about our call. We are also thankful that they are capable people and able to have exciting careers of their own. We enjoy the cross-fertilization this brings not only to our home but also to our ministries. Though we are well paid, ministry is not a highly paying profession and their work does help supplement our income and provide for college for our children as well as retirement. In addition to being our spouses and parenting our children they have chosen a few positions in the church that fit their gifts and calling. This works within the profile of all their present life experiences and provides a more normal experience for our children.

Our children are dear to us and we want, more than anything, for them to love Jesus and follow Him forever. Like other children, they have lots of homework, times with friends, sports and other extra-curricular obligations. While we have a clear understanding on the non-negotiables of their spiritual growth, we also recognize that it can be counterproductive to require their attendance at every church function. We want them to enjoy their participation in the body of Christ and find reward and challenge in the ministries they experience.”

Doug: “Whenever Paul said that it is better to not be married I thought he was crazy. Now I understand what he was trying to say: If one wants to just focus on ministry and do it well then don’t sacrifice part of it to marriage and then family. Being a husband and a father while being in ministry is both wonderful and extremely challenging. I deeply care that my wife and children love the Lord and love the church. I have seen too many who loved the Lord, resented the church (for the pressure it put on them) and then ultimately quit loving the Lord. I can think of very few more tragic events than this. I constantly pray for wisdom in balancing my role as a pastor with my role of being a loving husband and father. I want each member of my family to know they can be who God created them to be, not what the church assigned them to be.”

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: “All pastoral families understand their primary obligation is to support the church through ‘thick and thin.’ Though it may be hard at times, ultimately they will be rewarded and the church will reap the benefits of spiritual harvest. Children will benefit from the experience of self-sacrifice to serve others, and God will honor the sacrifices the family makes to serve His church.”

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: “This whole topic is a minefield. Pastor’s spouses and children should be completely left alone when it comes to church obligations. Any invitation or challenge to them will cause them to resent the church and ultimately lose their faith. After all, the church did not hire the spouse or the children so they shouldn’t put any expectations upon them.”

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at resolving situation would be?

## Chapter 14 JUST COMPENSATION

There are two errors that are easily made when it comes to compensation. The first is to make it dependent upon a subjective opinion of the board or committee responsible for setting salaries. The second is to treat all staff the same and not consider the weight of responsibility each carries, number of hours each one works, education they have attained, training they have acquired, years of service they have given and cost of living in the area.

1. Objective Criteria: With the increase in resources available to church boards and committees, it is no longer acceptable for a church to simply choose a subjective number at which to set pastoral salaries. Such subjectivity is easily distorted by the emotions and relationships of the members on the board which could cause compensation to be inappropriate and can then cause unnecessary competition and comparison among the staff.
  - A. To solve this, most congregations now use some type of resource to help set a just compensation policy. The “Church Law and Tax Report” publishes an annual document titled: “Annual Compensation Handbook for Church Staff.”  
<http://store.churchlawtodaystore.com/20cohaforchs1.html>  
This report takes into consideration a variety of factors and allows a fair and just compensation decision to be made for every staff member. This removes the subjectivity of the members of the board and allows the staff to accept differences in pay as based on standard operating procedures across all churches. This helps remove the presence of competition and comparison. It also provides a clear standard by which a staff person’s compensation will increase, i.e., more education, more responsibility, larger congregation, etc.
  - B. The necessity of having a separate committee, or subcommittee of the Finance Board, is also now the acceptable procedure. Since the compensation of pastoral staff is usually the most expensive decision within a church budget, it needs to be given study, deliberation and prayerful reflection. To make it the decision of people who are only going on their subjective feelings at the moment in the board meeting, or comparing the salary to their own, or becoming a champion for a staff person based upon their own relationship with the pastors, etc. is not only foolish, it can breed systemic injustice.
  - C. A separate, objective compensation committee can also research the several ways that compensation can be provided for a pastor besides that of cash salary. (See research)
2. The second error is to treat all staff the same. This can come from several obvious misunderstandings.
  - A. The first misunderstanding is, that since all pastors are pastors, then they should all be compensated the same. This is not only unfair to the senior pastor upon whom the entire responsibility of the ministry rests, it is unfair to those staff pastors who have larger areas of responsibility compared to other staff pastors. An objective criteria as used in the handbook noted above represents a professional standard that is universally applied.
  - B. To compensate all pastors the same also does not take into consideration the differences in their abilities, training, education,

commitment as shown by years of service, and other variables. These variations in gifts, education and commitment all contribute to the reality that those who are better equipped are also the ones to whom most people turn for pastoral assistance and leadership. The effective pastor creates work as they expand their area of ministry, whereas a managing pastor does not “expand” their work but only “manages” and “maintains” their work. The logical result of expansion or growth in the church is that a pastor who expands their area of responsibility and effectiveness will also have their compensation increase.

The healthy church staff has an objective criteria for establishing compensation, and does not keep this information a secret. All salaries are known not only by the board, but also by other staff members and the congregation as a whole. As the openness of this information and decision is standard practice, it allows any person who feels they are being unfairly treated to address the situation with respect and honor, just as they are being treated with respect and honor.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>14</sup>

### **THE PASTOR’S SALARY - AN INVESTMENT By Richard D. Locke**

*Richard D. Locke is a certified public accountant with over forty years of experience. His firm, Locke & Associates, P.C., is a full service accounting firm which specializes in taxation and nonprofit services.*

“...In Isaiah 58, the Lord’s reply why God had not taken notice of their fasting is that on that day of their fast, they did as they pleased and exploited all their workers. To exploit in this case means to under pay or under compensate a worker.

The salary review by an independent third party is the answer for the spiritual adequacy of your pay and to protect you from unreasonable compensation questions from the IRS. A salary review every other year, referencing it in your minutes, and setting adequate compensation is all that need to be done. The salary review will cover not only a reasonable salary range but will also include comparisons to related churches and include housing allowance, retirement plans, health insurance, automobiles, and reimbursement of out of pocket pastoral expenses.

Our firm has done a number of salary reviews for pastors and staff and we have reached four conclusions:

1. Most pastors are under paid.
2. There is a fear among the pastors that the IRS might consider their compensation unreasonable and this is keeping salaries lower.
3. Family members working for the church are not being paid.
4. The pastor is not receiving all of the tax free fringe benefits.

Seldom do we do a review and tell the pastor that he is over paid according to his peers. Only one pastor was at the top of the normal range for a comparable size church. This means that 95 percent of all pastors are underpaid.... The majority of the pastors are not even receiving the average pay to similar churches. Most pastors should be in the upper ¼, not just the middle range.

After the salary review and proper approval of the pastor's salary, there are a number of additional steps or fringe benefits that can maximize the pastor's compensation from a tax point of view.

After the salary has been determined, there needs to be a proper allocation to the housing allowance. The housing allowance, called the pastor's tax shelter, was improved recently when the courts overruled the IRS allowing 100% of a salary to be classified as housing allowance. The IRS has not acquiesced with this. However, we can aggressively claim 75 or 80 percent of your salary as housing allowance. To the extent you spend your housing allowance, it is not subject to income tax. The biggest error in this is that the majority of the pastors do not have enough housing allowance to offset all of the allowable costs. This is the equivalent of losing tax free income. For example, if your housing allowance was \$20,000 for the year and you spent \$24,000, your W-2 would show \$4,000 higher and be subject to tax.

The housing allowance allows pastors to have a larger residence because you get to deduct the housing allowance and the interest and taxes a second time on your schedule A, itemized deductions. This lets you reduce your taxes and lets you make major improvements to a personal residence. This combined with most gains on the sale of a residence are tax free....

All pastors should have an adequate health insurance policy. The payment of the health insurance by the church is a tax free benefit to the employees. This plan should cover not only the pastor but also all the pastor's family members. Since this is a tax-free benefit, we recommend a good plan with very good coverage and a low deductible. Health insurance can be provided for the pastor without covering all employees...

The pastor's automobile should be owned by the church. This will require the pastor keeping a log or estimate of his personal usage. This personal usage of the automobile will be included in the pastor's W-2. This is a cheap way to own an automobile because the pastor's cost is the personal use included in his W-2 at his income tax rate. It is important to address any insurance related issues in order to assure there is proper coverage for the pastor's use of the church-owned vehicle.

Perhaps you are confident that your salary is reasonable. Let me ask you some questions: Is your spouse working in the church? How many hours is she/he working and what is her/his pay? The second thing we see is that most of the spouses are underpaid if they are paid at all. If the spouse isn't getting paid and she/he is working at the altar, I think you have a problem of a bad seed again. I suggest you keep track of how much the spouse works and in what area, and determine a reasonable compensation.

A review of your salary also includes a review of the financial condition of your church or ministry. If your salary is way below even the average compensation, the church may not be able to raise the wages immediately, however, it will let you devise a three or five year plan for moving the compensation forward. This salary review is also a great benefit to the board members. This will assist them in approving the proper salary. If you know you are under paid and the salary is set by board members, the independent review is an easy way to approach the subject with the board members...."

## **CASE STUDY**

When James interviewed for the position as an associate pastor at First Church, the board promised him a salary based on his education and experience. Having come from a congregation that used the "Annual Compensation Handbook for Church Staff," James was familiar with the charts which set the standard for pastors and associate pastors. Assuming this was what the Board meant, James looked at the manual and budgeted what his compensation would be based upon his seminary degree and ten years of experience in a church with the budget and size of First Church.

However, after he accepted the position and moved his family and began his responsibilities, he was amazed to discover that the Board had put his compensation package at 2/3rds the figure on the chart. He came into his senior pastor's office feeling betrayed and angry.

His senior pastor, Charles, had been excited to have a seminarian on staff. Knowing that education is very important, but not having had the opportunity of attending seminary himself, Charles had accepted the compensation First Church had given him for the five years of his tenure without question or complaint. He came from the "old school" and, though he knew the compensation was lower than most, he had placed the issue of how much he got paid in God's hands thirty years earlier when he first began ministry. His naturally frugal ways had made it workable for himself and his family.

When he saw the anger on James' face, even though James spoke with respect and proper voice inflection, Charles could hardly hear his words. He thought, "Have we made a mistake? There is no way a pastor should ever get upset like this over money." Charles' mind became clouded and he felt defensive as he thought, "James has only been here two weeks. What will he be like a year from now?"

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Charles: "You might call me old-fashioned, but I do not believe pastors should get involved in helping set the standard or the pay for pastoral staff. I trust God and I trust the church to be fair. So when James came in to my office with these expectations of a salary that is equal to mine, just because some chart in some manual says that should be the associate pastor's salary for our size church with his education and experience, I think it is pushy and inappropriate. I know the Board will be offended when I tell them what James said."

Denny: "We often think that lay people know how to be members of a board directing a church simply because they are sincere and committed people or direct a business or professional office. The truth is that in a church large enough to need a pastoral staff, the complexity of the organization requires both training and resources for board members. In this area, the training and resource includes the use of objective criteria to establish a truly fair and equitable compensation schedule for all church staff. Charles has abdicated his responsibility to make sure that a just and equitable standard practice is established. Though the pastors do not get involved in setting the actual pay for themselves, we do give the board the training, understanding and resources to do so fairly. In this case study, James made assumptions instead of clarifying what the board meant. These assumptions resulted in his being unfairly treated both in his salary and in his complaint. If the church had an open and objective compensation process, then the board would have a strong foundation for both hiring new staff and dealing with complaints."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

James: "I could not believe it. When I told the pastor of my former church what happened, he could not believe it either. When I told him that Charles was working for almost \$20,000 below what he should be compensated, and that when I told him so, Charles only got more defensive, neither of us knew what to do. If my senior pastor is willing to take such a lower salary than is standard, then his decision causes all of us to not be fairly compensated. It was already going to be tight with the amount I thought I was getting, now I don't know what I'm going to do."

Doug: "James is in a tough situation, but he made the error of not asking the hard question in the hiring process. In some ways, it was a reasonable mistake. He trusted the hiring board on their word. In hindsight, it would have been better to have requested the real numbers. In ministry, especially in the early years, we are reluctant to talk about salary. We are passionate about serving God in ministry, we are thankful to find a position and so we take what is offered. If what is offered is not reasonable, we will later find ourselves 'distracted' by financial problems and plaguing doubts associated with a church that we perceive doesn't care."

As associates or senior pastors, it is okay to care for ourselves and our families while leaning on the guidance and wisdom of God to keep our financial requests reasonable and appropriate."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "James should just stay quiet and work hard. With faithful service, the church will grow and the board will be thankful and his compensation will increase. Besides, God will meet his needs if he is in His will."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "It is foolish to think that a church board is going to take care of you as a pastor. All boards are more interested in the bottom line than they are in taking care of their pastors. James should chalk this one up to experience and look for another church – one with a board who follows the manual. It's too bad, but life isn't easy. James won't make the same mistake twice."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 15 INVESTMENT IN STAFF

Conventional wisdom has proclaimed that “you get what you pay for.” This is not only true in the purchase of equipment, but also in the investments we make to educate, train and equip the pastoral staff. This investment pays large dividends not only in the lives of the pastors but also in those of the entire congregation. Pastors who have been the recipients of the investment of a conference or congregation are not only appreciative, but also experience more joy in ministry and are even more invested themselves in the life of the church.

Since the dividends of investing in staff are so obvious, the question quickly becomes: How do we accomplish this?

The answer to this is situational and depends on the opportunities available. The church needs to budget for advanced degrees, sabbatical renewals and continuing education costs. In addition, the staff needs to coordinate their schedules such that they can cover for one another so that the pastor does not return to an avalanche of work still needing to be done.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>15</sup>

In March of 2005, Ron Sellers presented the findings of this survey: **Ministers Find Time, Money for Continuing Education.**

“ Research results being released for the first time in the March/April edition of "Facts & Trends" magazine show most Protestant clergy are involved with continuing their education through classes and/or seminars, but a majority feels their budget for additional education is insufficient. Additionally, slightly under half say they are encouraged by their church’s leaders to continue their education using church time and/or funds.

Conducted for LifeWay Christian Resources by Ellison Research (Phoenix, Ariz.), the study took a representative sample of 860 Protestant church ministers nationwide, asked pastors about their participation in classes, conferences, and seminars, as well as their church’s budget for such activities.

Only 9 percent of all senior pastors had not attended any classes, conferences, or seminars in the last two years. The most common types attended were:

- Leadership/management skills - 54 percent
- Church growth - 52 percent
- Prayer/spiritual growth/renewal - 49 percent
- Evangelism/outreach training - 45 percent
- Personal skills training - 28 percent
- Discipleship/small group development - 26 percent
- Worship planning and ideas - 24 percent
- Marriage and family ministry - 19 percent
- Financial management/fundraising - 16 percent
- Youth ministry - 11 percent
- Church marketing/promotion - 9 percent
- Children’s ministry - 8 percent
- Multi-cultural ministry - 6 percent
- Single adult ministry - 1 percent
- Other types - 14 percent

The study showed that church growth and leadership or management skills development are less common among pastors in small churches than among those leading churches with 100 or more in regular attendance.

### **Pastor's age not a factor**

There are relatively few differences by the pastor's age or the church's region of the country. Fifteen percent of pastors age 60 or older had not completed any continuing education courses in the last two years, compared to 8 percent of those under 60. Younger ministers are more likely than older ones to have focused on leadership or management skills as well as marriage and family ministry. Youth ministry and personal skills training are both particularly popular in the Northeast, while evangelism and outreach training is particularly popular in the South.

There are some significant differences according to denomination. The average minister has received continuing education on 3.6 different topics during the last two years; for Methodists, this is 4.5 different topics. Southern Baptists, also, are more likely than average to be trained on a variety of topics, with an average of 4.0 over the last two years.

Some topics are particularly popular in certain denominational groups. Church growth training, for example, is something undertaken by 70 percent of Methodist ministers and 60 percent of Southern Baptists, but just 44 percent of Presbyterians and 28 percent of Lutherans. Another example is that 62 percent of Southern Baptists have continuing education with evangelism or outreach, compared to just 33 percent of Pentecostal/charismatic pastors.

### **Seldom a church budget item**

Even though most ministers have participated in seminars or classes, 36 percent say their church does not budget any money for this, and the average church that does budget for this reserves just \$1,504 per year for continuing education for their senior pastor.

Half of the smallest churches have no money at all in their budget for training for the senior pastor (compared to 24 percent of churches with 100 - 199 people attending, and 16 percent of larger churches). Pentecostal and Baptist churches (other than Southern Baptist) are the least likely to budget for the pastor's training, while Presbyterian and Lutheran churches are the most likely to do so. Overall, 82 percent of mainline churches have money in the budget for the pastor's continued education, compared to just 62 percent of evangelical churches.

Among churches with more than one paid staff member, 74 percent budget funds for continuing education for staff other than the senior pastor (an average of \$1,419 per church among those that do, although sometimes that amount is split among multiple staff members).

Only a minority of churches (32 percent) have any money budgeted for continuing education for key lay leaders, and the average for all lay leaders combined is under \$1,200 annually.

Only 45 percent of pastors believe their budget for continued education is sufficient, while 55 percent call it insufficient. Lutherans (61 percent) and Presbyterians (56 percent) are more likely than clergy in other denominations to believe their budget for this is sufficient.

Among churches with multiple staff members, 46 percent of pastors feel their budget for continuing education of their staff is sufficient, while 54 percent call the budget insufficient.

Where pastors really think their budget is insufficient is in training for key lay leaders; just 27 percent feel they have a sufficient budget for this.

### **Little encouragement to continue education**

One additional issue is that many pastors aren't being encouraged to further their education by leaders in the church (deacons, elders, board of directors, etc.). Forty-eight percent of all ministers say they are encouraged to continue their education using church time and/or funds. Another 8 percent say they are encouraged to further their education, as long as they use personal time and/or money to do so. Many (40 percent) say they are neither encouraged nor discouraged to continue their education, while 2 percent report being actively discouraged from doing so.

The smaller the church, the less likely the pastor is to be encouraged to further his or her education. Only 39 percent of ministers in small churches say they are encouraged to attend classes and seminars using church time and/or funds, compared to 55 percent in mid-size churches, and 64 percent in larger congregations.

The attitudes of church leadership toward pastoral education vary significantly by denomination. Most Presbyterian ministers are encouraged to further their education with church time or funds (73 percent), as are a majority of Methodists (57 percent) and half of Lutherans (51 percent). Pentecostals and Southern Baptists are the ones most likely to report ambivalence toward continued education by their church leadership. In general, there is far less encouragement to attend conferences and seminars in evangelical churches than in mainline Protestant churches; 39 percent of pastors in evangelical churches are encouraged to further their education using church time/money, compared to 64 percent in mainline churches.

Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, found it particularly noteworthy that not even half of all senior pastors are encouraged to further their education using church time or funds. "The ironic thing is that the laity still has the view that it's the pastor's job to do everything in the church, from growing the congregation to planning worship to being a youth leader, yet many don't wish to equip their pastor to be better at doing any of those things," Sellers noted. "Most people in business will tell you that the more skilled a CEO is the better off that CEO's company is. Pastors are essentially the CEOs of local churches. Why would you not want your CEO to be better trained and equipped?"

The findings seem to support one common perception about mainline and evangelical pastors, but explode another. "There's a perception that evangelicals sometimes do not value formal education as much as mainline Protestants," Sellers said. "This study shows mainline churches budgeting more money for training, putting more emphasis on this, and sending ministers to training on a greater variety of topics. There's also a perception that certain topics are of greater interest to evangelicals - particularly small groups, church growth, church marketing, creative worship and evangelism. But in all of these areas, mainline ministers were just as likely, and sometimes more likely, to attend classes or conferences as were evangelical ministers."

More complete data from these questions, including denominational detail, is available at [Ellison Research](#).

## **CASE STUDY**

Pastor Sam is senior pastor at a medium sized church in the northwestern part of the United States. He is honored to serve with two other full-time associates. All three have completed their seminary degrees and are happily serving this growing church. Sam has served this church for five years. Within the last two years, the two additional staff pastors were hired right out of seminary.

In his sixth year, Sam felt it was time to take advantage of a continuing education opportunity offered by his denomination. The denomination would cover his seminar registration and housing expenses. He only needed a plane ticket and he would be able to enjoy this challenging, growth-producing experience. He proposed the idea at his recent board meeting but it was rejected. The board had several concerns. First, there was no available money in the budget. Second, they thought he already had plenty of training because of his seminary education. And finally, they did not think it was right to pay someone to complete more education on church time and at church expense. Any further learning could be obtained through reading and study on his own.

Discouraged but not defeated, Sam continued to pursue continuing education for himself over the next few years. Though his proposals continued to be met with a rejection of church time and money, Sam funded his own experiences and used vacation time to attend the classes. After his associate pastors had been there for five years, Sam also tried to propose further education for them, explaining that this was common practice for pastors and that the investment would be great for the congregation. These proposals also met with rejection.

As Sam struggled to care for their growing congregation and shifting culture, he also began to observe the lack of new ideas and fresh perspectives coming from the staff meetings and board retreats. It seemed their “wells were drying up.”

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Sam: “I am grateful for the opportunity to have a seminary education. The depth of experience and knowledge it has given me is invaluable. However, I want to keep learning. My time in seminary taught me to love learning and that I need continual growth, not just in my spiritual walk but in my understanding of ministry and how to lead the church as well. The people of this church love me but it seems they don’t appreciate the need for my continuing education. I am not sure how to keep my staff motivated and growing when funds are not even given to me to do further training. I won’t ask them to use their own funds and vacation time to do this.”

Denny: “When working with a congregation, it is important to understand its culture. It is obvious that in Sam’s congregation, the members are unfamiliar with the various professions’ continuing education requirements or of educational sabbatical leaves for academic renewal. Since this is true, it does not do any good for Sam to continually present proposals which don’t speak the language of this congregation. Instead, Sam needs to understand why the congregation thinks the way it does and begin to educate them by changing the categories they use to evaluate this request. This can be done by not only giving them articles on the subject, but also by inviting denominational leaders who created the continuing education standards to speak with the board. If they are treated with dignity and respect, the board members can come to understand the importance of investing in their staff and the dividends that this will pay to their ministry.”

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Staff: “We feel unappreciated. We have asked our senior pastor for time and money for continuing education but he has said that the board did not approve of this. Surely he must realize how important this is and take leadership in this area. There must be some money he can re-allocate. We know he values our work but we are not seeing it reflected in our continued care. We can imagine he is under pressure but is the statement, ‘I can’t do anything about it’ true?”

Doug: “In this scenario, where the senior pastor does value continuing education, it is important for the associate pastors to be empathetic to his/her predicament. He/she must trust that the senior pastor does have their best interest at heart and is equally discouraged that his repeated proposals are not given their due priority. If the associate has latitude in their own budget, then it may be time to allocate some of their funds for continuing education on a once every two or three year basis.

This whole situation changes if the senior pastor is receiving regular funding for continuing education but is not encouraging the associate staff to do likewise. In this case, the associate will want to engage the senior in healthy dialogue and look for creative ways to free time and money for this priority.”

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: “Continuing education can most efficiently be done through internet study and reading books. Sam and his staff can do creative things to improve their ministries besides spending money on educational seminars. If they are having rich devotional times, their wells will overflow with inspired new ideas.”

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: “Sending people to seminars is just a misuse of time and money that could be better spent on pastors serving their people. Everyone knows that these educational seminars are just ways to get a vacation on company time. These pastors sound like a “high maintenance” staff to me. The board needs to continue to refuse their requests for extra “perks” or they will be swamped with special requests.”

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 16

### PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The tendency of a larger church staff is to become increasingly isolated. This is due to two interactive dynamics. The first is that a larger church has an unending workload. The staff can feel so overwhelmed with all that needs to be done that they bury themselves in their own church ministry. The second isolating dynamic is that a larger church has little need to cooperate with other churches either in their city or in their denomination. Large enough to provide their own retreats, camps, seminars, schools, counseling centers and outreach programs, the larger church staff can do it all with little help. The result of this isolation is a weakening of pastoral support, perspective and effectiveness.

Any professional who works in isolation will soon find themselves limited by their own experience. To protect against this, all of us invest in continuing education, journal reading and sabbatical enrichments. But one of the most helpful tools is the natural and frequent interaction with other pastors. These can occur by cultivating relationships with other pastors over lunch and setting up recreational times together as well as by being an active participant in the area's clergy or ministerial associations. These are often available in a variety of venues, from prayer times, to enrichment luncheons to joint seminars. Depending upon the size of the community, there are often such gatherings for various positions on staff, ie., a gathering of youth pastors, music pastors, education pastors, etc.

The support of the entire staff is needed for involvement in such enriching relationships. Though it requires time away from the actual ministry at the church, it provides opportunities for sharpening the skills that make the time spent in ministry more effective. Therefore the staff as a whole and the senior pastor in particular need to verbally and actively support this involvement. It is possible for a pastor to become overly involved in such meetings. If this is a staff pastor, then the senior pastor needs to help the associate find an appropriate level of involvement. If this is the senior pastor, then a trusted associate needs to address this difficulty privately, following the Matthew 18 principles.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>16</sup>

The obvious loss experienced in becoming an isolated though cohesive staff is explored by Susan Carol Losh:

“Alas, almost certainly the identical dynamics that produce "good" outcomes in groups also produce the "bad" outcomes in groups. The major culprit is the desire among group members to remain in the group and to please one another. This is what gives groups an enhanced ability to influence members. A secondary villain is a structure that discourages--or at least that fails to actively encourage--interaction between the group and its outside environment.

What does this imply? Cohesive groups tend toward surface--sometimes superficial--harmony. To avoid confrontation and other forms of ill-will members will publicly agree even when they privately disagree...Surface harmony combined with perceived group enemies can contribute to **group insularity** or insulation, the tendency of group members to interact primarily with each other and to avoid cross-group contacts. Once an imposed group homogeneity emerges, the group has closed itself off from cross-fertilization of ideas or from corrective input for its mistakes. Further, since members largely interact with one another, they may begin to feel invulnerable and superior to those who are not group members.

Given such self-protective strategies, members can propose extreme ideas and face neither challenges nor corrections from other group members or from outsiders. Problems may be ignored or glossed over. The group is now on a one-way trip to bad decision-making. Group failures become interpreted as enmity from the outside environment and the cycle continues.

Irving Janis coined the term "Groupthink" to describe this process and cycle of "bad decision-making." Bad decisions occur because group members are only exposed to limited and asymmetric information, typically information that supports the groups' decisions. Opposition from within is effectively stifled. Opposition from without is never referenced. Disaster occurs, leaving group members to shake their heads, wondering what went wrong.

The first sign that something has gone wrong...may be that cohesion breaks down and members begin to leave the group without signifying their intentions or even giving an explanation. Group productivity may drop precipitously and outside authorities are called in (e.g.,... [superintendents and bishops]), while the remaining members refuse to even acknowledge that there are any problems at all. One of the congregations I studied was affiliated with a major African-American, highly centralized denomination. The church was down to 35 people, most of them relatives of the elderly pastor. The Sunday School was so small that all grades were held in one room. The pastor and members refused to acknowledge that any problems even existed and the pastor stubbornly rejected any invitations to events from other churches. Ultimately, the pastor was retired by the denomination, which sent down a young, energetic pastor to revitalize the church.

Some other consequences of high cohesion that many would call negative:

- Cohesive groups are more cruel to deviants. Scapegoating, hostility and aggression are more common toward deviants in higher cohesion groups.
- Individual identity may be more stifled and restricted in cohesive groups. Because members are typically closer to one another, they may feel "an investment" in how you look, dress, or talk. If you try to change aspects of your personal identity--even in a positive direction, such as becoming more physically fit--you may find to your surprise that other group members ignore, criticize or otherwise undermine your attempts at improvement.
- If group goals diverge from organizational goals, not only may the group as a whole become less productive (by organizational standards), it may also reject members who *are* productive by organizational standards (e.g., ostracizing the "class brain" or "binging" workers viewed as "overproductive.")
- Group goals may be damaging, even deadly, to individual members...."

### **CASE STUDY**

Steve had been pastor of Lighthouse for almost thirty years. During that time he had become a leader in the community and had served as president of the local clergy association several times. Over the years as the church had grown, Steve had added several associate pastors. Recognizing their need to become involved in the community, Steve had encouraged them to join the clergy association or any other professional gathering that would better fit their area of ministry. But no one did.

Each associate pastor had a different reason, but it was clear by their behavior that they did not think this was a necessary part of their lives as a pastor. Sensing that this was a problem, Steve didn't know how to address it. If he required them to go, then they would most likely simply put in their time, and not engage in the conversations that enlarges one's perspective or gives a new idea. Steve had found that it was as much in the conversations before and after the meetings that

he heard so many things that had cross-fertilized his own ministry. He had also known professionals in other fields, such as a neurologist in town, who had been the best in his field thirty years ago but had stopped growing and was now hopelessly out of date. He did not want this for his associates. So he didn't want to just give up and let them isolate.

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Steve: "I once heard the story of a young woodcutter who challenged an old woodcutter to see who could chop down the most trees. They met early one morning and both began to chop. Working steadily, the young man soon saw the old man sit down. "I knew it. He doesn't have the stamina! I will easily win." Working side by side all day long, the older man stopped regularly to rest. When the day ended and the trees were counted, the younger man was astonished to find that the older man had cut more trees than himself. "How did you do that? You stopped to rest all the time!" To which the older man responded, "Yes, but when I was resting I was sharpening my axe."

That is the lesson I want to teach my young associates. Ministry is far too complex. If we don't stop and talk and sharpen our skills by learning from others who are doing this work, we will find ourselves exhausted at the end of the day and far less effective than we could have been."

Denny: "I can understand the dilemma that Steve feels. He has modeled good, healthy, professional relationships and yet his younger staff do not follow his example even when encouraged to do so. But Steve's hesitancy to make this a required part of their job is unwise. Just because his staff do not yet understand the importance of these relationships does not mean it is not vital to their growth and the overall health of the church. Although not guaranteed, it is sure that they won't come to value such relationships if they are never exposed to such encounters. In our case where we have district and conference meetings with other Free Methodist pastors, I make attending these top priority in my life and require it of all of our pastors. I do not allow excuses to miss these except in the case of emergencies."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Associate: "I am overwhelmed with the amount of responsibility I have. I come to work and am busy all day long, and leave work on my desk when I leave. My ministry is growing and I have more to do every year. When I have gone to the clergy association, I find myself thinking about all the things I need to do back at the church, and I not only don't enjoy it, but it makes me more stressed. I don't know how Steve goes to these things – he just must not have as much to do as I do."

Doug: "I don't personally know of anyone in ministry who is not stretched and challenged with their overwhelming responsibilities. God has given us much to do but He also offers wisdom in how to do it. I am the Youth Ministries coordinator for our city-wide network and am constantly surprised at how difficult it is for full-time youth pastors to take one hour a week at lunch to meet with us. Often their excuse is busyness.

Meeting with other professionals in the community, in my region and even on the national level is the equivalent of going to a workshop. In these arenas I am forced, in a good way, to articulate and evaluate my ministry. I have the opportunity to fellowship and share ideas with other 'missionaries' in my field. Meeting locally helps me to translate this complex culture and community, meeting regionally helps me to be more objective and yet collaborate with others from my part of the country, meeting nationally/denominationally allows me to get a larger sense of what God is doing and inspires me to greater work.

When associates choose to cloister themselves in their own 'church' they lose the greater vision of the global kingdom of God and the place in it that God has called them to serve."

**Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "People will eventually find the help and support they need. If Steve's associates don't want to meet with other pastors now, they will in the future when they become so overwhelmed with work that they begin to realize they can't do it the way they have been and start looking for better and smarter ways to do the ministry. Then they will want to talk with others to find out how they are doing it."

**Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "It doesn't do any good to tell these associates what they need to do. As it is said, you can take a horse to water but you can't make him drink. It is the same with pastors. If they don't want help then you can't make them seek it."

**Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 17 REGULAR EVALUATIONS

When was the last time you received or gave a formal evaluation as a minister or as a ministry team? If it has been a long time then, you are not alone. While this is one of the more important ingredients toward the growth of the individual and the staff, evaluations are not used with great frequency or regularity.

There seem to be several reasons given as to why this is true:

- a. Lack of an effective evaluation tool
- b. Fear of the results – i.e. “Ignorance is bliss.”
- c. Lack of respect for the evaluation group – i.e. A group of church people who only know a small percentage of the actual work.
- d. Little or no accountability from the larger church body or the denomination.

Whatever the excuse, evaluation is key to the improvement and growth of staff and ministries. Through faithful, credible and effective application, God is glorified and the entire ministry benefits.

The senior pastor is responsible to evaluate all staff within his/her care. This evaluation can be professionally done or can be a self-evaluation using a tool the senior pastor chooses or creates. The purpose of this evaluation is three-fold:

1. To help identify areas of strength and weakness so that the pastor can be encouraged and take steps to gain more training or skills where needed.
2. To provide the opportunity to talk about larger vocational goals and plans the staff pastor may have. Part of the relationship of a senior pastor to a staff pastor is that of mentoring. Part of mentoring is helping the pastor achieve their highest level of ministerial competence. This may include encouraging more formal education, preparing to take over their own congregation, or even moving from pastoral ministry to some other ministry the pastor feels God is calling them to do.
3. To provide the opportunity to talk about the spiritual state of the pastor’s soul as it relates to their ministry responsibilities. Even if the pastoral staff prays together often and has retreats in which personal sharing and prayer is solicited and given, this time of evaluation is like an annual physical that looks at the overall spiritual condition of the pastor’s life. If so desired, Denny has made available a form he created called “The Spiritual Life Check-up.”

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes)<sup>17</sup>

M. Hudson writes in his book Evaluating Ministry, “The purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve. Evaluation can be considered an ongoing process that strengthens our ministry, giving us the opportunity to reflect periodically on how well we are fulfilling our commitments to Christ and the Church and one another. It helps both clergy and laity redefine their current sense of calling and to identify where they are feeling good about their ministry, what may need more attention and what can properly be put to rest as no longer needed.”

Jill M. Hudson, a Presbyterian minister and former Executive Presbyter in Indianapolis for the Whitewater Presbytery, has published a book entitled: **WHEN BETTER ISN’T ENOUGH: EVALUATION TOOLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH** (2004: Alban Institute). She acknowledges that:

“Annual performance reviews can be routine, sterile, and relatively unproductive” or can be “used in negative, unhelpful ways to resolve pastoral difficulties and to justify the termination of relationships.” (p. 23) She also recognizes and defines the major shifts in our culture which have created new challenges for the church. The basis for her title, and the premise of the book, is that **doing better or working harder at what we’ve always done in the past is an insufficient response to this new mission field of North America.** So she proposes a list of twelve characteristics of an effective 21st-century pastor (or church staff member)

and then raises pertinent questions for each of the characteristics. She also provides questions for a review committee...to consider the overall effectiveness of the church and system – not just the staff.

The twelve characteristics of an effective 21st century pastor that Hudson details are:

1. The ability to maintain personal, professional, and spiritual balance.
2. The ability to guide a transformational faith experience (conversion).
3. The ability to motivate and develop a congregation to be a “mission outpost” (help churches reclaim their role in reaching new believers).
4. The ability to develop and communicate a vision.
5. The ability to interpret and lead change.
6. The ability to promote and lead spiritual formation for church members.
7. The ability to provide leadership for high-quality, relevant worship experiences.
8. The ability to identify, develop, and support lay leaders.
9. The ability to build, inspire, and lead a “team” of both staff and volunteers.
10. The ability to manage conflict.
11. The ability to navigate successfully the world of technology.
12. The ability to be a lifelong learner.

### **CASE STUDY**

Pastor Jim moved to his second position as senior pastor after a rough four years in his first church. He came into this second church feeling somewhat insecure about his abilities as a senior pastor and inheriting an associate pastor, Jane. Jane is in her third year at the church and Jim chose to keep her on his staff. After the normal “honeymoon” period, Jim longed to know how he was really doing, but when he asked, people only smiled and gave rather empty compliments. It seemed that everything was okay but without any real evaluation, he wasn’t sure. Judging by Jane’s responses, she seemed fine and so Jim saw no need to discuss job performance further.

However, in his third year, Jim and Jane were meeting with their leadership board in the fall. The beginning of the school year in many ways seemed like the beginning of the year for a church, so Jim opened the floor for comments on how leaders felt about the direction of the church. At first, people were reluctant to speak out, but then the honesty began to pour forth. Jim was pleased to finally hear his leaders give input but, the longer they went on, the more the words began to bite and before long, the comments were directly aimed at the two pastors. For the first time, he was hearing how they really felt about their pastoral leadership performance and it was not pleasant.

At the end of the meeting, a devastated Jim and Jane de-briefed concerning the “surprise attack.” “What had gone wrong? Why had we not heard this before? How much of this was true? What should we do with this new information? Many of these leaders don’t even know what we really do behind the scenes. What right do they have to evaluate us?”

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Jim: “I wasn’t afraid to know how I was doing in my job performance but I made the false assumption from the politeness of my people that everything was going well. Thus, I quit pursuing objective evaluation and enjoyed the bliss of not knowing the truth. Reality came crashing in when Jane and I were surprised at the fall board meeting. I should have seen this coming. I should have known better.”

Denny: “Most of us experience evaluations as unpleasant. Like going to the dentist or having our car serviced, we know that something wrong is going to be pointed out and we’re going to have to do something about it. But the truth is that if we don’t fill our cavities and fix our carburetors, things fall apart. I have found that a good self-evaluation with supervisor comments is very effective.

But having said that, this probably would not have made a difference in Jim and Jane’s situation. The obvious build up of dissatisfaction is most probably not something that regular evaluations would have solved. The general malaise was something Jim intuitively knew was there and actually asked for it when

he opened the meeting. This is not usually a helpful experience since it focuses the board's attention on what is wrong and, in any church, there is much that needs to be done better. Opening the meeting for feedback also provided the opportunity for people to form a coalition and scapegoat the pastors. The board needs to be given the opportunity to give feedback in a more formal and less "group-think" situation. In our conference, we use the Natural Church Development evaluation tool (see endnote). This provides the opportunity for pastors and superintendents to know the general health of the church as it records the attitudes of the leaders of the congregation."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

Jane: "I have been in ministry for six years and never been formally evaluated. I have received comments from time to time but nothing that ever stirred me to change or assess the need for improvement. I would admit that evaluations are intimidating, especially if they are done by people who really know very little about my daily responsibilities in ministry. If I had known I was going to be evaluated by the church board, I would have done a better job of promoting what I do in my board reports, but even then, how much will they really know?"

Doug: "Though most pastors long for honest feedback so they can become more effective in ministry, it is likely that very few want to be formally evaluated. Over the years I have been evaluated by three different groups. For a few years I was evaluated at our annual congregational meeting. Whoever attended the meeting completed the evaluation. For another few years I was evaluated by our leadership board. I sat in meetings with them throughout the year, they read my reports and so I felt they had a little more information upon which to assess my performance. In recent years I have been evaluated directly by Denny. He asks me to complete a self-evaluation, turn the copy into him and then we have an appointment to discuss it. He knows me the best so I greatly value his insights. Over all these years I would not tell you that I enjoyed evaluations, but I will tell you they were the best thing for me and I have never had any 'surprise attacks.'"

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "If we are doing well without formal evaluations, then it is best to continue without them. As the old saying goes: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Pastors are doing God's work – leave it to their own spiritual relationship with God to be convicted of their weaknesses – and leave it to God to change their weaknesses to strengths."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "Evaluations are never that accurate. Every person projects their own feelings on the situation and their insights are too subjective to be helpful. True evaluations are impossible but, if you must evaluate a staff person, then let everyone get involved since everybody has an opinion on how the pastors are doing. But in my opinion, a pastor is either capable of doing the work of ministry or no. Evaluations won't change that."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## Chapter 18 PROVIDING ADEQUATE RESOURCES

With the addition of the first staff member, the congregation must go through a clear shift in thinking. Rather than having a one-horse carriage in which the solo pastor is caring for the congregation, there is now a team of pastors. This team is more than just a doubling of the effort; if it is well-chosen and resourced, it can be a multiplication that has a synergistic effect. For this to occur, this new reality must be well resourced. There are at least four areas where resources are vital to staff effectiveness:

1. Support Staff
2. Equipment
3. Office
4. Volunteers

With recent advancements in electronic equipment, the first two of these resources are going through a shift in most churches. Rather than providing personal secretarial support, the support staff now necessary to increase the effectiveness of pastors includes technical assistance, computer accounting, online database, multimedia worship and web communication. With the use of emails and computer-generated snail mail, the traditional secretary is not as necessary as an operations manager who supports the various and increasingly technical aspects of a larger, electronic-functional congregation. From the complexity of phone systems to computer systems, a technically savvy support person is invaluable and increasingly necessary.

It is obvious that with this change in the means of operating a congregation, pastoral staff needs adequate equipment. From computers to phone systems to cell phones to ipods to PalmPilots, the staff pastor is able to be far more productive in the electronic age. From being able to do biblical and sermon research online, to being on-call but not onsite, to working from home or when on a trip, to downloading documents and responding to crisis, the fully equipped pastor is far more responsive and effective in the details of ministry. (As noted earlier, this may require black-out periods, on-call days, and other boundaries to provide pastors with prayer and study times, but today's equipment is a tremendous asset in time-management and effectiveness.)

What is difficult for a congregation is that adding a staff pastor is a far more expensive decision than it was in the past. Previously when some congregations balked at providing a personal secretary for a new staff pastor, now the decision is not so much to add a secretary as it is to provide a team of support personnel who either must be contracted or hired. When a good IBM Selectric typewriter and Xerox machine was the equipment needed thirty years ago, now a fully equipped staff office requires far more. The costs can be high, but the rewards can match them.

Although it could be argued that the third resource is not as necessary today because of the electronic equipment, a private office is vital. Each staff person needs a "place" within the facility where they can provide personal pastoral care and leadership. This can vary as the congregation grows, and staff often must share office space, but an adequate office, desk and files are as needed now as they have been for decades.

Finally, the last support resource is counter-intuitive and must be communicated to the congregation. When we hire more pastoral staff, we need more volunteers to engage in ministry, not less. If the congregation has the idea that we've hired pastors to "do the work" of the church, then the congregation will not only falter but implode. Pastoral staff are here to equip the people to do the work of ministry, and more staff result in more ministry volunteers. One of the job descriptions of our operations manager/administrative assistant is to manage the volunteer list and work with the pastors in helping each person identify their gift and become involved in ministry.

**RESEARCH:** (For full articles and research, go to the endnotes.)<sup>18</sup>

The Wired Pastor by John C. LaRue, Jr. “Nine of ten pastors have a personal computer at home or church, according to a recent study among **Your Church** readers. The study also reveals how personal computers are playing an integral part in pastors' lives.

### Computer Junkies

The typical pastor with a computer spends 15 hours a week, from one-seventh to one-eighth of his total waking hours, on that computer. Most of this time is spent preparing sermons or lessons. The pastor spends three hours each week using Bible software. When pastors were asked what type of software they use to prepare Bible lessons or sermons, their response was: word-processing software (59 percent), followed by Bible software (46 percent). Two of every ten pastors with a computer go online to use Internet resources, and one-tenth use software designed specifically for sermon preparation.

### Hardware Facts

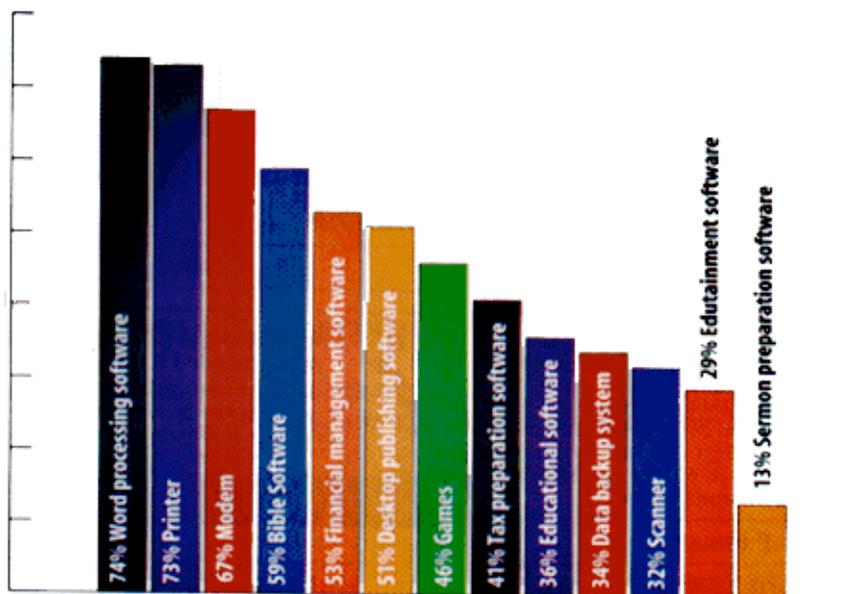
Having more than one personal computer is becoming as common as having more than one television set. An amazing four of ten pastors with computers have more than one computer in their homes. As pastors spend more time on the computer, so do their families. The abundance of computers in the home has made it possible for the majority of a pastor's family members to be active computer users.

Windows is clearly the dominant operating system for pastors, just as it is for Americans in general. Eight of ten pastors (78%) own a PC with the Windows 95 or 98 operating system. Three of ten own a PC operating under Windows 3.1 or older. Only 10 percent of the computers used by pastors are Macintoshes.

Pastors with computers spend an average of \$1,100-plus on them per year. Most of this is spent on new computer hardware (\$811). Software purchases total \$260 a year. Another \$79 goes toward computer-related books.

The two peripherals that pastors are most likely to own are a printer (73%) and a modem (67%). Most pastors own word-processing software (74%) and Bible software (59%). **See Chart 1** for a complete listing of ownership of peripheral equipment and software.

**CHART 1: Peripheral and Software Ownership**



## Net Connections

Most pastors with computers have Internet access. Six of ten subscribe to an Internet online service. Connected pastors spend an average of 6.7 hours a week online.

### CHART 2: Internet Online Service Used

America Online (AOL) is, by far, the Internet service of choice for online pastors (**see Chart 2**). One-third of all pastors with a computer, and 57 percent of all pastors on the Internet, are AOL members.



The next closest provider is CompuServe, with 11 percent (also owned by AOL). No other single service has more than 4 percent of the wired pastor audience.

## Church Media & Technology Resources

Churches are now using new forms of technology to communicate with their leaders, members and community. New gadgets and gizmos come out every day, but what do you actually need to help your church? How do you lower costs, save time, and become more strategic with your church technology?

**Pastors:** We know you are very busy so here is some advice for you.

*Start a **Media-Tech Ministry** and have them go through this outline and develop a plan that best fits your church's needs.*

### What type of communications solutions can help me run my church?

- **Word-of-mouth** (Getting “the word” out about your church and your events)
  - In-person verbal communication from the pulpit works, but most people only retain about 20% of what they hear. Often the message gets changed as the information is passed from one person to another.
- **Paper materials** (Creating your church bulletin and other paper materials)
  - Paper is a good way to keep the message clear and can help remind people if they read it and don't misplace it.
- **Phones** (Phone tree and verbal communication via phone)
  - Phone chains can work well and are a good way to quickly get a hold of a person. However, if a large number of people need to be called, phone chains are very time consuming.  
Don't be afraid to turn your cell phone off!
- **Faxes** (Sending and receiving faxes)
  - This is time consuming but also helpful if a person needs detailed information and doesn't have access to a computer.
- **Emails** (Communicating within the church and outside of the church)
  - Communicating with your leaders, your members, your visitors and seekers, as well as your local community

- This is becoming one of the best ways to get the word out to your congregation. A combination of email and phone calls is always going to be needed since 10-20% of your congregation will never use email or the Internet.
- Assign a person to keep your congregations contact information up-to-date and accurate. People should also be placed into groups such as the choir, leadership or youth. That way you can quickly contact specific groups for specific reasons.
- **Church web site** (As a church brochure, church bulletins, the church information center and as an outreach tool.)
  - Begin with an outline of what you want the web site to accomplish. Is it to bring new people into the church? Then address the felt needs of seekers. Answer the questions you think they may be asking such as:
    - Is this church friendly, active and interesting?
    - What services do they offer for me and my family?
    - What is the Sunday service like?
    - Where are they located and when are the services? (17% of Americans have looked for local religious services in their area using the Internet. [Source: PEW Report 2004](#))
  - Once you have a basic web site that looks good continue to build out the site for specific purposes.
  - Make sure you have some nice pictures and images on the site.
  - Testimonials can be helpful with a photo.
  - Have the person(s) who build and maintain your church web site place a Title META tag and a META description tag into the HTML at the top of the page under the <HEAD> tag. This will help search engines find you.
    - [How to use META tags](#)
  - Make sure you spend the time to get your church web site listed in directories and search engines such as Google, Yahoo, LookSmart:
    - [Submitting to Directories](#)
    - [Submitting to Search Engine Crawlers](#)
  - There are web sites in your area that people use to find local services and events. Search for your town in [Google](#) and [Yahoo!](#) and see what kind of directories are listed.

#### **Companies that help you build out your church web site:**

- [Christianity.com](#)
- [Electricurrent](#)
- [ForMinistry](#)

#### **What type of scheduling solutions are available for your church?**

- **Secretaries and assistants**
  - Managing the events and schedules of church functions with a person can work well but your assistant may want to use a better solution.
- **Day timer and other paper**
  - Paper schedules work well for most but are hard to share.
- **Outlook & PDA's**
  - Schedule kept in electronic format that can be moved from one device to another or between people.
- **Online Scheduling Solution**
  - An online solution such as the calendar in [Yahoo! Groups](#) can work well if all people involved are online. You can share schedules, messages within the group and many valuable features. It can even cut down on the number of meetings you have ;)

#### **How can technology help me with my training and events?**

- Paper books, workbooks and manuals
- Videos and cassettes
- DVD's
- **Live CCN broadcasts**
- Church digital library
  - In a computer with enough hard drive space, church sermons, PDF's and other materials can be maintained and copied upon request.
  - A password protected area of the church's web site can be used to store and distribute pastoral teachings in audio, video and print form.
- Scheduling and planning of events
  - By using a service such as [Yahoo! Groups](#) communication and planning can be made much easier.
- Promoting, announcing and motivating to get people to an event can be facilitated. Use print, email, the web site, video and your pulpit.
- Having a live event

### What are current technology trends?

**Faith Online: 64% of wired Americans have used the Internet for spiritual or religious purposes**  
**SOURCE: PEW Report**

- Email
  - More emails are sent each day than postal mail
  - Word-of-mouth is now done through email as well
  - Wireless communications - Voice (Most Americans now have a cell phone)
  - Data (A growing number of homes and businesses have wireless networks)
- People use the Internet in four areas:
  - **Content** (All types of info. in text, graphics, audio and video)
  - **Community** (discussion groups, web logs, instant messaging)
  - **Commerce** (Direct purchase, auctions and B2B commerce)
  - **Communications** (email, email newsletters & instant messaging)
- Almost 70% of Americans and one billion people worldwide are using the Internet.
- **55% of US Adult Internet Users Have Broadband at Home or Work**  
[Source: Pew Report](#)
- Millions of audio and video files are being viewed and downloaded every day.
- DVD Players and DVD's are the fastest growing consumer electronic platform in history. Almost half of US homes have a DVD player.
- Phones are getting smarter and doing more things including taking pictures.
- Most new computers have DVD & CD "burners" as well as media software on them.
- PC's will continue to get smarter, more powerful and be able to manage larger music and video files.
- Devices are now being sold that allow people to record, save and copy audio and video files off of their TV, radio, PC, CD, or DVD.
- **64% of wired Americans have used the Internet for spiritual or religious purposes.**  
[Source: Pew Report](#)
- Hundreds of millions of people play video games. This is a larger industry than movie box office sales. The effects of extremely intense gaming on the brain and soul are just now beginning to be understood.
- **There are over one billion global Internet users.**  
[Click here](#) to see the break down by country.
- Sources of technology trends:  
**ClickZ**  
**Pew Internet & American Life**  
**Complete Guide to Internet Statistics and Research**

## What are your church hardware and software needs?

(What to buy and when to buy it. Spending enough but not too much.)

- **Hardware:** Reviews at: [CNET](#) & [PCWorld](#)
  - Computers
  - Printers
  - Projectors
    - [Here is](#) a good [glossary of terms](#) when picking out a projector.
    - There are companies that sell to churches at wholesale
    - The quality continues to go up as the price goes down
  - Network equipment
  - Wireless Network
    - [CNET](#) has some good resources on the How To's of wireless networking.
  - Digital Video Recorders and a **SlingBox**
  - DVD players and other devices
    - [CNET Top Pick's](#)
  - Digital cameras
    - Digital cameras are great for capturing church events
    - The history and people of your church should be captured with pictures
  - PDA's
- **Software:**
  - Communication tools (Email, Chat, Instant Messaging, VoIP solutions)
  - Scheduling software (Outlook...)
  - Budgeting software ([Quickbooks](#), [Peachtree](#), [Blackbaud](#))
  - Word processing software (Word...)
  - Presentation/Worship Software ([Powerpoint](#), [Sunday +Plus](#), [MediaShout](#), [EasyWorship...](#))
  - Database software
  - Image and graphic design software ([PhotoShop](#), [PaintShop Pro](#), [Flash...](#))
  - Audio and video editing software ([ProTools](#), [After Effects](#), [Premier...](#))

## How can you use technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your church?

- Use a **simple but effective accounting software**. (e.g. Quickbooks...)
- Keep a **good church database**. (Name, address, giftings, interests, email address)
- **Use email to communicate** with your leaders and congregation.
- **A projector in the sanctuary** can be used to show images, song text and video to improve the services.
- **Create a media-tech ministry**
  - Evaluates your church's computers, software, printers, the church computer network and other electronic devices.
  - Runs your A/V equipment, computer systems, web site and networking equipment.
  - Helps with events and programs that can reach the lost and strengthen the church members.
- Upgrade as you can. (new computers now start at \$400, a wireless network costs \$80 plus \$60 per computer to set up, photo quality printers start at \$150...) You can start small and build as needed.
  - **As one example:** *In March of 2004 my church went from a few old Mac's to a new high-definition projector throwing a 20 foot wall of video in the sanctuary that is connected to a new computer that can burn CD's and DVD's all connected to a broadband wireless network.*  
*All of this for under \$6,000.*
  - **Another example:**
    - Update your current computers.
    - Upgrade to broadband.

- Install a \$120 wireless router.
- Purchase a Digital Video Recorder to save CCN programming.
- Plug a **SlingBox** into the DVR so you can send CCN programming to any computer on your network or over IP to your church members.

### What is a church media-tech ministry and how will it help your church?

- **A media-tech ministry within the local church**
  - Plans out and maintains all of the hardware and software issues of your church.
  - Runs the web site.
  - Continues to help find ways to improve your church's use of technology.
- **Interesting audio, video and technology based programs**
- Reaches the lost with after school technology based programs.
- Supports your local church congregation with classes and tech help.

Helpful Resources:

- **Technology for Worship Magazine Archives**
- [OXYGEN church multimedia](#)

### The Digital Church

- Use multimedia in your Sunday service and other events
  - A one or two minute video clip illustrating a sermon point can speak volumes.
  - Still photos of church events helps build community
- **Building a digital church library**
  - Purchase a newer computer with a large hard drive and a DVD burner on it. This can be less then \$1,500.
  - Place it next to your sound board and connect the two using a good audio card or box. Under \$200. This will allow you to save your sermons and teachings as MP3 files which can be posted on the web or burned onto a CD.
  - Keep a digital library of sermons, photos, video clips, outlines, teaching materials for re-use. Archive them based on felt needs.
  - If a person comes to you struggling with a specific issue have your computer person make a CD of all the materials you have dealing with that issue.
  - 10-12 sermons in audio can fit on one ten cent CD copied from a computer
- Your church wireless network. Once you have broadband it is very inexpensive to install a wireless network in your church.
- Your church communications network
  - You can save money using VoIP
  - Using email to save time
  - Developing an Extranet for your leaders and congregation

### CCN for your church training

- Set a satellite system up at your church
- Hold live seminars using top speakers to train your leaders and congregation as well as have seeker events around CCN broadcasts that are geared towards seekers.
- If your church is not a CCN subscriber [click here](#) to get more information about CCN.”

## **CASE STUDY**

As Green Meadow Church grew, it went from a small, single-cell congregation of 30 to a larger congregation of 500 with four pastors and five support staff. But for John, the staff pastor who was hired when the congregation was 200 and helped the congregation break the 200 barrier, it has been a hard road. Starting with a small facility that was cavernous for 30, the congregation and staff squeezed into the space and shared offices, a secretary even used a bathroom for desk-space during the week! It was an exciting, trying and difficult time.

But what was most difficult was the staff's inability to get the congregation to accept the responsibility this growth created. Having new people coming into the congregation weekly, baptisms increasing, children's classes and youth group overflowing, exciting worship and new electronics - the congregation loved this. But what was not getting through was that each new person meant more responsibility to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ, to help educate them in His word, disciple them and bring the power of the Holy Spirit to heal their infirmities.

As senior pastor, Steve was a loving and caring person who did not like to make people uncomfortable or call them to sacrifice. The result was a staff that was increasingly exhausted and a congregation that was spiritually stymied and unchallenged.

In addition, the board of the church was still primarily composed of the members of the congregation from the earlier decades, where the church was smaller and the resources were less. When new computers were needed and the costs of putting in a network were discussed, the amount of money needed was more than had been paid for their pastor only a decade earlier. The board felt overwhelmed and fearful. When the slide projectors were replaced with video projectors for worship, someone mentioned that they hoped these projectors would last the rest of their life, for they couldn't imagine paying that much to replace them!

### **Senior Pastor Perspective**

Steve: "I can't believe how things have changed. Sometimes I am amazed myself at how many people we are caring for. The calls for counseling, the hospital visitation, the classes that are needed, especially for children, the musicians, the youth team, the assimilation team, the Parish Health team, the outreach events, it can all boggle my mind. I know that this is God's blessing and that He will provide, but when I look at how much we need to bring in for offerings each week, I must admit that I even get scared. What if we can't make payroll for all of these dear pastors? And what will happen if we need so much here that we don't have money for missions or the poor? I hope that never happens."

Denny: "It is difficult for a church to transition from a ministry easily cared for by a solo pastor to a ministry needing a multiple pastoral staff. That is why many experts say that a congregation needs to break the 200 barrier by their second or third year, so that the mindset is one of a larger church. But when a smaller church grows and adds the first associate, it is imperative that the entire congregation go through an educational process of what that means to the church body. From the sociology to the organizational philosophy to the staffing required, the board needs to be educated and the congregation needs to be challenged to become a part of what God is doing."

### **Associate Pastor Perspective**

John: "Since I am younger than Steve, I am far more comfortable with the changes than is Steve. So I take the lead in some of the necessary facility, equipment and ministry philosophy changes. I do the research and help Steve understand what is available, and then Steve and I work with the rest of the staff and board to make the changes we know are needed. It isn't easy, but the results are compounding as we now have a vital group following God."

Doug: "As an associate in my present setting I am blessed with resources. I work hard to never take these resources for granted. When the opportunity arises I thank the appropriate board/committee or people who have made budget decisions that result in these resources. This is one way I can positively 'educate' others as to the value of the equipment/staffing/people in the ministry.

Senior pastors constantly have the entire ministry as their responsibility. We can best support them through being their 'eyes and ears' on the field. We can contribute our unique assessments and proposals regarding resources. In the context of accountability, trust and teamwork our senior pastor and boards will appreciate the input we bring."

### **Optimistic Perspective**

Opto the eternal optimist says: "Living things grow. It should be no surprise to Steve or John that their congregation is growing, for it is alive with the power of the Holy Spirit. They don't have to worry about it, for the Lord of life will send out new roots and new branches when they need it. He will bring people with the resources to accomplish what He has for this congregation."

### **Pessimistic Perspective**

Pesty the pessimist says: "Growth is hard. That is why most churches come to those moments in their history where they hit a wall and begin to withdraw. Some churches are meant to be small. There is no guarantee that a congregation will always grow larger, for each church has a life-cycle and we shouldn't fight it. If the congregation hits a blockage and starts to die, then we should move on and let it die in peace."

### **Redemptive Perspective**

What do you think the biblical, redemptive way of looking at and resolving this situation would be?

## END NOTES

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### <sup>1</sup> **Companions in Ministry Youth Workers and Pastors in Partnership** *by Will Penner and Dan Sanders-Wooley*

Seven years ago, a new church-planting pastor met a struggling graduate student who was looking for a place to live. Today this senior pastor and youth minister are friends, colleagues, coworkers, and, most importantly, companions in ministry.

Though the graduate student had recently been licensed to the ministry, he wasn't looking for a job. He was looking for an historic home to caretake, in lieu of paying rent and utilities; that would be just enough, he'd calculated, to make his stipend cover expenses and let him focus all his energies on getting a Ph.D. in Education and Human Development. In search of such a home, he sent letters to everyone he could think of, including the local historical preservation society.

The young Presbyterian Church was in the process of seeking a new choir director, and the founding pastor of that church outside Nashville had also been on the lookout for someone who'd make a good youth minister. As a former Young Life leader and church youth minister himself, he understood the impact a youth worker could have on the life of the church.

As these things often happen, the president of the historical society had a teenager at this church...and she served on the church's personnel committee. The graduate student's letter referenced the student's experience leading church choirs. So, when she received the letter, she passed it on to the pastor, who called the graduate student—who, since he'd found no historic home (or any other kind) to live in, was open to almost anything.

The graduate student went to meet with the pastor, thinking they'd discuss a position as Minister of Music, a role he'd served in two previous churches. When the pastor started talking about youth ministry, the student was horrified. After all, youth ministers worked too hard, had weird hours, got far too little prestige, and didn't get paid well! There was no way! The pastor, however, recognized someone with great youth leadership potential, so he offered him the job as choir director combined with "some" youth ministry responsibilities. The student accepted the challenge, and a new friendship was formed. It seemed that they'd work well together.

And they've been doing it ever since.

### **Companions**

According to Mark 3:13-19, many, many people were surrounding Jesus, wanting to be a part of whatever it was he had to offer. Among the throng, Jesus chose 12. He called them to heal the sick and preach the gospel, but, first and foremost, he called them to be his companions in ministry.

When we first thought of writing an article about how well we work together, we thought about a dialogue approach or even a debate. Maybe the senior pastor would write a "what all senior pastors should know about their Youth Ministers," and vice-versa. As we wrestled with our structure, we continued to return to this notion of companions in ministry. It's an accurate image of what we've experienced together and a good model for staff relationships in the church.

Because we approach our ministry in partnership, we approached this article the same way. We decided to write the entire article together in order to model our work. We've both heard the nightmare stories about staff relationships in churches (and have some experience in being parts of dysfunctional staffs ourselves). Most of those negative experiences seem to result from churches developing business models, instead of biblical models, for their staffs. But it's the model of companions in ministry that seems the most appropriate for staff relationships.

Ultimately, we get along so well together for that very reason—because we're companions in ministry. And because we get along well, working together is enjoyable. In the seven years we've worked together, we've had plenty of difficulties in our church environment; but our interpersonal relationship has held fast—something that's been a saving grace in times that might have caused a great deal of conflict in other staff situations.

When conflict has arisen, we've problem-solved together. As our relationship has grown, we've found a bedrock of mutuality that undergirds everything we do. Mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual appreciation are evident in all of our interactions.

### **Mutual Trust**

Trust is the cornerstone of any relationship. When one friend trusts another friend, she'll go out of her way to build up and encourage; she'll give her friend the benefit of the doubt; and she'll do her best to be trustworthy in return. When we trust God, we're less anxious about the unknowns in our lives; and we long to live worthy lives in response to God's trust in us.

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The youth pastor/senior pastor relationship is no different. When we trust each other, we edify one another. We show appreciation to each other—in private and in public. We don't criticize each other behind the other's back—the emotional equivalent of marital infidelity. Trust is built on being committed to each other and standing by that.

We spend some non-work time together. We don't buy into the notion that personal lives and work lives need to be kept separate and compartmentalized. We realize that, even though we have different roles in the church, fundamentally we're just two people trying to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Spending time together outside of the church leads to a much greater level of trust, and we're convinced that this is much closer to the model of Jesus and his disciples than the corporate approach many churches take.

Because of this continually deepening trust, we also share information. Communication between companions in ministry is vital. It's important that the senior pastor never be blindsided by something that's gone awry (of course, we know nothing ever goes awry when it comes to youth!). The youth pastor needs to let him know upfront rather than wait for him to find out from someone else. If he has already been informed from the youth pastor, when it comes to him from another source he doesn't look ignorant of what's going on. When the pastor sees the youth pastor about to stick his foot in quicksand with the elder board or parents (and we know that never happens either—just theoretically speaking, you understand), the youth pastor will appreciate hearing about it ahead of time. Perhaps it can keep him from having to dig himself out of a hole that he could've avoided.

### **Mutual Respect**

The key to a healthy spiritual life is humility. And the key to long-term successful ministry is to never get to the point where you think you know everything. Or think that just because you're the boss, that means you are in charge. The only one in charge of the church laid down his life for her.

One of the most magnificent things about working with adolescents is their irreverence for worn-out traditions and structures and their passion to create identities and traditions of their own. Many youth workers choose the profession because they share some of that irreverence, and it's important not to allow these tendencies to create an Us vs. Them environment.

Since the fundamental question of adolescence is one of identity, it often is manifested not only as "Who am I?" but "Who am I apart from you?" This has to be resolved before significant interchange can take place. Since a certain part of youth is, "I am me, not you," we hear things like, "We want worship that's meaningful to us!" Part of that is just generational, wanting a separate identity, but youth ministers should be careful not to slip into "our way is good; theirs is bad." That kind of attitude can have large institutional implications.

As much as possible, we integrate our youth ministry into the life of the church-at-large. In addition to keeping the body of Christ whole, this wins points with parents, fosters intergenerational relationships, makes it easier to get adult volunteers, and makes everyone feel better about the youth ministry in general (which, incidentally, adds job security). Just as the goal of mature adulthood is not complete independence but healthy interdependence, the goal of youth ministry is a healthy interdependence within the community of faith. A freestanding, teen-only environment leaves no one to usher young people into adulthood.

Youth pastors need to help kids understand that they're not autonomous. Many bring parents along, and the senior pastor deals with them. So free-flowing communication about what kids need and what their parents need is vital. At its best, youth ministry should provide parents with a safe place where they can begin to let go of their children without dropping them into nothingness. They can let them go within an environment where adults share their core convictions. A senior pastor who trusts and respects the youth minister and who has all necessary information can significantly aid parents in this part of their journey.

### **Mutual Appreciation**

We're one body with many parts. Any time we begin to devalue the work of another part, we're setting ourselves up for failure. No body can fully function without the parts doing what each is specifically called to do.

One of the quickest ways to hamstring a good youth minister is for the pastor to micromanage. A better choice is to hire a good person—one the pastor can trust and respect—then, leave him alone and let him do his job. If he's micromanaged, he may stay out of trouble with the pastor, but he'll likely be ineffective with the kids. If the pastor is spending all of her time checking up on the youth minister, she's probably not doing what she needs to do, either.

More than any other position in the church, youth ministers are outside the box. They don't just act a little outside the box; they often live way outside the box—which is why kids are drawn to them. That's actually a spiritual gifting. But, many youth workers like to constantly rebel—going against the grain, swimming against the flow. Such metaphors are best left for Christians struggling to counteract worldly influences, not dealings with your senior pastor.

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One reason that we've gotten along so well is that we each know the other has valuable insight into the lives of people and situations in our congregation that we do not. We each see from a different perspective simply because of where we're standing. We're able to share our insights freely, appreciating the different perspective the other brings.

We also trust that God has called each of us to our specific areas of ministry, which means that the youth pastor cannot do the senior minister's job as well as he can, and vice-versa. It's simply not our place to tell the other one how to execute his call.

Along with trusting God's call, we find power in praying for one another. Continually lifting up your ministry companion in prayer connects people in ways nothing else can.

It's important for the youth minister not to assume that youth ministry is the only thing going on; there's other important work happening in the church. We need to share creative ideas, insights, and resources—which may mean we spend a lot of time helping the children's ministry look good, and no one sees the fruit directly for the teens. That's good biblical servanthood, because we're not worrying about who gets the credit.

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That founding pastor of East Brentwood Presbyterian Church is still the Senior Pastor, and that graduate student is still their Director of Youth Ministries. He hasn't yet finished that Ph.D., because he found God's calling in youth ministry. They're still great friends and still enjoy working together.

Jesus' disciples ultimately went out to do ministry in twos. We like that image. We're pretty sure God doesn't intend for us to be Lone Rangers out there, because that's not how we function best. We function best through trusting, respecting, and appreciating each other. We function best as companions in ministry. And come to think of it, even the Lone Ranger had Tonto, didn't he?

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**Will Penner** has worked with junior high and high school students as a teacher, coach, and principal, and he's served on staff at Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. He's currently the editor of *Youthworker*, and he's been the Director of Youth Ministries at East Brentwood Presbyterian Church for the past seven years.

**Dan Sanders-Wooley** was a youth worker for a decade and has been a pastor in the Presbyterian Church for 18 years. He has an acute interest in new church development and church growth, especially for young adults who tend to drift away from church. He was the organizing pastor of East Brentwood Presbyterian Church, where he has served as the senior pastor for the past 15 years.

<sup>2</sup>James Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, Jossey-Bass, 1984,2000

Banks and Stevens have an excellent article on the call of God and its complexity: <http://www.ivmdl.org/cbec.cfm?study=134> Here are selected paragraphs:

## VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Vocation is our divinely given life purpose embracing all dimensions of our human existence and the special dimensions of service Christians undertake in the church and world. Vocational guidance is the process of helping others, or receiving help oneself, to discover and persist in that life direction. It is more than finding the right job. It has a larger and deeper meaning: responding to God's purpose in marriage, singleness, family, neighborhood, church, political service and occupation.

Vocational guidance is a modern concept that emerged principally from the Protestant Reformation. At a time when the rigid structures of society were breaking down, the idea of calling and the recovery of the dignity of work permitted people to make choices in occupations. Out of this the idea of vocational guidance was born.

### Misunderstandings

The confusion surrounding this topic is illustrated by Barbara Zikmund. Vocation, she says, is presented as something that "(1) has little to do with our jobs, (2) has something to do with all jobs, (3) has more to do with certain jobs, (4) or has everything to do with on-the-job and off-the-job existence. No wonder good Christians get confused" (Zikmund, p. 328). So we must start by clearing away several misunderstandings.

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The idea of choosing a calling is an oxymoron. The word vocation is derived from the Latin *vocatio* which means “to call.” So vocation and calling are identical in meaning. It would be a good thing if we used calling more often since it invites the questions, By whom? and For what? Basic to the idea of vocation is a divine, not a human, choice. God has issued a summons to his creatures. This summons is all-embracing and includes work, family, neighborhood, civic responsibility and the care of creation. The basic structure is found in Ephes. 4:1, where Paul urges all Christians (and not just church leaders) to “lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (RSV) and then in Ephes. 4-6 elaborates some of the contexts in which we are to live as called people: congregational life (Ephes. 4:1-16), marriage (Ephes. 5:21-33), home (Ephes. 6:1-4), workplace (Ephes. 6:5-9) and society (Ephes. 6:10-18). Simply put, the Christian vocation is God’s call to live for the praise of his glory (Ephes. 1:12, 14) and to serve God’s purposes in every context of life. A career is chosen; a calling is accepted.

God does not have a wonderful plan for our lives. He has something far better—a wonderful purpose! For some Christians, concern “to be in the center of God’s will” leads to guidance anxiety. A plan, like a blueprint, must be followed in slavish detail, but a purpose is like a fast-flowing stream that carries a boat along and incorporates even mistakes into its ultimate direction. God’s primary concern, according to the Bible, is not that we fit like pegs in their proper slots but that we become people who love God, neighbors and God’s creation. To participate in God’s grand purpose of renewing everything in Christ means to oppose evil, to do the work of maintaining a city, to build community, to create systems that bring dignity and value to human life....

Vocational decision-making is not a once-for-all event but a lifetime process. There is only one once-for-all vocational decision, and that is to yield to the gracious invitation of God in Christ and to welcome being caught up in his grand purpose. Within that purpose, life is full of adjustments, decisions, redirections, mistakes and even second chances. This has not always been recognized, as when vocation was identified with one’s station in life. In fairness to Luther (who is often charged with promoting fixed callings understood as positions in life), he stressed the duties attendant on one’s station as a means of fulfilling calling, not the location of that calling. Calvin and his followers developed this further: vocational living is using our gifts and talents within our callings—thereby opening the door to “changing jobs” to fulfill calling. In a modern mobile society we must grasp the heart of vocational living as a continuous process of discerning God’s will and purpose.

Vocational guidance is not simply an individual matter.

Gifts and talents are discovered and affirmed communally, and roles and responsibilities are defined communally. While we should, as the Puritan William Perkins advised, explore our own affections, desires and gifts, we should also consult the advice of others because of our inherent tendency to be biased (p. 759). The Christian community should create an environment where people with a broad vision can encourage one another with the particularity of one’s vocation (Fowler, pp. 115-25). Most people will find this possible in local churches, accountability groups and spiritual friendships.

#### A Short Theology of Vocational Guidance

Our vocation comes out of our identity, not the reverse. In the secular world people are defined by what they do: She is a doctor; he is a business person. Guidance counselors speak of helping people gain a “vocational identity.” But the Christian approach is the exact reverse. Our fundamental identity is to become children of God through Christ. So instead of developing a vocational identity, we should seek an identity-formed vocation. Being precedes doing. First we are called to Someone to become somebody. Then we are called to do something for that Someone. Vocation flows out of our essential identity in Christ. On this note Augustine insightfully recommended that someone wanting to find out who a person was should not ask what that person does but what that person loves.

God is the ultimate vocational director...

God’s will is not hard to find. Guidance is essentially a pagan concept. Outside the revelation of God to Israel and the church, people seek guidance by consulting mediums, casting spells and examining the entrails of animals and birds—all ancient equivalents to fortunetelling, reading the horoscope and looking for signs and portents. What Scripture offers is better than guidance; it offers the Guide. The Bible is more concerned with our relationship to the Guide than our being in “the center of his will,” a concept not actually found in the Bible but promoted by popular Christianity. Perhaps 90 percent of our questions about what we are to do with our lives are answered by the teaching of Scripture. As Boehmehl says, “If God does not call us to a particular task at a particular time, we must fall back on the creational and salvational tasks that have already been given: to sustain and to further physical and spiritual life in the family and in the community, in the neighborhood and in the nation” (p. 34).

Sometimes God will speak directly through an inner persuasion, a vision or a dream. Though normally it is bad advice to tell someone to do that for which he or she is disinclined or unqualified, Scripture witnesses to God’s surprising and unwelcome summons, for example, to Moses, Jonah and Paul. Lee Hardy wisely comments, “When [God] does that, it is because he is about to give a special demonstration of his power. That is, he is about to perform a miracle—which is, by definition, a

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departure from the normal course of affairs” (p. 93). Lacking such supernatural direction, Christians are not powerless to move forward in their lives. They can do so confidently for good reason.

Self-knowledge is an important part of our spirituality. A study by the Marketing and Research Corporation showed that three or four out of every five people are in the wrong jobs (Jones, p. 30). Ralph Mattson and Arthur Miller have devoted themselves to making links between the central motivational thrust and its primary vocational expression in the workplace. Their approach, now systemized in the SIMA test, assumes that (1) God has made us with the capacity to enjoy working and serving in a particular way; (2) what brings joy to us is a powerful indication of what God has designed us to be and do; (3) our central motivating pattern is consistent through life—the boy that nurses a wounded bird at five drives an ambulance at thirty-five.

Sophisticated and popular tests are now available to measure interests, natural aptitudes, values, personality type, learning style and life changes, and many of these tests have been made available in self-help workbooks, such as *Naturally Gifted: A Self-Discovery Workbook* (Jones). These tests are useful and helpful in understanding ourselves, though they seldom acknowledge that much of the world does not enjoy the luxury of occupational choice or the privilege of a fulfilling career.

### Vocational Guidance as a Spiritual Discipline

The process of lifelong vocational decision-making is a discipline. It is not only helped by the use of spiritual disciplines, such as meditation and journaling, but it directs us to God for some of the following reasons.

Vocational guidance is concerned with both entering in and continuing in a calling in worthy manner (Ephes. 4:1). Vocational life is littered with idols: the idols of gain (being in it for the money), glory (seeking position in the church for human approval) and instant ecstasy (getting a “fix” or “high” from making a sale). All too easily a challenging profession or an all-consuming role like mothering can feed our addictions and become idolatrous. Idolatry is defined simply as making something one’s ultimate concern other than the One who is ultimate. The Puritan William Perkins reminds us that “walking worthy of one’s calling” requires an ongoing process of sanctification of the worker and the works....

The chief cause of a vocational mismatch is not being in the wrong location but yielding to the lust of the spirit. We should be living contentedly within our calling, but joy in service is not a matter of location as much as spirit. Drivenness is a symptom of something wrong inside. The lust of the spirit is the desire for something other than what God deems best for us. If we do not judge that the particular calling in which God has placed us is the best of all callings for us, we will yield to discontentment, as did Absalom, the sons of Zebedee and Cain (Perkins, p. 756).

To counteract this pernicious lust, Perkins offers several practical measures: (1) discerning the initiative of God in our lives so that even in times of crosses and calamities we may rest certain that God has placed us in this calling (p. 760); (2) repenting if necessary for the wrong reasons we entered a calling (be it marriage, career or ministry) but refusing to forsake our place and so continuing with diligence and good conscience (p. 762)—a strategy that is crucial for those who feel they entered marriage for the wrong reasons. Further, Perkins advises (3) seeking sanctification both of the worker and the work by the Word of God and prayer (p. 766); (4) resisting the temptation to covetousness by laboring to see our particular situations as a providence of God no matter how difficult it may be and by resolving in our hearts that God—not a perfect situation—is our portion (Psalm 16:6); (5) turning our affections from this world to better things by not seeking more in this world than we actually need and setting our mind on heaven (p. 770; compare Ephes. 1:18); (6) persisting in our calling by pruning our lives of ambition, envy of others placed in “better” callings, and impatience, all of which incline us to leave our calling when trouble comes. On this last measure Perkins uses a medical image from the days before anesthesia that is superbly graphic. He says we must continue in our callings as the surgeon who continues to cut his patient even through the patient is screaming a lot (Perkins, p. 773)!

Hardship is not an indication of our being in the wrong calling. Run through all the callings, Luther pleaded, and you will find that every earthly occupation has a cross. We can suffer for the sake of others and identify in some small way with the suffering of Christ right where we are. This is entirely in line with a faithful interpretation of 1 Cor. 7:20—“Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him”—namely that change, while permissible, should not be undertaken as though it had spiritual significance. Paul is a classic case. Though he was being stoned, dragged out of cities and suffered privations, not least of which was his day and night handwork to support himself as a tentmaker, he knew he was doing God’s will. Hardship can become a pruning experience, even a means of grace. Being in the will of God does not guarantee health, wealth and a creative, fulfilling career. Discovering that nothing in this world will ultimately satisfy us, as C. S. Lewis once pointed out, is a powerful hint that we were made for another life and another world. In the end what counts is that we are found in Christ.

A person who has gospel confidence, Luther stated, is like a man who feels completely comfortable and secure in the mutual love between his wife and himself. Such a person does not have to weigh which act or deed might bring about the maximum positive response: “For such a man there is no distinction in works. He does the great and the important as gladly as the small and the unimportant, and vice versa. Moreover, he does them all in a glad, peaceful, and confident heart, and is an absolute willing companion to the woman” (Luther, pp. 26-27). But if the man is insecure in his or her love, he will calculate and offer

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the largest and most impressive deed to gain what he thinks he can obtain by works. So too the person insecure in his or her relationship with God may choose to win approval by works, works that might include going into the monastery (in Luther's day) and going into the ministry (in our day). Without the foundation of divine approval, vocational decision-making will normally become a means of inventing personal meaning and satisfaction—a form of self-salvation for the unbeliever—or an attempt to win God's approval in the case of the believer.

In summary, we should regard the Christian life and service as a comprehensive and liberating summons of God. We already know what God's will in broad terms is for our life! Finding the best job is a minor part of this. We should do the thing at hand for God's glory until clearly led by God. We should affirm God's providence in our life. We are not a bundle of accidents, and even occupational-and other-mistakes can be incorporated into God's purpose for our life. This means we can live wholeheartedly and exuberantly in the present, not with our eye on the next (and more fulfilling) assignment. The heart of Christian vocation, and therefore the essence of vocational guidance, is not choosing to do something, but responding to the call to belong to Someone and because of that, to serve God and our neighbor wholeheartedly.

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-R. Paul Stevens

[See all topics from the book.](#)

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<sup>3</sup> Why A Pastor Needs A Seminary: by R. Scott Clark, 2004.

...the seminary business has changed dramatically in recent years. Today seminaries are offering their product (education and preparation for ministry) at a distance through satellites, video, and the Internet. WSC is enthusiastic about these emerging technologies and is exploring the best way to use them to advance Christ's kingdom. One possibility under consideration is finding a way to provide continuing education to pastors through the Internet and other technologies (see below).

Some folk, however, see the Internet as a way not only to supplement a pastor's seminary education and to strengthen his ministry (it surely is these things) but also as a way to replace seminaries altogether. This is a worrisome trend, frankly. The strongest argument which proponents of "home grown" pastors make is that the church should have a more intimate role in the training of her ministers. They see the Internet therefore as a way to harvest the best of scholarship while keeping candidates for the ministry in their local churches. This program, though initially attractive, rests on some false assumptions.

#### Face to Face is Best

Though there are many benefits to be had through the Internet — I use the Internet daily to communicate with other scholars in my field and to find and read various documents and to download software—it *can never replace the sort of community which exists between professors and students in the classroom, lunchroom and the office.*

The word community is the right one in this context. Most of the students attend local Reformed churches (many of which exist because God used the Seminary faculty and students to plant new churches in this area) in which WSC faculty preach and

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teach. Some students live with faculty and there are gatherings in faculty and student homes regularly which make school and church life a sort of seamless garment. All this interaction contributes to the formation of men for the ministry. We regard the spiritual and theological development of students to be part of our ministry. So it is not true, as is sometimes implied in the discussion about the relative necessity of seminary, that men who go to seminary are somehow in the wilderness.

### Would You Trust Your Heart to a Mail Order Surgeon?

At WSC we are still old-fashioned enough to believe, however, that a seminary education comes only one way: through hard work. Therefore, while many seminaries are now advertising (quite seductively it seems!) that one can earn a seminary degree while never leaving home, at WSC we believe that self-sacrifice is a part of ministry. Ask yourself this question: Would you choose as your heart surgeon who learned his skills via satellite and video tapes? Even with the assistance of a seasoned physician nearby, such training would clearly be inadequate. There is something about knowing how deep to cut which can only be learned through hands-on, tactile, face-to-face training.

Your soul, as our Lord Jesus taught us, is of infinitely more value than even your heart muscle. Notice that I keep saying, "At WSC" instead of "through WSC." This is because Seminary is not just a vehicle, a means to an end. While students are here, there students the *end*, that is, the *telos*, or the purpose not just the means or instrument. By challenging, praying with, and lecturing to students we believe that we are preparing them to serve in Churches by providing them with the tools they will use every day for the rest of their lives in their pastoral ministry.

What we think about seminary is important because, since the formation of the Reformed Church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we have always believed in scholar-pastors. This belief distinguishes us from much of the rest of American and Modern Christianity. Some might say, "That's the problem". I respectfully disagree and for one reason primarily. Preaching is the minister's primary calling. He is called to preach from the Bible. The Bible is, to quote J. I. Packer, a "very big book". More than that, it was written in three languages in several cultures over quite a long time. It takes a certain amount of learning to get to grips with the history, theology, background and proper application of God's Word. Nor is the Bible read in a vacuum. The Church has been thinking about and interpreting the Bible for a long time. So we need pastors who are not only trained to read God's Word as it was written, but who are trained in the Christian tradition. This is not something done quickly, easily, or cheaply. It is not something which is done well by distance (electronic) education to large groups without access to a Seminary library or faculty. Thus, such distance-education is not adequate, at least not presently, for servants of God's Word and his people.

### It Takes One to Know One

Quite understandably, most pastors (like most physicians, lawyers and accountants) are far too busy to be able to keep up with the latest literature in any one field (e.g., New Testament studies) let alone **all** the fields required for seminary preparation. Staying abreast of academic developments is a full-time calling. Only recently one of our New Testament professors presented to the rest of WTSCA faculty a highly technical, but most interesting paper on recent developments in the study of the grammar of the New Testament. Most of the faculty, even though they are full-time scholars, were unaware of these changes. If full-time scholars struggle to keep up with the changes in the various fields, how could even the most skilled and industrious pastor fulfill all his parish responsibilities *and* do the sort of reading which would prepare him to train men for ministry full-time? Clearly this is highly unlikely.

### Why Seminary Indeed?

One might say, "who cares if seminary professors know the latest scholarship, is it not all a waste of time anyway?" The answer is no, its not a waste of time. To use the medical analogy again, do you care if your physician reads the *New England Journal of Medicine* or are you prepared to do without antibiotics? Certainly there is much foolishness in Modern scholarship. Yet it will make its way into the Church and our pastors and elders must be ready to address it. More than that, there are benefits to recent scholarship. For example, one of our professors has made use of some newer educational techniques to make his Greek instruction even more effective. Its still hard work, but the students will leave seminary with the ability continue to improve their Greek skills, instead of putting the Greek testament on the shelf. In my field (theology) there is some very good scholarship being done which has brought back much of our 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century tradition to life again through essays and translations. The church will reap many rewards from these sorts of studies.

### Seminary and the Church

"But", some object, "doesn't sending men away to Seminary take them out of the local church?" The answer to that question is yes and no. Yes, sending men to seminary does take them out of one local church, but, of course, sending them to WSC, for example, means that they will find themselves them right back in another local church. It does not take men from "the" local church. Rather, sending men to Seminary shifts them temporarily from one local congregation to another.

"But", someone says, "isn't the local church the primary place for the training of ministers?" Of course the church has the central role in the calling and forming of ministers. The question is not *whether*, but *how*? Remember, seminary is a three and

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sometimes four-year commitment. The local church, if she is raising up future pastors, has young men for twenty years or more.

If our local churches are really concerned about the welfare of their seminarian sons, they can do many things to help. First they can pray for them. Seminary is a challenge. The academic demands are high. Think of those whom you know who have gone away to medical school. The demands of a WSC education are comparable to those of the best professional (law, dental, medical) schools in the nation. The local congregation can also support the student financially. It is a simple equation: the less time the student must spend working, the more time the student can spend studying. The more time the student spends studying, the better prepared he will be for ministry.

It is wrong to assume that a local congregation or even a Classis can replace a seminary. Which of our local congregations, or any combination of them has the necessary time, money, human and capital resources to train men for ministry? The WTSCA library holds tens of thousands of books and dozens of journals and thousands of back copies of magazines and journals. Few local congregations could support such an endeavor. This list doesn't even mention the computer hardware and software which (which needs upgrading almost constantly) and the valuable resources constituted by a learned faculty, all gathered in one place.

#### Seminary: A Place for Reflection

The home-grown-do-it-yourself-learn-as-you-go model neglects another very important fact of education: time. Seminary is a time to come away from the typical schedule of ministry demands to *think*, learn, reflect on the Scriptures and pray. Any pastor will tell you that if there is one thing he misses from his days at Seminary it is the luxury of time away from the telephone (or email), and access to the latest journals and books, or even access to some of the very oldest books and time to read and meditate on them.

#### Follow the Money

In the discussion over "whether seminary" it is frequently objected that Seminary is "too expensive." The assumption here seems to be that professional training for our ministers is could be done less expensively by frugal folk who know what they are doing. Those who say this have probably not tried to offer outstanding graduate level education in the USA. The administrative overhead at WTSCA is quite low. We employ a very talented staff, some of whom have given up lucrative careers in order to advance God's kingdom serving at the seminary. The cost of seminary at WTSCA is ranked almost exactly in the middle of seminaries in the USA. Given the quality of the education at WTSCA, we think that the tuition is quite reasonable. Costs do rise, but some of them are uncontrollable, such as the cost of books which have risen considerably over the years. What should the seminarian-pastor do? Go without books? Would you visit a mechanic who had no tools?

One should not assume that the proposed electronic alternative is cheaper. Electronic-Distance education does not promise to be any less expensive, in the long-run. Daryl Hart, in the October, 1997 of *New Horizons*, noted that there are hidden costs to distance education. For example, some complain that they do not want to move to where the seminaries are. In that case, one wonders, in reply, if they ill want to move where the churches are? Some complain that they will have to meet the cost of living while at Seminary. Is there no cost of living where the prospective student now lives? If not, let us all move there. Of course that would raise the cost of living would it not?

Then there are the seminary facilities. Each distance-learning student must have a suitable PC (let us say about \$1500.00) and the associated software, which will need nearly constant up-grading. More than that, the long-distance seminarian will need his own seminary library, since the equivalent does not yet exist online. A decent library for such an enterprise could easily cost \$10,000.00.

In this scheme, one has made a substantial investment toward becoming self-taught, but there are less tangible costs as well. When, in this scenario, will the stay-at-home seminarian study his Greek and Hebrew? Who will mark his papers? Evaluate his sermons? With whom will he compare notes? Will he really memorize his Greek and Hebrew vocabulary or will that also be too much bother? Will he really spend the late hours necessary to do the reading and writing for class? A computer terminal or video screen is wonderful, but its not human fellowship.

#### No Easy Way

All this is to point out that there is no easy route to the ministry and we delude ourselves if we say that there is. It is the Church's obligation to make certain that the seminaries to which she sends her young (and older!) men is worthy. What constitutes a worthy place? One which continues to confess the historic Reformed faith, which not only keeps up with the questions and criticisms offered by the culture, but which offers biblical and intelligent answers to those criticisms. That is, a worthy seminary is one which understands the times in which we minister and who equips her students to face those times, which equips her students to stand in the pulpit week after week and tell the truth, all of it, regardless of the consequences. WSC, was, is, and shall, by God's grace, remain such a worthy place.

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## The Old Fashioned Way: They Earn It

WSC is old-fashioned in other ways as well. Unlike many seminaries, we still require students to learn to read God's Word in the original languages. This was the vision of our founder, J. Gresham Machen, that Westminster would produce men expert in the Bible. For this reason, students spend much of their first year learning Greek and Hebrew. They're expected to attend their other classes in Systematic, Practical and Historical Theology with their Bible open as well. They also attend more advanced courses in *exegesis*, i.e., the explanation of the biblical text. More than just biblical study, they learn what to do with the Bible in the Church. They learn the biblical theology of the Church, her offices, and the theology and practice of pastoral ministry.

## The Proper Role of Distance Learning

The new technologies cannot and should not replace face-to-face seminary education. What they can do, however, is to extend our ability to help pastors continue their education. Having laid the foundation of life-long learning in the classroom, we can help pastors keep up with theological, intellectual and academic trends email discussion lists, web pages, interactive seminars via the Internet or satellite uplink.

## Concluding Thoughts

Our seminary has been entrusted with a tremendous responsibility. At WSC the faculty takes this responsibility with the greatest seriousness. No seminary, or any human institution is perfect and we are profoundly aware of this fact. Nevertheless, the Lord has given us this ministry of training men for ministry. Our slogan (in the Greek text on our seal) says, "The whole counsel of God". That is the mark we aim to hit: to train men to preach all of God's Word. It is no easy task, but it is joyous one. I hope that you will pray for us as we pray for you and the prosperity of Christ's Church.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cshs.csp.edu/ma/M015/lectures/pea520/basic%20concepts1.htm>

**basic systems concepts** by Prof. Jim Ollhoff of Concordia University. (Taken from a larger article covering the eight concepts by Bowen).

### **"Differentiation**

This is the perception of personal boundaries. People who are well-differentiated have good, healthy boundaries. They know where one person stops and the other starts. They can separate the intellectual and the emotional. They know where they stand on a given issue, and can live with others who don't agree with them.

A poorly differentiated person believes that if you love me, you must love my dog, too. Poorly differentiated people have difficulty taking a stand, because when another person states a belief, they feel they must conform. They are chameleon-like, taking the belief systems of whoever is around them. Poorly differentiated people have trouble keeping secrets; they share private information about themselves too easily; they can be invasive and nosy; they can pry into other's affairs because they have few boundaries.

A well-differentiated person can be autonomous, even when the others around are saying, "we should all believe the same thing." A well-differentiated person can enter relationships and not have life governed by the relationships. A well-differentiated person will make a conscious choice to have a life based on intentional principles and goals, and not be ruled by emotionally reactivity.

Poorly differentiated people frequently operate with a high emotional reactivity. They react emotionally to everything. Life, for these people, is about feeling good or feeling bad.

As anxiety increases, so does the tendency to react emotionally—and to lose sight of the big picture. Anxiety puts pressure on the system to become less differentiated. It will tend to diffuse the anxiety if we all believe the same thing...

Families that are poorly differentiated tend to become more symptomatic (they end up in therapy more often). Organizations that are poorly differentiated tend to become mediocre, because members become less concerned with excellence and carrying out the mission of the organization, and more concerned about hurting someone's feelings.

### **Emotional Triangles**

A triangles is **not** three people who have a relationship. It is **not** three groups of people that communicate. A triangle is **not** a person who passes information from one person to another.

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A triangle **is** a way of stabilizing an unpredictable relationship. The textbook progression is when two people can't get along with each other. Their fighting is uncomfortable because of its unpredictability. It produces anxiety in both partners, because we tend not to like to have rotten relationships. So, what frequently happens, is that the two fighting partners triangle in a third person. Both can relate to this third person, and this stabilizes the relationship. Initially, the anxiety decreases (however, in the long run the anxiety simply shifts around the triangle).

When two people are calm and comfortable, they don't need to triangle anyone into their relationship. However, when the anxiety between two people grows, the "natural" thing is to triangle in a person, place, or thing.

So, triangles are always about anxiety. And, the process of triangling is so familiar to us that we frequently triangle and get involved in triangles without even knowing it.

Here are a few examples...

- I know a married couple, that doesn't particularly enjoy each other's company. So, they continue to have children (they have five so far) so they won't have to deal with the anxiety in their marriage.
- In a church where Jim was formerly a member, the pastor didn't know how to manage a large congregation, and the congregation knew he was a poor leader. So, they manufactured a budget deficit, so that when they came together, they could discuss the budget, rather than discuss the fact that the pastor was an ineffective leader. Discussing the budget was more comfortable than discussing the pastor's abilities. Notice here, that it is not necessarily a person who becomes triangled. In this case, the two parties triangled in a thing—a budget deficit that they manufactured. This manufacturing process was beneath the level of awareness—no one knew that they were manufacturing a budget problem.
- Sometimes, scapegoating is a way people create triangles. Two parents bring a youth to the office of a therapist. The youth has green hair, studded wristbands, a wide assortment of facial jewelry, and leather clothes. The parents demand that the therapist "fix" their child. Chances are, it is the parents, not the youth, who has the problem. Their anxiety had become intolerable, so they elected their child to be the problem. They, in fact, manufactured their child's rebelliousness so that they wouldn't have to deal with their anxiety.
- Frequently congregations have conflicts between the pastor and the people... and rather than deal with the conflict, they hire a DCE.

The more undifferentiated the people are and the more anxiety is present, the more likely it is that a triangle will form.

So what do you do when you find yourself in a triangle?

In the long run, it is usually most helpful to detriangle. This involves setting up your boundaries. It means no longer rescuing and perpetrating the anxiety of the other two. It means no longer playing the game (but being ready for intense pressure by the other two to "get back in the game")."

<sup>5</sup> Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The Godbearing Life*, Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998, p. 41

"My supervising pastor in seminary was a seasoned Southern parson named Sam Stanley. Sam pastored a little chapel in Arlington, Virginia, and people packed it to the gills every Sunday. You could easily underestimate Sam because of his laid-back style and bone-deep gentility. He wore his considerable clout like an undershirt, unconscious of it. Yet Sam was both the strongest and most subtle pastor I have ever known. Despite his determined opinions, he seldom spoke at meetings. He made himself available for appointments or counseling or coffee. He was an ace preacher; worship was memorable and moving. He and his wife Ruth ate lunch together every day.

But Sam had an ear to the ground like a Cherokee warrior. The vibration in the grass sent him flying to his Volkswagon Rabbit, which had about four million miles on it. A minute's time would find him standing at a parishoner's front door (unannounced) to "check in," as he put it. "There's really only time for two things in ministry," he drawled one afternoon as we zipped around the beltway to "check in" — without warning — on the fifth or sixth person that afternoon. "Lead fine worship. Visit the people. The program leave, leave to volunteers and gung-ho seminarians."

<http://ctlibrary.com/6112> Pastor Narcissus

From the book [The Pastor's Soul Volume 1: The Power of Loving Your Church](#)

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Pastoral ministry is, . . . to a large degree keyed to the reproduction and the death cycles of humans. This is the natural relation of the cycle of *eros* and *thanatos*, the Greek words for sexual love and death. We conduct ceremonies for the purpose of solemnizing and blessing the birth of humans, the onset of puberty in humans, the mating rituals of humans, and the death of humans. Much of the church's ministry is organized around the orderly and successful progress of reproduction cycles. We initiate programs to support and enhance courtship, marriage, and child raising. We devise youth groups, one major purpose of which is to keep humans from mating too soon. The modern church attempts to provide program niches for persons not directly involved in the reproduction cycle—singles and seniors—but the church is never as good at that as it is at providing program support for those intimately involved in human reproduction.

Why?

One reason may be that the church and its rituals evolved over a couple thousand years during which successful reproduction was continually threatened by high infant mortality rates and short life expectancy. For instance, the purpose of the genealogies in the Bible is, at the very least, to demonstrate God's providential care of humanity. God provides for the preservation of humanity generation after generation. In its reproduction rituals, the church affirms and blesses what the genealogies demonstrate.

The church's involvement in confessing and providing God's blessing on reproduction goes back thousands of years. It is not less important today. People care only a bit less today about obtaining divine blessing upon marriage and reproduction than they did before. Case in point: modern Europe. Virtually the entire native, Caucasian, atheist/agnostic population is baptized. As a pastor I can say without the slightest hesitation that nonbelievers are often more insistent on the importance of religious ceremonies to begin marriage and to usher in infancy than are believers.

So the church and its rituals are shot through with *eros*. Many of the church's oldest rituals solemnize *eros*, regulate it, even glorify it. Pastors hope that there's plenty of *eros* in the marriages in the church. Parish life goes better when marriages are healthy. (The marriage-seminar industry may not, since when marriage is hot their business is not.)

The church is also shot through with *thanatos*. We deal constantly with death issues and particularly with helping people not to fear death. Again, many of the church's oldest and most venerable rituals solemnize *thanatos*, regulate it, and glorify its defeat.

### Fatal attraction

The church acknowledges the proper place of *eros* in life and it regulates it. But we state unequivocally that *eros* has absolutely no proper role in the relationship between pastor and parishioner, and it has no proper place in the relationship between the pastor and the corporate body of the church. The result of erotic involvement is always some form of *thanatos*, for the parishioner and his or her family, for the pastor and his or her family, and for the whole church.

At least part of the problem is, however, that *eros* thrives in the environment of the true pastoral loves: *hesed* (loyalty, bonding), *racham* (compassion), *philos* (delight and friendship), and *agape* (sacrificial love). Frankly, bonding to a person of the opposite sex with compassion, delight, and sacrifice is for most humans an aphrodisiac. Pastors who show real pastoral love can, without great care, become ecclesiastically aroused. Believe it or not, pastors can love the whole church erotically.

When pastors build the church on the basis of erotic love for the organization, the next (perversely logical) step is for the pastor to love a parishioner erotically. Often pastors who do this don't see anything wrong with it until they are confronted. The reason that loving parishioners erotically doesn't seem wrong to some pastors is because they have spent so many years loving the *church* erotically that loving a parishioner erotically is a perversely logical form of discipleship. It is shocking how many pastoral sexual affairs start out as pseudo-discipleship, and continue on that basis:

They acted shamefully, they committed abomination; yet they were not at all ashamed, they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time when I punish them, they shall be overthrown, says the Lord. ( )

What does it mean to love a church erotically? *First*, the argument of this book is that the pastor can love and must love the whole church, not just the individual parishioners. Now if a pastor can love a church with *hesed*, *racham*, *philos*, and *agape*, it may well be possible, even if it is wrong, for a pastor to love the whole church with a kind of *eros*.

*Second*, the church is by its nature an erotically charged environment—it affirms, regulates, and blesses *eros* in its proper place—which makes the possibility that the pastor could love the church with *eros* quite conceivable.

*Third*, the obvious truth that the four great loves of pastoral ministry are also the four great loves of marriage—and that the exercise of these loves makes the pastor a possible object of erotic attraction for parishioners—increases the possibility that the pastor may covertly substitute *eros* in pastoral work.

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Still, the idea that we can have an erotic attachment to a church may seem far-fetched. But consider this: Pastors commonly use erotic terminology to describe the effect of their ministry. Pastors say they want to excite the church, or turn the church on, or even light the church's fire (The Jim Morrison School of Ministry).

Most of us want to lead exciting worship and preach on-fire sermons. Many parishioners want us to. When pastors deliberately set out to excite their congregation in worship and preaching, what is getting excited? Are we only exciting parishioners spiritually?

But what are we really talking about?

Nothing more than good, old, all-American narcissism, a bastard love that has no place in pastoral work.

### **Pastor Narcissus**

The story is told that Narcissus, a son of a nymph, flirted injuriously with the affections of the nymph Echo. Echo eventually pined away to become nothing more than a disembodied voice. Narcissus, bent on further pseudo-conquest, messed with the mind of another nymph, who tattled on him to a powerful god named Nemesis. Narcissus' nemesis became his love for his own image. One day, wandering in the forest, he came upon a pool of water into which he glanced. Narcissus saw his own image, became fixed to it, and could not break away. He died beside that pool—in love with himself.

This story is cold over and over in pastoral ministry: Pastor Narcissus is in love with himself; that is, he is erotically in love with his church, which he sees as an extension of himself. This is seen in two ways:

First, Pastor Narcissus is attached to his image in the pool of the church. Pastor Narcissus is attracted to the visage of the whole church as it is being built under his leadership. What great things he has done! These things reflect well on him. There is much yet to be done, but he is determined to continue to build the church according to his vision. Anyone who stands in the way is dispensable on account of a greater good, which is the enlargement of the pastor's image.

*Eros* may seem a strong or odd term to apply to a pastor's love for what he sees of himself in the church. But none of the other loves fits. *Philos* comes close, but *philos* for a church is love for what God has made the church to be; it delights in God's goodness for the sake of the church, not for possession, self-aggrandizement, or personal enjoyment.

Erotic love for a church, on the other hand, is a form of possession of the church. It is love for the aggrandizement of self in ministry and for the pastor's image, which he has foisted upon the church. It is to be tempted by possession, self-aggrandizement, and personal enjoyment to dearly hope our church will "make us proud."

Second, Pastor Narcissus lacks boundaries. He doesn't know where he ends and the church begins. By fixing his gaze upon the church as an image of himself. Pastor Narcissus sees the church as, at the very least, an extension of himself. He sees the church and its individual parishioners as something he wants and as something he cannot live without. He is attached to it and to them as if by an umbilical cord. The line between what Pastor Narcissus *makes* and what nourishes him simply disappears. If Pastor Narcissus takes the credit for making the church, then most surely he takes credit for the fact that the church provides for him. Eventually he cannot imagine life apart from the church he has made and its nourishment.

If Pastor Narcissus thinks he needs or wants sexual attention, he simply takes it. He takes it from himself for himself. After all he built it—it is his, he needs it, he deserves it. This is bogus *eros* and has nothing to do with adult sexual love. Pastor Narcissus is not looking for love or adrenaline; he seeks death. Sex with a parishioner is an escape into certain death.

We must never believe a pastor or a parishioner who has been involved sexually when he or she says: "We didn't mean to hurt anyone." In Proverbs, wisdom tells us, "Those who miss me injure themselves; all who hate me love death" ().

Narcissistic attachments are deep and primitive, and probably all of us who pastor struggle with them on some level. The question is how this crazy stuff gets out of control.

The answer, I believe, is ambivalence.

I discussed ambivalence earlier in this book as the numb state of existence pastors fall into when, through the pounding they receive in ministry, they don't feel they can risk love again. Love is dangerous.

But ministry can't be done without some kind of love. So ambivalence retreats into self-love and self-protection. To put it in psychological terms, when ambivalence takes over a ministry, the pastor's inner child becomes the pastor of the church. Obviously this happens a lot. Laypeople can attest to how intractably childish some pastors can behave. Of course, these same laypeople don't recognize that the blows they deliver on a regular basis force the pastor into primal retreat.

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Whereas bitterness causes pastors to put up barbed-wire fences, ambivalence can break down a pastor's sense of personal boundaries. The blows come from every side, and eventually the pastor simply lays down the fists and gives in to the attack. Sadly, ambivalence sees death as a reasonable solution. As the defenses go down and the will to live lessens, merging into some kind of peaceful place without pain can sound good. So can getting forced out of the ministry through having an affair—a form of death.

The sorry, wimpy state of the ambivalent pastor hardly seems to fit the picture of the lusty, selfish, church-building, parishioner-abusing Pastor Narcissus. But they are definitely the same person. That abused children can become weak adults who abuse children is quite suggestive to this discussion. That powerless, ambivalent adults are frequently violent suggests the same. So does the sad truth that when we are weakened by life's heatings, we often find it difficult to live by our most dearly held values. This is a good enough reason to leave a pastor-killing church or any church that pummels its pastor to the point of childish, moral weakness.

Whether outwardly successful in ministry or not, often Pastor Narcissus is a pastor who has been beaten up many times in life and in ministry. It is sad, but it is no excuse. Pastors can choose not to become ambivalent in ministry by, among other things, choosing to love the church properly as an adult or by leaving the church.

And though the pastor cannot help but administer the ceremonies of the sex-and-death drama of the church, the pastor can and must transcend that drama or perish in it. The pastor cannot escape involvement in the sex-and-death drama in the church but can transcend the drama professionally—clerically—in a manner similar to the way a fly-fisher is involved in but still transcends the sex-and-death drama of the trout stream.

The fly-fisher's involvement is from the outside. The fly-fisher uses the tools of fly-fishing—the fly rod, the line, the reel, the artificial fly—to involve himself or herself in the sex-and-death drama of the trout stream. The tools of fly-fishing are the logical but objective extensions of the fly-fisher to catch the trout. The fly-fisher does not jump into the water and grab the fish by the gills.

The pastor uses the tools of ministry to affirm, regulate, and bless the sex-and-death drama of parish life: the Word and the sacrament. To the extent the pastor's exercise of these tools represents genuine pastoral love and the desire to bring men and women to obedience to Christ, they are the logical but objective extension of the pastor into the sex-and-death drama of the parish.

But there is a line pastors cross, where they stop exercising the ordinances modestly. They get cute, original, and personal with the biblically ordained tools of ministry. They inject themselves into the ceremonies they perform, the sermons they preach, and their calling. This is a crossing of personal boundaries into the sacred arena. Whenever a pastor performs ministry in a way that makes it seem like his personal involvement is more important than the ceremony itself—as if without his vital, personal input this sacrament is flat and ineffective—I wonder if Pastor Narcissus isn't at work.

When the pastor stops ministering Christ and the love of Christ and ministers himself and his own love, the pastor's life is no longer the parable of Christ; the pastor's life is the "thing" itself. When the pastor/parishioner relationship becomes the parish cult, Narcissus' invasion of the parish is complete; all that remains is for Pastor Narcissus to dive into the bottomless pool and die.

As vital as they are to pastoral ministry, personal relationships between pastor and parishioner are not actually the pastoral ministry. The pastoral ministry is the communication and administration of Christ in Word, sacrament, and in the pastoral relationship, which is indeed personal but is much more and much different than merely a personal relationship. The pastoral relationship is a specific kind of personal relationship that exists within the community of the church, is governed by its order, and, by various ordained means, communicates the transforming love of Christ.

This brings me back to the importance of *agape* to ministry. Pastoral relationships that are not governed by the *agape* love of Christ for the parishioner and the *agape* love of the pastor for Christ will always degenerate into a destructive form of personal love, which is not pastoral love. The pastor's *agape* love for God is the free, transcendent decision of the pastor to love the church sacrificially for the sake of Christ and not for the pastor's own glory.

The pastor's *agape* love is first and foremost love for God. We must love God first, and then our church and our parishioners for the sake of our love for Christ. Only in this way can Christ stay at the center of the church, instead of the pastor moving to the center of the church. The church must be the body of Christ. It must reflect his love, project his image, and be his witness to the world. The pastor is the servant of this love, this image, this witness.

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<sup>6</sup> **Personality Disorders** by [Linda Lebelle](http://www.focusas.com/PersonalityDisorders.html)  
<http://www.focusas.com/PersonalityDisorders.html>

Don't become a victim of yourself. Forget about the thief waiting in the alley; what about the thief in your mind? -- [Jim Rohn](#)

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**A personality disorder is identified  
by a pervasive pattern of experience and behavior that is abnormal with respect to any two of the following:  
*thinking, mood, personal relations,  
and the control of impulses.***

The character of a person is shown through his or her personality -- by the way an individual thinks, feels, and behaves. When the behavior is inflexible, maladaptive, and antisocial, then that individual is diagnosed with a personality disorder.

Most personality disorders begin as problems in personal development and character which peak during adolescence and then are defined as personality disorders.

Personality disorders are not illnesses in a strict sense as they do not disrupt emotional, intellectual, or perceptual functioning. However, those with personality disorders suffer a life that is *not* positive, proactive, or fulfilling. Not surprisingly, personality disorders are also associated with failures to reach potential.

The [DSM-IV-TR: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders](#), published by the [American Psychiatric Association](#), defines a personality disorder as an *enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectation of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment.*

Currently, there are 10 distinct personality disorders identified in the DSM-IV:

- **Antisocial Personality Disorder:** Lack of regard for the moral or legal standards in the local culture, marked inability to get along with others or abide by societal rules. Sometimes called psychopaths or sociopaths.
- **Avoidant Personality Disorder:** Marked social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and extremely sensitive to criticism.
- **Borderline Personality Disorder:** Lack of one's own identity, with rapid changes in mood, intense unstable interpersonal relationships, marked impulsively, instability in affect and in self image.
- **Dependent Personality Disorder:** Extreme need of other people, to a point where the person is unable to make any decisions or take an independent stand on his or her own. Fear of separation and submissive behavior. Marked lack of decisiveness and self-confidence.
- **Histrionic Personality Disorder:** Exaggerated and often inappropriate displays of emotional reactions, approaching theatricality, in everyday behavior. Sudden and rapidly shifting emotion expressions.
- **Narcissistic Personality Disorder:** Behavior or a fantasy of grandiosity, a lack of empathy, a need to be admired by others, an inability to see the viewpoints of others, and hypersensitive to the opinions of others.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder:** Characterized by perfectionism and inflexibility; preoccupation with uncontrollable patterns of thought and action.
- **Paranoid Personality Disorder:** Marked distrust of others, including the belief, without reason, that others are exploiting, harming, or trying to deceive him or her; lack of trust; belief of others' betrayal; belief in hidden meanings; unforgiving and grudge holding.
- **Schizoid Personality Disorder:** Primarily characterized by a very limited range of emotion, both in expression of and experiencing; indifferent to social relationships.
- **Schizotypal Personality Disorder:** Peculiarities of thinking, odd beliefs, and eccentricities of appearance, behavior, interpersonal style, and thought (e.g., belief in psychic phenomena and having magical powers).

According to Dr. Sam Vaknin, author of [Malignant Self-Love: Narcissism Revisited](#), individuals with personality disorders have many things in common (see [The Interrelationship Between Personality Disorders](#)):

- **Self-centeredness** that manifests itself through a me-first, self-preoccupied attitude
- **Lack of individual accountability** that results in a victim mentality and blaming others, society and the universe for their problems
- **Lack of perspective-taking and empathy**
- **Manipulative and exploitative behavior**
- **Unhappiness**, suffering from [depression](#) and other mood and [anxiety disorders](#)

- **Vulnerability to other mental disorders**, such as obsessive-compulsive tendencies and panic attacks
- **Distorted or superficial understanding of self and others' perceptions**, being unable to see his or her objectionable, unacceptable, disagreeable, or self-destructive behaviors or the issues that may have contributed to the personality disorder
- **Socially maladaptive**, changing the rules of the game, introducing new variables, or otherwise influencing the external world to conform to their own needs
- **No hallucinations, delusions or thought disorders** (except for the brief psychotic episodes of Borderline Personality Disorder)

[Yaknin](#) does not propose a unified theory of psychopathology as there is still much to learn about the workings of the world and our place in it. Each personality disorder shows its own unique manifestations through a story or narrative (see [Metaphors of the Mind](#)), but we do not have enough information or verifying capability to determine whether they spring from a common psychodynamic source.

It is important to note that some people diagnosed with borderline, antisocial, schizoid, and obsessive-compulsive personality disorders may be suffering from an underlying biological disturbance (anatomical, electrical, or neurochemical). A strong genetic link has been found in antisocial and borderline personality disorders (see [Genetics and Mental Disorders](#), [The Chemistry of Personality](#) and [The Biology of Borderline Personality Disorder](#)).

<sup>7</sup> From Youthworker Journal, January/February 2003, Second Bananas: Ministering in the Shadow of Your Peers, Joe Neill

<sup>8</sup> In an excellent website for the Christian Reformed Church titled: "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence" there are many helpful things, including the importance of accountability and mentoring. <http://209.200.88.167/pages/analysis.cfm>

In one of their sections speaking to this issue they write on "Lifelong Learning"

#### "Lifelong Learning

It has never been more important for pastors to be lifelong learners. Sustaining pastoral excellence involves continual learning—for intellectual, personal, spiritual, and professional growth. Several factors make such education especially crucial now:

The rapid rate of change in our culture requires ongoing education and adaptation to new realities.

The great variety of ministry contexts also calls for lifelong learning. In pastoral ministry, no longer does "one call fit all." Pastors need continuing education that takes the principles learned in seminary and applies them to particular situations.

Seminaries cannot "do it all." Seminaries never could; but in the past, the church often has assumed that the pastor's education was finished upon seminary graduation. What seminaries must do is instill in students a passion for lifelong learning, an openness to learning from different sources, and the important priority of study and thoughtful reflection. Pastors must realize that there is much that seminaries simply cannot teach. "They never taught me that in seminary" is frequently used as an indictment of the seminary. More often, it's an indication of how much a seminary cannot teach and how much must be learned in one's ongoing ministry.

Local congregations often do not understand the need for continuing education and consequently do not support such possibilities for lifelong learning. Especially in congregations with few college-educated or professional members, pastors often have difficulty getting the support they need for continuing education, in terms of time, money, as well as encouragement. In sum, successful programs to enhance pastoral excellence in our context need to promote vital spirituality, highlight the importance of emotional and interpersonal intelligence, teach well-grounded models of leadership, insist on relationships of accountability, and promote lifelong continuing education."

A second example is that the experience is universal in virtually all areas of professional life: continuing education, both formal and informal is necessary for growth. Here we found the documentation of this reality in the area of Forestry. If you simply replace *Forestry* with *Ministry* and *Foresters* with *Pastors* in the following, the lessons are obvious:

**Terraces of experience:** [http://www.fao.org/documents/show\\_cdr.asp?url\\_file=/docrep/f6137e/f6137e05.htm](http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/f6137e/f6137e05.htm)

"At first glance continuing education appears to be a diagonal line climbing up throughout a career. Closer examination reveals a terrace of experience at every stage after each course of education or training, as the recipient consolidates and absorbs the points that he has learned into his own employment. Eventually he becomes ready in experience and outlook for the next stage, and if he is fortunate he receives another course of instruction and continues to climb the career ladder, rising

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from the terrace again. According to Ovington (1974) this type of education, in a formal sense, is a privilege of the few rather than the recognized right or need of all foresters [pastors].

There are several ways of implementing this lifetime of progression by education and training, some formal, some informal. The obvious way is by on- and off-site training, particularly at the lower levels. ...

Similarly, fairly regular attendance at local or regional meetings, seminars, and discussions as in earlier years, will help a man's technical ability as well as his personal development to some extent, but it is the organized courses that will give the most satisfactory results.

One great advantage - as Ovington says - is that if these courses are held at forestry schools [seminaries] and colleges the opportunity is provided for young students to meet advanced foresters [seasoned pastors] who are also studying, which gives them better motivation and provides a better sense of direction. This is very evident at my own college, which provides a three-year course for suitable, educationally qualified young men who have been forest workers [pastors] for one or two years (to learn basic skills), and aspire to be technicians [ordained]. In addition there is a progression of much shorter courses for new entrants, and ambitious older men if they have the necessary ability and inducement, which eventually lead to technician and managerial level.

This system of short courses has been evolved over the past few years, based on the "terrace of experience" concept. After about eight years of full-time work and part-time study, with regularly spaced short courses, it is possible for men of suitable inclination and intelligence to reach managerial status [ordination]. The college or other agency must at all times be ready to advise the aspiring student regarding his chances of advancement."

<sup>9</sup> YOUTHWORKER JOURNAL, FALL 1995, "Senior Pastors, On What It's Like Working with You."  
[http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/staff\\_relationships/senior\\_pastors.php](http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/staff_relationships/senior_pastors.php)

One question taken from an interview with a panel of six former youth workers—now supervisors, heads of staff, or senior pastors (Matt Condon, Barb LeFever, Steven Mabry, Kevin McClure, Malcolm McQueen, and Greg Tucker)—to summon up their objectivity now that they're on the other side of the desk, and give us their views of pastoral relationships as they are and as they could be.

#### **On the appropriateness of socializing with your senior pastor:**

**LeFever:** I consider myself friends with the youth staff. We enjoy each other. We have very open communication. They keep me informed about the ministries. They involve me as they need me.

**Mabry:** I see it both ways. The first head of staff I worked under, I went to lunch with once in six years. I had a good time with him, but he didn't give friendship.

My second pastor and I went to lunch together twice in 10 days.

My personal style is to give my staff friendship because I want to be their colleague, not their boss. Yet my church stipulates that I in fact be the boss to every staff member. So it depends on whether your head of staff can feel okay about challenging you on some stuff, and whether you're the kind of person who can hear that from a friend.

Whether or not your head of staff reaches out to you like this, I think you can reach out as well and see what kind of response you get.

**Condon:** A lot of senior pastors feel they must keep a distance. They rarely have a relationship outside of the church office. But I think a relationship can open up over time. In one of my youth ministry positions, it took the pastor a while to open up to me. But I kept trying, and eventually we became close. Over time you'll be able to tell if he does or doesn't want to relate on a personal level.

**McQueen:** Socializing is appropriate, but with limits—as in most work environment. Some socializing and friendship is appropriate as colleagues in ministry. At the same time, however, you have to maintain a professional working relationship. Personally, I've never felt it's appropriate for me to have the other associates or heads of staff as best friends, because then the professional and personal roles blur too easily.

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I get together for fun with my youth staff about once a quarter. But I don't tell everything there is to know about me. I'd encourage a youth worker to go ahead and initiate that kind of relationship, but still watch for the signs.

I've come to appreciate that a head of staff has a whole lot more worries and is involved in a greater range of situations and ministries than a youth worker is. As paternalistic as it may sound, I think a youth worker will never understand some things about the head of staff. And that's okay. So if a head of staff is reluctant to be very personal, take it as a boundary. Enjoy what you can, but know boundaries will exist.

**McClure:** A pastor needs to be talking to his staff. You don't have accountability if you don't have a relationship with someone. To me the issue is not accountability, but friendship. I think what we have today in most churches are sincere, well-meaning, paid professionals who love Jesus—but who are so afraid to let people know the real them that they don't talk to each other. It's no wonder there's so much fallout. God called people to stand together in the church, and that's an issue that I think youth pastors and senior pastors really need to talk about. We need to get close to each other instead of sitting in meetings and giving our reports—and then going off our separate ways again until the next staff meeting. That's not a real team in my book.

I'm going to look for someone who wants to be close to me and who wants me to be close to him. That's more than just hiring someone to do a job.

**Tucker:** I worked at one place for 11 months. One day the pastor there said, "I heard you're having a dance contest." He didn't know me well enough to know I wouldn't do that, because it's no secret that dancing is a big taboo in that denomination. In those 11 months, I never saw his house. We never met, other than professionally, and because of that he didn't really know me.

I think a certain familiarity needs to exist between the two in order to really sense one another's heart and recognize we are on the same team.

By the way, that no-dancing pastor—I called him "pastor" because I felt removed from him. The next senior pastor I had, I called by his first name—even though we weren't best buds and didn't do a lot together. Yet I felt we were on the same team. Still, in socializing I think youth workers need to remember their place in the hierarchy.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.christianitytoday.com/bcl/areas/churchministries/articles/042705.html>

### **Developing a Vision** *What kind of church would we like to be?*

By Aubrey Malphurs

Vision is essential to a church. However, unlike the values, mission, and purpose, the vision is more subject to change. It is dynamic, not static. Over time, the vision must be renewed, adapted, and adjusted to the cultural context in which the congregation lives. The change takes place only at the margins of the vision, not at its core. The core—the Great Commission—does not change. The details of the vision and the words used to convey them will change. The vision provides us with a picture of what the mission will look like as it is realized in the community.

The vision concept is not new to the Scriptures. You will find visions sprinkled throughout the Old and New Testaments. For example, God caught Abraham's attention with his vision for him in Genesis 12:1–3 (the Abrahamic covenant). God used Moses to communicate his vision for his people, Israel, in Exodus 3:7–8 and Deuteronomy 8:7–10. It is possible that the "joy" that Jesus looked forward to while enduring the cross was the vision of his return to the presence of his Father in heaven (Heb. 12:2).

### **The Importance of a Vision**

The limited information that is available indicates that pastors and congregations are struggling with the vision concept. For example, in commenting on pastors and their visions, George Barna writes, "But when we asked these pastors, 'Can you articulate God's vision for the ministry of your church?' we found that roughly 90 percent of them could articulate a basic definition of ministry. But only 2 percent could articulate the vision for their church." David Goetz writes, "In *Leadership's* study, however, pastors indicated that conflicting visions for the church was their greatest source of tension and the top reason they were terminated or forced to resign." Clearly, vision is of utmost importance to leaders and their ministry. Here are seven reasons why.

### *A Vision Encourages Unity*

In a ministry a shared vision changes people's relationship to one another. When a leader casts a vision in a church, it is no longer "their church," it becomes "our church." The ministry's vision encourages and allows people to come together and work together. It creates a common identity in two ways. First, it signals to all where the ministry is going. It says that if you want to go where we are going, then climb on board—let us go together. Second, it fosters the retention of congregants and staff. A common vision says that we are working together toward the same goals. We need each other if anything significant is going to happen for Christ. This, in effect, mirrors such passages as 1 Corinthians 12:20–22 and Ephesians 4:15–16.

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### *A Vision Creates Energy*

Not much happens without an inspiring, compelling vision. Not much was happening in Nehemiah's day. The people had no vision. Jerusalem lay in ruins, and no one was motivated to do anything about it (Neh. 1: 3). Then along came Nehemiah with a vision from God to rebuild the gates and walls of the city. Visions are exciting and they energize people. They strike a spark—the excitement that lifts a ministry organization out of the mundane. They supply the fuel that lights the fire under a congregation—leaders are able to stop putting out fires and start igniting a few. A vision from God has the potential to turn a maintenance mentality into a ministry mentality. And when your vision resonates with your values and mission, it generates the energy that fuels the accomplishment of the ministry task.

### *A Vision Provides Purpose*

The right vision creates meaning in people's lives. It gives them a sense of divine purpose in life. They are a part of something great that God is accomplishing at this time and place in history. With a shared vision, people see themselves not just as another congregant or a "pew warmer," but as a vital part of a church that is having a powerful impact on a lost and dying world. They are not simply in a church; they are on a mission. They are part of a revolution that has the potential to change this world, to have a wonderful impact for Christ. For example, a wide gap exists in terms of commitment and dedication to God and a sense of personal significance between one member who, when asked what he or she does, replies, "I am a teacher" and another, who may have the same ministry, but answers, "I am changing the life course of a class of adolescents who will someday accomplish great things for Christ."

### *A Vision Fosters Risk Taking*

A shared vision fosters risk-taking by a congregation. This is especially true in church-planting situations. When the point person or lead pastor casts the vision, everyone knows what needs to be done. That is not the question. The question is, How will we do it? Sometimes we know the answer, but most often we do not. Consequently, ministry for Christ becomes an exciting adventure into the world of the unknown. We attempt something for Christ and it does not work. We attempt something else and it does work. Though much of what we are doing is experimental, it is not ambiguous. It is perfectly clear to all why we are doing it. It is for God and the Savior. People are not asking for guarantees. They all know that no guarantees exist, yet people are committed anyway. The risks are great, but so is the God they serve, and the vision he has given them. How else can we explain the early church and what God accomplished through them or those believers that make up the faith hall of fame in Hebrews 11?

### *A Vision Enhances Leadership*

Developing a vision and then living it vigorously are essential elements of leadership. I define a leader as a godly servant who knows where he or she is going and has followers. That describes not only the Savior, but his disciples and those who ministered in the early church as recorded in Acts. Godly servants are people who display Christ-like character throughout the ministry organization. They exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, given in Galatians 5:22–23. They know where they are going and where they are leading their ministry. They have a dynamic mission and, most important, a clear, energizing vision that paints a picture of the future. The consequence of character and vision is followers. When a congregation has a leader who owns a vision and lives that vision in a Christ-like manner, they will follow that leader to the ends of the earth.

### *A Vision Promotes Excellence*

God desires that his church minister and serve well on his behalf. This calls for ministry excellence. Whatever we do for Christ must be done well, not sloppily or haphazardly. In the Old Testament God required that people give their best when they brought animals for sacrifice (Lev. 22:20–22). This was excellence in worship. In the New Testament Paul explains that God expects us to put forth our best efforts in our work. He says to perform as if we are working for him (Eph. 6:5–8; Col. 3:23–24). This is excellence in the marketplace.

A shared organizational vision promotes a standard of excellence. Deep down, people want to do a good job, to have a sense that they are effectively and powerfully advancing God's program through their ministry in the church. The vision casts a picture of what that looks like. It provides a visual, mental measure by which staff and congregation can evaluate how well they and the ministry are doing.

### *A Vision Sustains Ministry*

Ministry can be very difficult, even painful. Discouragement and disappointment often lurk in the ministry hallways and boardrooms of the typical church. It is not beyond the enemy to incite persecution against Christ's church (Acts 8:1). Spiritual warfare comes with the ministry territory (Eph. 6:10–18). Many have risked or given their lives for the Savior and the furtherance of the gospel. The list of martyrs for the cause of Christ is extensive. Why? What has sustained Christians from the beginning of the church in the Book of Acts up to today? One answer is a biblical, compelling vision. It encourages people to look beyond the mundane and the pain of ministry. It keeps a picture in front of them that distracts from what is and announces what could be. All the trouble and grief that we experience in this world while serving the Savior are trivial compared to the importance of what we are attempting for him. That picture, carried in our mental billfolds, is one way God sustains us in the worst of times.

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Second, the business world is gathering a very helpful body of literature that speaks to this. Typical of such guidance available is the article by Donna Fitzgerald, titled:

Shared Vision: A key to Project Success [http://builder.com.com/5100-6315\\_14-5034758.html](http://builder.com.com/5100-6315_14-5034758.html)

"The discipline of shared vision, as outlined Peter Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline*, moves us into the realm of group process. With shared vision it no longer matters what we think but what thoughts and concepts we share with the team. In other words, shared vision is the point where we actually harness the horses so that we can get some work done.

In this article, I'd like to explore two different perspectives on shared vision. The first is the explicit concept of shared vision that focuses on capturing, communicating, and reconciling our goals and our methods for achieving those goals. The second perspective is that all organizations have an implicitly shared vision, which manifests itself as what is most often referred to as the corporate culture. In addition, this implicit shared vision influences, at a significant level, how we manage our projects.

Beginning with the concept of explicitly shared vision, in order to create and effectively benefit from a shared vision, the following strategies are required:

- The ability to create or elicit the initial vision
- The ability to translate that vision into the physical activities required to achieve it (using systems thinking)
- The ability to articulate and sell this vision to others as either the right or best way to reach the goal
- The ability to hold true to the essence of the vision when reality changes the plans

### **Creating the initial vision**

If the initial vision isn't completely prepackaged in the head of the project sponsor, there are two ways to create it. The first and preferred alternative is by asking the right questions at the first meeting of your steering committee—or at what I often call my first Joint Application Development (JAD) session. The second alternative, for nimble project managers operating in [stealth mode](#), would be to have a series of meetings with the appropriate individuals and elicit the information by practicing a technique called "long earlobes."

This initial meeting with the stakeholders is intended to accomplish the following four items:

- Get answers to [the Five Whys](#): Why are we doing this project? Why do we think the identified problem really is the problem? Why do we think this is important to solve now? Why do we think this proposed action would solve the problem? Why do we think this action won't make anything else worse?
- Establish the boundaries of the project (what is in and what is out).
- Establish metrics for measuring success.
- Produce a one- or two-page scope or charter document.

If you are in a stealth project management environment, you will need to accomplish this by asking the right questions of your sponsor. Remember that subtlety is important in a stealth environment, and you will need to ask the Five Whys with an understanding that you might be rebuffed at any time. Your fallback position will be to present the questions as a way of defining risk.

When I started my career, my job was to talk to engineers and ask them all sorts of seemingly nosy questions about what they were doing, how long it was going to take, and how they could be sure it would all work when they were finished. As a young woman with no technical background, I was told by my boss to be prepared for a high noise-to-signal ratio in my initial interviews and the trick I needed to learn was what he called "long earlobes." Back in the late 70s I didn't know that what he was really advocating was a combination of active listening and reading body language. I also didn't understand that it's basic human nature to want to have others understand us and that if we give people enough time and safety they'll always reveal their underlying mental models. Given these facts of human nature, even in stealth mode you should be able to elicit a solid vision statement from your stakeholders.

### **Translating the vision**

This is the easy part of being a nimble project manager. We know what we're supposed to do, and we can now gather our team around us and figure out the specifics of getting it done. At this stage we view the problem with our systems thinking hat on. We need to double-check that we have the problem scoped correctly, that we are clear about the way things are connected in feedback loops, and that we're not falling victim to the archetypal mistakes of shifting the burden or exceeding the limits of growth. We also need to make sure that we align our project approach with the prevailing implicit vision of the company culture (which we'll discuss later in this article).

### **Selling the vision**

This is one area where many project managers stumble. We get too caught up in the day-to-day management of the details of our project and don't spend enough time selling to our constituents. On small IT projects this may not be a fatal mistake; as project size

increases, this one factor alone can determine the personal success of the project manager. I don't think there's a lot of need to stress the mechanics of selling the project: Status meetings, e-mails to stakeholders, and a well-designed and informative project Web site all are things that will help.

What is probably more important to discuss at this point is how to deal with the guilt of feeling as if you're not doing anything constructive for your project if you're out pressing the flesh. Most nimble project managers come up through the ranks being very visible and very involved with their team. They concentrate on selling and aligning the vision downward and sideways. The problem is that as the importance and visibility of the project increase, the selling needs to be focused upward and sideways, and that means that there is less time to be involved in the details.

**Holding true to the vision**

From the perspective of the nimble project manager, the art of holding true to the vision comes down to the decisions that you make when you've just suffered a sneak attack from Mr. Murphy. The average nimble project is designed to take the crises of the day completely in stride, but what happens when something goes seriously wrong? Even if you have a well-articulated risk plan, you are faced with the fact that you are absolutely going to have to move one of the three legs of the triple constraint and somebody is going to blame you for the fact that things have changed.

Inexperienced project managers usually try to ignore the situation, or they ask for more time and more money to cover them while they scramble to recover. The nimble project manager calls an immediate time out and is willing to objectively look at the situation by asking the following questions:

- Is the goal of the project still important and aligned to company strategy?
- If we were starting this project today, would we be developing this product?
- What are the business implications of the project being late?
- What are the business implications of the project costing more?
- Can we reduce scope and still meet our success criteria?

The key here is that the project is based on the vision of delivering a product that meets or aligns with certain goals. It is the vision of the product that is of primary importance and not the vision of the project. The nimble project manager understands this and is therefore always able to entertain the notion that there could come a time when the only right answer is to cancel the project.

Up to this point we have reviewed in detail the four aspects of building and maintaining an explicit shared vision on a project. The next element of shared vision we need to examine is one that will influence everything we do but that is rarely articulated.

**Implicit shared vision**

Back in the 80s I was first exposed to the concept of company cultures through the work of Kennedy and Deal. I had just moved from a culture that was the epitome of "tough guy macho" and I was struggling to adjust to a culture that defined the "work hard/play hard" ethos.

Most of the work that has been done on corporate cultures centered on matching culture to business objectives in order for the company to thrive in its marketplace. From the perspective of the nimble project manager, our only goal is to establish what the culture is and then determine how we can best manage our projects without violating any unwritten rules.

In **Figure A**, I've included three of the most common culture models as well as what I call the nimble PM culture model. All of these models vary slightly based on specific points they're trying to make, but for the most part they're remarkably similar (though only Kennedy and Deal acknowledge a risk-oriented culture).

**Figure A**

Nimble PM	Power-I	Collaboration-we	Achievement results	Rule/Process-effort
Kennedy & Deal	Tough guy macho	Work hard/play hard	Bet your company	Process
Harrison & Stokes	Power	Support culture	Achievement	Role
Geoffrey Moore	Cultivation	Collaboration	Competence	Control

The nimble PM model says cultures are either "I-centric" or "we-centric." In the I-centric culture, adopting the archetype of project manager as benevolent dictator works perfectly with the team. They're programmed to accept it, and most of us are programmed to operate that way (at least if our earlier training was in a power-based culture). In a collaborative culture, the project manager's job becomes that of obtaining consensus, and what power there is must be shared with some or all members of the team. At the furthest

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extreme of the we-based model you will find the concept of self-directed or leaderless teams.

The second component of corporate culture is the rule vs. achievement culture. The average nimble project manager should be able to operate quite well in any culture that aligns itself along the achievement axis. Nimble project management has as its primary mental model an achievement-based underpinning. The trick for the nimble project manager is how to survive and be successful in cultures that align with the rule-based axis.

In a company that is aligned with the power/rule quadrant, most project managers will find that they have almost no influence on how their project gets done. The team and the stakeholders will all be looking to do things first the way they've always been done and second the way the "power holder" says they should be done. In a collaborative/rule-based culture, the nimble project manager will be confronted with "meetingitis," analysis paralysis, and lots of people saying that their opinions are not being taken into account.

We should take a short time-out here. If you've read the previous articles on mental models, my last statement should be an obvious example of where my own mental model of the world (which stresses flexibility of means and primacy of results) has caused me to present a situation in the negative rather than in neutral or positive terms. What we learn from practicing the disciplines of mental models and shared vision is an understanding that some of our biases are very deeply held. In fact, some of these biases define the very nature of our personality structure. As we said in our discussion on [personal mastery](#), knowing that we have these biases doesn't mean that we have to change. It simply means that we need to understand them well enough to be able to modify our behavior when required.

Managing a nimble project, then, in either of these two environments involves accepting the validity of the culture as an implicitly shared vision. It absolutely doesn't matter that the project might take longer and cost more than you think it should. It doesn't matter that you might have to fill out what you consider a few extra reams of unnecessary paperwork. If you accept that the culture is right, you are then free to see what latitude you might be allowed within it.

I've found that power/rule cultures often tolerate what I refer to as the loyal opposition. When IBM acquired the company I worked for, I quickly learned that while 95 percent of everyone followed the rules in IBM, outsiders were kept on board to do those things that were too risky and too crazy for the others to handle. From the perspective of the nimble project manager, it is critical at the outset of a project in this type of culture to be clear why you've been chosen to run it. If the answer is that it's because management thinks you're crazy enough to risk failure in order to do something impossible, then you should find that your executive sponsor will give you the explicit authority to break the rules (which usually means to conduct a low-ceremony, rapid-results project that flies under the radar of the rest of the company). If the answer is that the project is a mainline project and you've been assigned through luck of the draw, then minimal compliance and a respectful attitude should keep you enough on the right side of the culture to allow you build a slightly more nimble project team.

The absolutely hardest culture to be nimble in is the collaborative/rule-based culture. Forget any concept of quick and dirty or the cheapest price and the shortest time frame. In these cultures the journey is much more important than the destination. I once had a discussion with a client where we had a \$35 million difference between doing the project their way and doing it on an accelerated basis. I simply couldn't bring myself to understand that in their minds all those meetings and weeks of indecision were simply a cost of doing business. With the advantage of hindsight, I can safely offer the nimble project manager a few suggestions for surviving this type of culture:

- View your role as project manager as chief salesperson of the overall vision.
- Be visible and never be too busy with the project to sell the vision.
- Break the project into multiple sequential phases.
- Limit detailed planning to the current phase.
- Establish review committees and hold frequent meetings.
- Remember consensus rules.

### **Self-organizing behavior**

Up to this point, we've explored the concept of both explicit and implicit shared vision. In the case of an explicitly shared vision, we've discussed how to articulate it, sell it, and maintain it. An implicitly shared vision (i.e., company culture), on the other hand, isn't something we can shape or influence quite as easily. Before we leave the topic of shared vision, it is important to take another look at the entire concept of project management itself (as we did in the article on [Mental Models](#)). I can say with absolute certainty that we as a project management community do not share a single unified vision of what we should be doing as project managers, let alone how we should be doing it. For every e-mail I read from a project manager complaining that his organization is populated by hide-bound cretins who want the PM to waste precious time filling out paperwork, I can point to another e-mail from a project manager complaining that his organization is totally hostile to any sort of project management process at all and that even filling out a scope document would get pushed back.

What I hope I've been able to show in this article is that while any good project manager can articulate the project vision; the nimble project manager has developed the conscious ability to tailor that project vision into a language or context that can be accepted as congruent with the company's implicitly shared vision."

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<sup>11</sup> Taken from YOUTHWORKER JOURNAL, Fall 2003, "From Herding Cats to Becoming Family" – Thoughts from a European Ministry staff working in the military community. [http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/staff\\_relationships/cats.php](http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/staff_relationships/cats.php)

## **Effective Communication**

### **David Martin**

Communication can be my best friend or my worst enemy. Here are a few principles that'll bring your communication ability out from behind enemy lines, so you can connect with the people around you.

**1. The art of listening.** Almost all college graduates take a speech class at some point, but I've yet to meet one who's taken a class in listening. None of us likes to share our innermost feelings with someone who isn't listening. Listening takes concentration and eye contact. Listening to people makes them feel important. It conveys a sense of care and concern. To insure you're listening, communicate back what you've heard. This helps you concentrate and gives confidence to others.

**2. The sense of sensitivity.** If you ever met me, you probably wouldn't think I looked like the most sensitive guy in the world. You might think I'm a professional wrestler. But contrary to first impressions, I'm more sensitive than an exposed nerve. I'm not referring to my own fragility; I'm talking about an ability to perceive the feelings of others. This hasn't come easily, and I've learned a few lessons the hard way. Being sensitive means that we don't ask questions that shouldn't be asked and we don't push beyond the line of trust. It's important to be aware of people's body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. We must always seek to understand the emotional state of those around us if we ever want to communicate effectively.

**3. Clarity is king.** Misunderstandings can be the bane of any team or family. Often we feel like we've communicated our message when nothing could be further from the truth. Repetition aids clarity. As you work with a team, state and restate your ideas. If your audience doesn't understand your message, then everyone has wasted valuable time.

### **John Cullipher**

Communication that lacks honesty will tear down the spirit of a staff. When the staff has to take a second (or third) look to see if they can depend on what's been said, they'll not want to stay very long. Times get tough enough without having to question the leader's honesty. The biblical challenge is to let our yes be yes, and our no be no. When we always speak with integrity, we strengthen our staff; it's freeing being able to trust what's said within a team.

This doesn't mean that we need to fire away whenever we feel like it. Timing and delivery are also quite important. Too many times we have no idea what's going on in the lives of those around us, and we have a "ready, fire, aim" mentality. You can be right on target in what you are trying to say, but if your timing and delivery are off, it'll discount what you're trying to say.

I can't begin to count how many times I've said to myself, "I sure wish I'd said that differently." Being misunderstood seems to come with leadership, but pausing to consider how best to say what we're about to say can save a lot of pain.

We miss so many opportunities to build or mend bridges. Paul challenges us not to let the sun go down before we make the necessary connections with others. He speaks in terms of anger, but this also applies to praise as well.

### **Dave Sanders**

In the beginning, God walked with man and woman, and they talked and hung out. They communicated in the purest fashion—with body, soul, and spirit. Effective communication for us is an ever-present desire and need to get back to that. Within a staff team there are multiple communication styles, some open and some closed; but effective communication is far more than just speaking to each other. The ultimate communication is shared lives and experiences interpreted together. Respecting the image of God in each individual is key.

Conflict and confrontation are natural and necessary. I've learned that my style is to come at adversity from the side in order to minimize the damage. This is a strength of mine; and it's a weakness, especially when it comes to confrontation in relationships. Delay in confrontation can be a seedbed for bitterness and isolation. With isolation, relationships die. Effective communication finds healthy ways to confront, but confront it must. Communication is also a two-way street. My 15 year-old daughter and I spent an hour and a half yesterday agreeing on breaking patterns that have developed in our communication style. I don't listen because I'm crafting my argumentative response; so she shuts down; so I demand her attention through eye contact; so she glares at me with a defiant focus and clenched jaw—and so on the pattern goes. The feelings and longings and underlying issues of a 15 year-old girl are all there, but I want to be right in crafting the argument. So I'm trying to rebuild effective communication by establishing a two-way street.

Communication happens best face to face. E-mail is for information, not communication. Effective communicators will sit face to face with folks, because there are a zillion different ways we communicate with others beyond words alone.

Effective communication is the bridge between the heart of the leader and the hearts of the people. Without it, the team is stagnant and progress halts. Jesus grafted his heart to the hearts of the people by speaking in parables, preaching with power, and teaching with authority. He listened; he wept; I bet he laughed, too. Effective communication holds people together and shapes them into a team. Without it, you'll find yourself trying to herd a flock of cats.

<sup>12</sup> **The Servant Leader and the Exercise of Forgiveness in the Context of the Organization - Part III** by Dr. Jeffrey D. Yergler <http://www.refresher.com/ljdyforgiveness3.html>

## **Introduction**

In **Part I** of this series Dr. Yergler discussed how the emotional, relational and spiritual expectations and deficits which people bring with them into the organization place incredible and often unreasonable pressures on those who lead and manage. It is the servant leader who is in a position to most effectively respond and intervene.

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In [Part II](#) of this series Dr. Yergler very skillfully led us on a very mindful and powerful personal journey of how we can create worth and value *first*, and then create authentic organizational communities where a legitimate and sustainable desire for performance thrives.

In Part III Dr. Yergler discusses the servant leader and accountability, the transforming organization and a personal leadership style that is restorative and empowering. Being a servant-leader who intentionally incorporates the work of forgiveness into the total milieu of relationships and organizations, represents a holistic or complete response to the overall responsibility of leadership.

### **The Servant Leader, Forgiveness and Accountability**

The organization, besides being a just and redemptive community, must *also* be a place of performance accountability and proper stewardship of organizational resources and finances. There are three dimensions of the servant-leader and forgiveness that must be seen from the perspective of organizational stewardship.

First, forgiveness helps servant-leaders hold employees accountable for the stewardship of the organization in terms of production quality and the return on the investment of assets. Though forgiveness must consistently be applied *regardless* of the person or performance, *servant-leaders should always expect a return on the action of forgiveness* (ROForgiveness).

Greenleaf (2002) held forgiveness and accountability in balance when he noted that "The servant-leader always empathizes, always accepts the person but sometimes refuses to accept some of the person's effort on performance as good enough" (p. 33-34). If forgiveness within the organization is not connected to personal and/or performance change, its application can be destructive to the employee, the servant-leader and the organization. Anderson (2001) points out that when forgiveness is used only as a "quick fix" and does not lead to personal and social renewal, it has essentially failed. Smedes (1984) agrees by saying that "there is no real forgiving unless there is first relentless exposure and honest judgment" (p. 127). Without accountability, the application of forgiveness can realize McGregor's (2001) archetypical description of soft management *results*. In an organization, the work of forgiveness should *always* result in a changed attitude and improved performance. In this sense, forgiveness is considered costly because it expects a response from the recipient. If forgiveness does not bring about changed behavior and performance, it becomes an expression of cheap forgiveness; while it is gladly received, there is no intent on the part of the recipient to change behavior patterns or performance levels. In this case, from the perspective of the servant leader's responsibility toward the person and organizational stewardship, the employee puts himself or herself in a very tenuous position.

Second, forgiveness keeps the servant-leader accountable for his or her own mistakes and errant behaviors. When a servant-leaders seek reconciliation because of their own actions, they are choosing to sacrifice self-interest for the sake of service to the greater organizational community. In so doing they broaden and deepen the capacity of the organization to be a place where self-sacrificing service is not only accepted, but highly valued. In no way is this a small or easy step to take for the servant-leader. On the contrary, it is exceedingly difficult. When servant leaders pursue forgiveness, they are clearly, as Block (1996 ) notes, "...willing to be deeply accountable without choosing to control the world...[this] requires a level of trust that we are not used to holding" (p. 6).

Third, to be more specific about accountability, there are two primary areas where forgiveness and accountability come into play within the organization: the violation of core values and organizational processes. The *core values* of an organization are the organization's essential and enduring tenets. Often these core values include *relational* boundaries and expectations, how the work involves respect and justice between *human beings* whether they are internal colleagues or external vendors, clients or customers. When there is a serious infringement upon core values, when someone has failed to honor the injunction to provide respect and justice to people, the servant-leader must be especially insightful about the best course of action. Whether or not forgiveness is requested or granted, the servant-leader must determine if the employee is capable of more virtuous and morally-grounded behavior. To retain a toxic employee, under the rubric of forgiveness, is foolish, dangerous and irresponsible.

Forgiveness and *organizational processes* involve the financial benefit or cost of the employee to the organization. Performance mistakes resulting in financial loss for the organization can be exorbitant. Though forgiveness is given when a mistake is made *regardless* of the cost to the organization, the servant-leader must assess the ongoing liability involved in retaining the employee. Forgiveness, though it as an act of personal and organizational stewardship, must also "pass the test of the marketplace. It must be practical and economic" (Block, 1996, p. XXII). In the case of costly mistakes, forgiveness must also include an evaluation of individual competencies and organizational fit. Unintended mistakes, though always forgivable, are in some cases not worth the risk of a repeated failure. Even in reassignment or termination, forgiveness by the servant-leader remains an act of grace and can foster new beginnings for the person and the organization.

Because forgiveness is profoundly restorative, empowering and generative of the human spirit, it must be considered an unparalleled worth-and-esteem creating action that transforms the person at the deepest levels of self-identity, regardless of whether or not they stay with an organization. Those experiences where I have grown most have always resulted from

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personal crises and pain meeting up with justice *and* forgiveness. When it comes to our failures, what most of us know is the punitive nature of the law when, in actuality, what causes the greatest growth is truth coupled with grace.

### **The Servant-Leader and the Transforming Organization**

We have affirmed up to this point the importance of forgiveness as a core leadership component in the life of the servant-leader. Two final questions, more macro in nature, must be asked and answered: How do servant-leaders help create transformed organizations, and, how does the sustained and consistent work of forgiveness, when included in the repertoire of servant-leadership, create organizations that impact the global community? I would offer three answers in response.

First, forgiveness eradicates impersonal and dehumanizing treatment of people for which organizations are known. Because the act of forgiveness communicates value and honor, it connects the organization's vision and mission with the manner in which people are treated in the organization. Like nothing else can, the work of forgiveness bridges any gap between what is stated in theory and what is practiced in actuality. The employment of forgiveness within the organization implicitly and explicitly declares that people matter, their growth matters *and their role as trustees of the public, national and global sectors (social brokers of forgiveness) matters as well*. Wise and mature organizations understand the "contagious nature," the external social and global impact, of organizational forgiveness.

Second, the practice of forgiveness in servant-leadership can lead to just and fair human resource structures and processes. Because forgiveness places a high value on the inherent worth and well being of people, it leads to the establishment of internal processes, policies and training which recognize and honor that worth and well being. It is a contradiction, and perhaps even an impossibility, to vaunt the exercise of forgiveness within and through servant-leaders, yet maintain destructive and demeaning organizational policies which have the net effect of dismantling the human spirit.

Third, because of the potential size and global location of an organization, the practice of forgiveness can potentially exemplify the politics and practice of redemption, hope and alternative moral models to the larger international community (Novak, 1981, 1990). In the case where an organization which values forgiveness is a multinational corporation, owning other corporations and subsidiaries throughout the world, the impact can be significant *if it is willing to value the practice of forgiveness as a shared institutional and global value* and then engage in the critical work of translating the language and behavior of forgiveness into the lingua franca and praxis of the local community. If forgiveness is practiced within an organization whose workforce is drawn primarily from the indigenous population, it is highly likely that the practice of forgiveness, in some measure, would be imported into the local communities and cultures.

### **A Personal Leadership Style that is Restorative and Empowering**

Because I aspire to be a servant-leader, becoming a *practitioner* of forgiveness rather than merely a theologian who knows *about* forgiveness is a non-negotiable. However, the reality is that leading as a servant-leader and understanding how to exercise forgiveness is no simple task. Not only is this work complex, my own effectiveness as a servant leader who demonstrates forgiveness will *always require personal depth and self-awareness*. My capacity to authentically restore, redeem and empower others and to be vulnerable enough to allow others to restore me is contingent upon my own experience of restoration, redemption and empowerment. There is simply no other way. There is a difference between leaders who possess knowledge alone and those who possess knowledge coupled with the courage to execute by taking what they know and translating that knowledge into actionable behaviors which create change (Bossidy & Charan, 2002). From my perspective, this ability to "translate" knowledge into actionable behaviors requires three competencies which, when applied consistently to my role as a servant-leader, will create a restorative and empowering leadership style.

First, I must always base my capacity to model forgiveness on *remembering my own propensity* toward hubris, arrogance, jealousy and selfishness. Leaders who do the most damage to those they lead lack self-awareness and deny their own broken humanity. The reality is that no leader can ignore her flawed humanity and continue to mature into a servant-leader. It is a Faustian myth for leaders to believe that they can conceal their humanity in order to leverage immediate and longer-term results when, in actuality, the suppression of their own humanity increases the chance that damaging consequences to people and the organization will be the eventual result. Greenleaf (1996) affirms this danger of focusing only on personal aggrandizement when he notes that "One may be conspicuously successful and at the same time may be destroying oneself and everything that is personally important" (p. 83). We do violence to ourselves, others and the organizations we serve when, as Merton (1958) describes, we choose to live in a world of unreality, blinded to our own identity, selfish ambition and success at any price.

Second, I will adhere to the belief that the exercise of forgiveness as a servant-leader releases individuals *from* the lethal, debilitating and immobilizing effects of their own anger, failure and shame. One of the greatest contributions I can make to an individual is to try to liberate him from the weight and baggage created by the effects of his own failures. Extending or inviting forgiveness, whether for a wrong suffered by the servant-leader or for wrongs suffered by another within or without of the organization, is a mandate for the servant-leader. The transformational impact of such liberation is powerful precisely because it asserts that, despite biased self-talk, the onerous opinions of others and costly errors of judgment, one is *always* worthy of

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love and hope and the possibility of new beginnings. As Kushner (Wiesenthal, 1969) observes, forgiveness, "...[frees] us from the shame of the past so that we can be different people, choosing and acting differently in the future" (p. 184). Servant-leaders always search for the beauty through the tarnished image. Covey (1990) affirms this thought by observing that principle-centered leadership discerns the difference between actual observed behavior and the "unseen potential" (p. 34).

Third, I will seek to exercise forgiveness in order to release individuals to the redemptive actions that restore people and organizations and which seek justice in the larger global community. In other words, servant-leaders who live and model forgiveness release others *from* self fragmentation and ridicule so that they themselves can be released to works of liberation and redemption on a relational and organizational level. In this sense, the act of forgiveness ultimately extends beyond individuals to the organization, the community and the global community.

As an aspiring servant-leader who fully embraces the power of forgiveness to restore and transform people and institutions, the spiritual dimension of forgiveness should not be overlooked. Given the precipitous potential for increasing chaos and hostility within our culture and world, all creation, it seems, is crying-out for forgiveness, redemption and meaning. Whether we are in concert with the words of Ambush Chief (Welch, 1986), "Give us peace and allow us to live in peace. Sun Chief, bless our children and allow them long lives. May we walk straight and treat our fellow creatures in a merciful way" (p. 113) or agree with Viktor Frankl's (2000) assessment that "survival is dependent on direction...unless life points to something beyond itself, survival is pointless and meaningless. It is not even possible...Only those who [are] oriented toward the future, toward a goal in the future, toward a meaning to fulfill in the future, [are] likely to survive" (p. 134-135), the act of forgiveness is both a spiritual work and a spiritual calling that, of its own accord, seeks to move the created order toward a unifying and life-giving goal.

I am convinced that being a servant-leader who intentionally incorporates the work of forgiveness into the total milieu of relationships and organizations, both locally and globally, represents a holistic or complete response to the overall responsibility of leadership. From a more mystical vantage point, I see the work of forgiveness, when it is authentically lived in the life of a servant-leader, as an undoing or unraveling of the insidious and unrelenting damage caused by selfish human nature. To use the powerful metaphor of Sylvia Fraser (1988), "All of us are born into the second act of a tragedy-in-progress, then spend the rest of our lives trying to figure out what went wrong in the first act" (p. 241). I believe that servant-leaders, when they speak the words of forgiveness, begin to reverse the devastation in the human soul and heart set-loose somewhere in "the first act."

<sup>13</sup> We recommend two books: PK: Helping Pastors' Kids Through Their Identity Crisis by Cameron Lee (Zondervan, 1992) and Life in a Glass House: The Minister's Family in its Unique Social Context by Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick (Minister's Resource Library, 1989)

<sup>14</sup> **THE PASTOR'S SALARY - AN INVESTMENT**  
**By Richard D. Locke**

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During one of my recent onsite church reviews, the Lord spoke the following word through me to the pastor regarding his salaries, "*If my people who work at the altar aren't fed at the altar, then I won't bless the minister.*" Remember, as long as the earth remains there is seed time and harvest. If the ministry is not paying the pastor properly, we are sowing a bad seed. Today, "fed at the altar" primarily deals with adequate compensation for being a pastor. In Isaiah 58, the Lord's reply why God had not taken notice of their fasting is that on that day of their fast, they did as they pleased and exploited all their workers. To exploit in this case means to under pay or under compensate a worker.

The salary review by an independent third party is the answer for the spiritual adequacy of your pay and to protect you from unreasonable compensation questions from the IRS. A salary review every other year, referencing it in your minutes, and setting adequate compensation is all that need to be done. The salary review will cover not only a reasonable salary range but will also include comparisons to related churches and include housing allowance, retirement plans, health insurance, automobiles, and reimbursement of out of pocket pastoral expenses.

Our firm has done a number of salary reviews for pastors and staff and we have reached four conclusions:

1. Most pastors are under paid.
2. There is a fear among the pastors that the IRS might consider their compensation unreasonable and this is keeping salaries lower.
3. Family members working for the church are not being paid.

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4. The pastor is not receiving all of the tax free fringe benefits.

Seldom do we do a review and tell the pastor that he is over paid according to his peers. Only one pastor was at the top of the normal range for a comparable size church. This means that 95 percent of all pastors are underpaid. Regardless of why the salary is low, whether it is ignorance or fear, it still results in the pastor with low pay. The majority of the pastors are not even receiving the average pay to similar churches. Most pastors should be in the upper ¼, not just the middle range.

The IRS has put out lots of information about unreasonable compensation. They have instigated a number of penalties for any compensation over what they think to be reasonable. There is a 25 percent penalty against the employee, a 10 percent penalty for any of the board members or trustees that participated in the decision and a damaging 200 percent penalty if the transaction is not corrected within a period of time. These penalties have caused people to be cautious in setting pastoral salaries or giving them raises. This is a lot of talk about nothing because we have not seen an issue of unreasonable compensation pursued by the IRS. These penalties, however, have caused the body of Christ to spend untold thousands of hours setting up independent committees and reviews. The IRS is not chasing church salaries.

After the salary review and proper approval of the pastor's salary, there are a number of additional steps or fringe benefits that can maximize the pastor compensation from a tax point of view.

After the salary has been determined, there needs to be a proper allocation to the housing allowance. The housing allowance, called the pastor's tax shelter was improved recently when the courts overruled the IRS allowing 100% of a salary to be classified as housing allowance. The IRS has not acquiesced with this. However, we can aggressively claim 75 or 80 percent of your salary as housing allowance. To the extent you spend your housing allowance, it is not subject to income tax. The biggest error in this is that the majority of the pastors do not have enough housing allowance to offset all of the allowable costs. This is the equivalent of losing tax free income. For example if your housing allowance was \$20,000 for the year and you spent \$24,000, your W-2 would show \$4,000 higher and be subject to tax.

The housing allowance allows pastors to have a larger residence because you get to deduct the housing allowance and the interest and taxes a second time on your schedule A, itemized deductions. This lets you reduce your taxes and lets you make major improvements to a personal residence. This combined with most gains on the sale of a residence are tax free.

A number of spouses should be licensed and ordained in addition to receiving the salary. This would let them consider electing out of the Social Security system. If her spouse has been in the Social Security system more than 40 quarters, then she is entitled to retirement based on his earnings and his full retirement in the event of his death. For this reason, it is difficult for spouses to build a retirement beyond the benefit they are entitled to from their spouse. This means that their paid salary will not necessarily increase their retirement plan. Any licensed or ordained person can elect out of the social security system for future ministry income by filing form 4361 in a timely manner.

If the spouse elects out of social security, then this becomes an excellent source of money to funnel into a retirement plan. The tax laws just passed by congress is increasing the IRA contributions from \$2,000 to \$5,000 per year and increasing the 403B and 401K deductions by approximately 50 percent. They have even added an additional \$5,000 increase if you are over age 50. Even the IRS now recognizes the need for retirement and that folks nearing retirement need to get caught up.

All pastors should have an adequate health insurance policy. The payment of the health insurance by the church is a tax free benefit to the employees. This plan should cover not only the pastor but all the family members. Since this is a tax free benefit, we recommend a good plan with very good coverage and a low deductible. Health insurance can be provided for the pastor without covering all employees. In addition, smaller churches and ministries should take advantage of a medical reimbursement plan. This is a written plan that the church should adopt and cover the out of pocket costs of the employees. This plan cannot be discriminatory and must include all full time employees. The church can set a dollar amount or preferably, a percentage of everyone's salary as the maximum annual amount.

The pastor's automobile should be owned by the church. This will require the pastor keeping a log or estimate of his personal usage. This personal usage of the automobile will be included in the pastor's W-2. This is a cheap way to own an automobile because the pastor's cost is the personal use included in his W-2 at his income tax rate. It is important to address any insurance related issues in order to assure there is proper coverage for the pastor's use of the church owned vehicle.

Perhaps you are confident that your salary is reasonable. Let me ask you some questions: Is your spouse working in the church? How many hours is she working and what is her pay? The second thing we see is that most of the spouses are underpaid if they are paid at all. If the spouse isn't getting paid and she is working at the altar, I think you have a problem of a bad seed again. I suggest you keep track of how much the spouse works and in what area, and determine a reasonable compensation.

A review of your salary also includes a review of the financial condition of your church or ministry. If your salary is way below even the average compensation, the church may not be able to raise the wages immediately, however, it will let you devise a three or five year plan for moving the compensation forward. This salary review is also a great benefit to the board members. This will assist

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them in approving the proper salary. If you know you are under paid and the salary is set by board members, the independent review is an easy way to approach the subject with the board members.

To summarize, the salary of the pastor is spiritually important and naturally important to the growth of the pastor and the church. The three main observations in our salary reviews are:

1. Most of the pastors are under paid.
2. There is a fear among the pastors to make sure their compensation is not unreasonable compensation. The IRS is not assessing any penalties in this area and this is certainly not an easy victory for them.
3. The spouses working in the ministry are not being adequately paid and in a number of cases not receiving any compensation.

It is time for the independent salary review and assessment to ensure that the "altar pay" is reasonable and adequate.

<sup>15</sup> For Ron Sellers complete article go to:

[http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article\\_main\\_page/0,1703,A%253D159530%2526M%253D200210,00.html](http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article_main_page/0,1703,A%253D159530%2526M%253D200210,00.html)

<sup>16</sup> The obvious loss in becoming an isolated though cohesive staff is explored by Susan Carol Losh:

<http://72.14.203.104/search?q=cache:rowVjBo9b8QJ:edp5285-01.sp01.fsu.edu/Guide6.html+%22cross+fertilization%22+%26+Pastor&hl=en>

**Alas, almost certainly the identical dynamics that produce "good" outcomes in groups also produce the "bad" outcomes in groups. The major culprit is the desire among group members to remain in the group and to please one another. This is what gives groups an enhanced ability to influence members. A secondary villain is a structure that discourages--or at least that fails to actively encourage--interaction between the group and its outside environment.**

**What does this imply? Cohesive groups tend toward surface--sometimes superficial--harmony. To avoid confrontation and other forms of ill-will members will publicly agree even when they privately disagree. Even if a brave member speaks up in opposition, cohesive groups can be very cruel toward "deviants." If they remain in the group, deviants tend to become isolates and possibly even scapegoats. When group members are aware of these sanctions, they engage in **self-censorship** either avoiding contentious topics or carefully monitoring their verbal responses.**

**Surface harmony combined with perceived group enemies can contribute to **group insularity** or insulation, the tendency of group members to interact primarily with each other and to avoid cross-group contacts. Once an imposed group homogeneity emerges, the group has closed itself off from cross-fertilization of ideas or from corrective input for its mistakes. Further, since members largely interact with one another, they may begin to feel invulnerable and superior to those who are not group members.**

**Given such self-protective strategies, members can propose extreme ideas and face neither challenges nor corrections from other group members or from outsiders. Problems may be ignored or glossed over. The group is now on a one-way trip to bad decision-making. Group failures become interpreted as enmity from the outside environment and the cycle continues.**

**Irving Janis coined the term "Groupthink" to describe this process and cycle of "bad decision-making." Bad decisions occur because group members are only exposed to limited and asymmetric information, typically information that supports the groups' decisions. Opposition from within is effectively stifled. Opposition from without is never referenced. Disaster occurs, leaving group members to shake their heads, wondering what went wrong.**

**The first sign that something has gone wrong (aside from dramatic disasters such as the Challenger explosion) may be that cohesion breaks down and members begin to leave the group without signifying their intentions or even giving an explanation. Group productivity may drop precipitously and outside authorities are called in (e.g., principals or higher level bosses), while the remaining members refuse to even acknowledge that there are any problems at all. One of the congregations I studied was affiliated with a major African-American, highly centralized denomination. The church was down to 35 people, most of them relatives of the elderly pastor. The Sunday School was so small that all grades were held in one room. The pastor and members refused to acknowledge that any problems even existed and the pastor stubbornly rejected any invitations to events from other churches. Ultimately, the pastor was retired by the denomination, which sent down a young, energetic pastor to revitalize the church.**

**Some other consequences of high cohesion that many would call negative:**

- Cohesive groups are more cruel to deviants. Scapegoating, hostility and aggression are more common toward deviants in higher cohesion groups.
- Individual identity may be more stifled and restricted in cohesive groups. Because members are typically closer to one another, they may feel "an investment" in how you look, dress, or talk. If you try to change aspects of your personal identity--even in a positive direction, such as becoming more physically fit--you may find to your surprise that other group members ignore, criticize or otherwise undermine your attempts at improvement.
- If group goals diverge from organizational goals, not only may the group as a whole become less productive (by organizational standards), it may also reject members who are productive by organizational standards (e.g., ostracizing the "class brain" or "binging" workers viewed as "overproductive.")
- Group goals may be damaging, even deadly, to individual members. Remember the loyal German soldiers, the Japanese pilots, and the followers of Jim Jones, who were willing to die for their groups.

<sup>17</sup> Evaluating Ministry – Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations, Jill M. Hudson, The Alban Institute, 1992  
<http://alban.org/BookDetails.asp?ID=975>

To purchase a staff evaluation form go to: <http://shop.store.yahoo.com/buildingchurchleaders/chstevchpr.html>

To read the article on Hudson's work: <http://www.northminsterfamily.net/blogs/?author=5>

To purchase the Natural Church Development evaluation go to: <http://www.ncd-international.org/public/:jsessionid=31B713F0C08E0FE5A47D302BE956D464>

### <sup>18</sup> Church Media & Technology Resources

Print information and live events are just two ways that people learn and get information. A pastor has the attention of his congregation for one to three hours each week while the average person consumes three to six hours of various types of content every day outside of work. Capturing the attention of couch potatoes and hard-core gamers is becoming an increasing challenge.

What is a pastor to do to cut through the noise?

Churches are now using new forms of technology to communicate with their leaders, members and community.

New gadgets and gizmos come out every day, but what do you actually need to help your church?  
 How do you lower costs, save time, and become more strategic with your church technology?

**Pastors:** We know you are very busy so here is some advice for you.  
*Start a **Media-Tech Ministry** and have them go through this outline and develop a plan that best fits your churches needs.*

#### Categories for using technology to help build your local church:

<a href="#">Communications</a>	<a href="#">Scheduling</a>	<a href="#">Training &amp; Conferences</a>	<a href="#">Tech Trends</a>
<a href="#">Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness</a>	<a href="#">Church Web Site</a>	<a href="#">Email</a>	<a href="#">Hardware</a>
	<a href="#">Media- Tech Ministry</a>	<a href="#">Software</a>	

#### What type of communications solutions can help me run my church?

- **Word-of-mouth** (Getting "the word" out about your church and your events)
  - In-person verbal communication from the pulpit works, but most people only retain about 20% of what they hear. Often the message gets changed as the information is passed from one person to another.
- **Paper materials** (Creating your church bulletin and other paper materials)
  - Paper is a good way to keep the message clear and can help remind people if they read it and don't misplace it.
- **Phones** (Phone tree and verbal communication via phone)
  - Phone chains can work well and are a good way to quickly get a hold of a person. However, if a large number of people need to be called, phone chains are very time consuming. Don't be afraid to turn your cell phone off!
- **Faxes** (Sending and receiving faxes)
  - This is time consuming but also helpful if a person needs detailed information and doesn't have access to a computer.

- **Emails** (Communicating within the church and outside of the church)
  - Communicating with your leaders, your members, your visitors and seekers, as well as your local community
  - This is becoming one of the best ways to get the word out to your congregation. A combination of email and phone calls is always going to be needed since 10-20% of your congregation will never use email or the Internet.
  - Assign a person to keep your congregations contact information up-to-date and accurate. People should also be placed into groups such as the choir, leadership or youth. That way you can quickly contact specific groups for specific reasons.
- **Church web site** (As a church brochure, church bulletins, the church information center and as an outreach tool.)
  - Begin with an outline of what you want the web site to accomplish. Is it to bring new people into the church? Then address the felt needs of seekers. Answer the questions you think they may be asking such as:
    - Is this church friendly, active and interesting?
    - What services to they offer for me and my family?
    - What is the Sunday service like?
    - Where are they located and when are the services? (17% of Americans have looked for local religious services in their area using the Internet. [Source: PEW Report 2004](#))
  - Once you have a basic web site that looks good continue to build out the site for specific purposes.
  - Make sure you have some nice pictures and images on the site.
  - Testimonials can be helpful with a photo.
  - Have the person(s) who build and maintain your church web site place a Title META tag and a META description tag into the HTML at the top of the page under the <HEAD> tag. This will help search engines find you.
    - [How to use META tags](#)
  - Make sure you spend the time to get your church web site listed in directories and search engines such as Google, Yahoo, LookSmart:
    - [Submitting to Directories](#)
    - [Submitting to Search Engine Crawlers](#)
  - There are web sites in your area that people use to find local services and events. Search for your town in [Google](#) and [Yahoo!](#) and see what kind of directories are listed.

**Companies that help you build out your church web site:**

- [Christianity.com](#)
- [Electricurrent](#)
- [ForMinistry](#)

**What type of scheduling solutions are available for your church?**

- **Secretaries and assistants**
  - Managing the events and schedules of church functions with a person can work well but your assistant may want to use a better solution.
- **Day timer and other paper**
  - (Paper schedules work well for most but hard to share.
- **Outlook & PDA's**
  - Schedule kept in electronic format that can be moved from one device to another or between people.
- **Online Scheduling Solution**
  - An online solution such as the calendar in [Yahoo! Groups](#) can work well if all people involved are online. You can share schedules, messages within the group and many of valuable features. It can even cut down on the number of meetings you have ;)

**How can technology help me with my training and events?**

- Paper books, workbooks and manuals
- Videos and cassettes
- DVD's
- **Live CCN broadcasts**
- Church digital library
  - In a computer with enough hard drive space, church sermons, PDF's and other materials can be maintained and copied upon request.

- A password protected area of the churches web site can be used to store and distribute pastoral teachings in audio, video and print form.
- Scheduling and planning of events
  - By using a service such as [Yahoo! Groups](#) communication and planning can be made much easier.
- Promoting, announcing and motivating to get people to an event can be facilitated. Use print, email, the web site, video and your pulpit.
- Having a live event

### What are current technology trends?

**Faith Online: 64% of wired Americans have used the Internet for spiritual or religious purposes** *SOURCE: PEW Report*

- Email
  - More emails are sent each day than postal mail
  - Word-of-mouth is now done through email as well
  - Wireless communications - Voice (Most Americans now have a cell phone)
- Data (A growing number of homes and businesses have wireless networks)
- People use the Internet in four areas:
  - **Content** (All types of info in text, graphics, audio and video)
  - **Community** (discussion groups, web logs, instant messaging)
  - **Commerce** (Direct purchase, auctions and B2B commerce)
  - **Communications** (email, email newsletters & instant messaging)
- Almost 70% of Americans and one billion people worldwide are using the Internet.
- **55% of US Adult Internet Users Have Broadband at Home or Work**  
[Source: Pew Report](#)
- Millions of audio and video files are being viewed and downloaded every day.
- DVD Players and DVD's are the fastest growing consumer electronic platform in history. Almost half of US homes have a DVD player.
- Phones are getting smarter and doing more things including taking pictures.
- Most new computers have DVD & CD "burners" as well as media software on them.  
PC's will continue to get smarter, more powerful and be able to manage larger music and video files.
- Devices are now being sold that allow people to record, save and copy audio and video files off of their TV, radio, PC, CD, or DVD.
- **64% of wired Americans have used the Internet for spiritual or religious purposes.** [Source: Pew Report](#)
- Hundreds of millions of people play video games. This is a larger industry than movie box office sales. The effects of extremely intense gaming on the brain and soul are just now beginning to be understood.
- **There are over one billion global Internet users.**  
[Click here](#) to see the break down by country.
- Sources of technology trends:  
[ClickZ](#)  
[Pew Internet & American Life](#)  
[Complete Guide to Internet Statistics and Research](#)

### What are your church hardware and software needs?

(What to buy and when to buy it. Spending enough but not too much.)

- **Hardware:** Reviews at: [CNET](#) & [PCWorld](#)
  - Computers
  - Printers
  - Projectors
    - [Here is](#) a good [glossary of terms](#) when picking out a projector.
    - There are companies that sell to churches at wholesale
    - The quality continues to go up as the price goes down
  - Network equipment
  - Wireless Network
    - [CNET](#) has some good resources on the How To's of wireless networking.
  - Digital Video Recorders and a **SlingBox**
  - DVD players and other devices
    - [CNET Top Pick's](#)
  - Digital cameras
    - Digital cameras are great for capturing church events
    - The history and people of your church should be captured with pictures

- PDA's
- **Software:**
  - Communication tools (Email, Chat, Instant Messaging, VoIP solutions)
  - Scheduling software (Outlook...)
  - Budgeting software ([Quickbooks](#), [Peachtree](#), [Blackbaud](#))
  - Word processing software (Word...)
  - Presentation/Worship Software ([Powerpoint](#), [Sunday +Plus](#), [MediaShout](#), [EasyWorship...](#))
  - Database software
  - Image and graphic design software ([PhotoShop](#), [PaintShop Pro](#), [Flash...](#))
  - Audio and video editing software ([ProTools](#), [After Effects](#), [Premier...](#))

### How can you use technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your church?

- Use a **simple but effective accounting software**. (e.g. Quickbooks...)
- Keep a **good church database**. (Name, address, gifting's, interests, email address)
- **Use email to communicate** with your leaders and congregation.
- **A projector in the sanctuary** can be used to show images, song text and video to improve the services.
- **Create a media-tech ministry**
  - Evaluates your churches computers, software, printers, the church computer network and other electronic devices.
  - Runs you're A/V equipment, computer systems, web site and networking equipment.
  - Helps with events and programs that can reach the lost and strengthen the church members.
- Upgrade as you can. (new computers now start at \$400, a wireless network costs \$80 plus \$60 per computer to set up, photo quality printers start at \$150...) You can start small and as needed.
  - **As one example:** *In March of 2004 my church went from a few old Mac's to a new high-definition projector throwing a 20 foot wall of video in the sanctuary that is connected to a new computer that can burn CD's and DVD's all connected to a broadband wireless network. All of this, for under \$6,000.*
  - **Another example:**
    - Update your current computers.
    - Upgrade to broadband.
    - Install a \$120 wireless router.
    - Purchase a Digital Video Recorder to save CCN programming.
    - Plug a **SlingBox** into the DVR so you can send CCN programming to any computer on your network or over IP to your church members.

### What is a church media-tech ministry and how will it help your church?

- **A media-tech ministry within the local church**
  - Plans out and maintains all of the hardware and software issues of your church.
  - Runs the web site.
  - Continues to help find ways to improve your churches use of technology.
- **Interesting audio, video and technology based programs**
- Reaches the lost with after school technology based programs.
- Supports your local church congregation with classes and tech help.

Helpful Resources:

- [Technology for Worship Magazine Archives](#)
- [OXYGEN church multimedia](#)

### The Digital Church

- Use multimedia in your Sunday service and other events
  - A one or two minute video clip illustrating a sermon point can speak volumes.
  - Still photos of church events helps build community
- **Building a digital church library**

- 
- Purchase a newer computer with a large hard drive and a DVD burner on it. This can be less than \$1,500.
  - Place it next to your sound board and connect the two using a good audio card or box. Under \$200. This will allow you to save your sermons and teachings as MP3 files which can be posted on the web or burned onto a CD.
  - Keep a digital library of sermons, photos, video clips, outlines, teaching materials for re-use. Archive them based on felt needs.
  - If a person comes to you struggling with a specific issue have your computer person make a CD of all the materials you have dealing with that issue.
  - 10-12 sermons in audio can fit on one ten cent CD copied from a computer
  - Your church wireless network. Once you have broadband it is very inexpensive to install a wireless network in your church.
  - Your church communications network
    - You can save money using VoIP
    - Using email to save time
    - Developing an Extranet for your leaders and congregation

### CCN for your church training

- Set a satellite system up at your church
- Hold live seminars using top speakers to train your leaders and congregation as well as have seeker events around CCN broadcasts that are geared towards seekers.
- If your church is not a CCN subscriber [click here](#) to get more information about CCN.

We will be using many case studies from those of you who wish to share your experiences.

We would like to hear about your successes and failures in how you have used technology in your church.

**CLICK HERE** to tell us about your experiences at your church in these areas, or ask us questions or suggest specific topics you would like us to address.

We look forward to assisting you as you build your church,

[Ken Lubeck](#)  
CCN Technology

### The Wired Pastor

by John C. LaRue, Jr.

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Nine of ten pastors have a personal computer at home or church, according to a recent study among [Your Church](#) readers. The study also reveals how personal computers are playing an integral part in pastors' lives.

#### Computer Junkies

The typical pastor with a computer spends 15 hours a week, from one-seventh to one-eighth of his total waking hours, on that computer. Most of this time is spent preparing sermons or lessons. The pastor spends three hours each week using Bible software.

When pastors were asked what type of software they use to prepare Bible lessons or sermons, their response was: word-processing software (59 percent), followed by Bible software (46 percent). Two of every ten pastors with a computer go online to use Internet resources, and one-tenth use software designed specifically for sermon preparation.

#### Hardware Facts

Having more than one personal computer is becoming as common as having more than one television set. An amazing four of ten pastors with computers have more than one computer in their homes. As pastors spend more time on the computer, so do

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their families. The abundance of computers in the home has made it possible for the majority of a pastor's family members to be active computer users.

Windows is clearly the dominant operating system for pastors, just as it is for Americans in general. Eight of ten pastors (78%) own a PC with the Windows 95 or 98 operating system. Three of ten own a PC operating under Windows 3.1 or older. Only 10 percent of the computers used by pastors are Macintoshes.

Pastors with computers spend an average of \$1,100-plus on them per year. Most of this is spent on new computer hardware (\$811). Software purchases total \$260 a year. Another \$79 goes toward computer-related books.

The two peripherals that pastors are most likely to own are a printer (73%) and a modem (67%). Most pastors own word-processing software (74%) and Bible software (59%).

### **How to Avoid Calendar Collisions: *Practical ways to schedule church events***

**by Jennifer Schuchmann** Janet arrived early at a church to attend her cousin's baby shower. She didn't see signs directing her to the shower, so she asked a man where the family was. "Follow me," the man said. The man directed Janet to the front row of the chapel where she found herself in the middle of a funeral.

At another church across town, Betty, a piano instructor, was starting her annual recital when four giggling bridesmaids burst into the room, carrying white crepe-paper bells and a ladder. As her star student played on, Betty argued with the girls about who had reserved the room first.

#### **Start with the Basics**

Scheduling activities in a church is a never-ending job. With the right tools and a few simple rules, however, your calendar keeper can keep everything under control.

Connie Mullins, office manager of the 400-member Grace Brethren Church in Waterloo, Iowa, schedules church events on a desk-type calendar (available at office-supply stores for less than \$10). People call the church office to schedule activities such as meetings, programs, baby showers, and weddings. A staff member checks the calendar to see if the time and date are available, then logs in the event.

"We don't do a lot of changing; a reservation is there to stay unless the activity is canceled," Mullins says. She and other staffers use a first-come, first-serve policy to decide who gets an opening. Pastors or organization leaders are allowed to modify the calendar when necessary.

*Suggestion:* If your church makes a lot of changes in its schedule, consider using an erasable calendar.

Once a month, Grace Church publishes the schedule of events in the church's newsletter and on the church's Web site. *Tip:* If you post your calendar on a Web page, make sure the information is current. Nothing signals a dead church quicker than an outdated calendar.

#### **Add Some Technology**

A monthly calendar is great, but Larry David McCormick, **pastor** of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in North Bergen, New Jersey, finds he also needs to view church activities on a weekly or daily basis. McCormick tried using personal organizers, such as a Day-Timer or Franklin Planner, but wasn't completely satisfied. "You have to adapt your life to an organizer and carry around the binder wherever you go," he says. "And if you need to change an appointment, you have to scratch out the old one and write in the new."

McCormick was happier with an electronic organizer: a Palm III from 3Com (800-881-7256), a kind of hand-held computer. Church activities are recorded on the Palm III, which McCormick carries with him. He can make changes to the organizer, then transfer those changes to his desktop computer at the end of the day without having to re-key anything.

The Palm III has a stylus that allows McCormick to enter information with a modified version of his own handwriting. It includes software that allows one-button synchronization between the Palm III and a PC. McCormick uses the Palm III to track his personal schedule as well as church events. "It helps me to respond quicker," he says. "If I am visiting a family, and the couple tells me that their daughter would like to get married on the third weekend in June, I can look up the date while I am visiting. I don't have to play phone tag to give someone a simple answer."

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The Palm III is available for less than \$400, McCormick says, which isn't high compared to the cost of some personal-organization systems, for which you'd spend \$80 for an organizer, \$60 for software, and more than \$100 for filler pages for the next three years. Many types of personal digital assistants are available today. In large markets, you can even try out an electronic planner for a small rental fee prior to purchase.

### Work Ahead

Keeping church events organized requires good planning. Jonathan Bosse, senior **pastor** of New Monmouth Baptist Church, an 800-member church in New Jersey, says his people work out a calendar of events 12 to 16 months in advance. The calendar of events is printed in the church bulletin. All scheduling information is then collected in the church office. "We put the two most recent months in the administrative assistant's office, where that becomes the final word," Bosse says. "Every thing else we do is considered a suggestion."

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### Scheduling activities in a church is a never-ending job that requires attention to detail, communication, and follow-up

At this point, only one or two people have the authority to change the schedule. The staffers then use Calendar Creator software to create the next calendar for distribution in the bulletin. Calendar Creator is available from Parson's Technology (800-644-6344) for less than \$40.

If people need to make changes in the upcoming schedule, they can make notations in a notebook Bosse keeps outside of the church office. The notebook includes a page for each month's activities for the rest of the year. It's a kind of self-service tool, freeing up office staffers who later collect the information and update the master calendar.

### Split Up the Task

Betty Heston, network administrator of Arizona Community Church in Tempe, Arizona, says a monthly calendar is nice for an overview of activities, but it's hardly big enough to contain the day-to-day activities of a large church. "Our daily calendar alone usually takes four to five pages to print out," Heston says.

Deborah Riddle at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia, can relate to that. The church currently has 12,500 events scheduled on its calendar system, and it's Riddle's job to keep track of the details. To do that, she communicates regularly with the church staff. She has created forms to help her track specifics. And her staff meets twice a year with the ministerial staff to work out scheduling for the next 12 to 15 months as well as to coordinate big events among the different ministries.

After a planning session, each department must fill out a calendar-request form with details on each event, including times, dates, rooms needed, where tables and chairs should be placed, what type of audiovisual **equipment** is needed, and whether foodservice or childcare will be necessary. When Riddle receives a completed form, she circulates it among the various departments. Once approved, the event is entered in the computer, where it becomes official. To handle all this data, Riddle uses the Shelby Calendar Program (\$195 from Shelby Systems: 800-877-0222).

### Control the Process

Keeping a calendar under the control of a few people so that it is handled consistently is crucial, says Heston. She recommends that a neutral person record all calendar information and that all disputes be arbitrated by a **pastor**.

No matter how good they are, calendar procedures only work if people follow them, Heston says. She reminds her workers of the importance of entering accurate information in the calendar system as well as checking it frequently to avoid potential conflicts.

Bosse admits he doesn't always look at the church calendar before scheduling an event. That can cause double-booking problems, such as what happened in the churches cited at the beginning of this article. An alert calendar keeper can spot such potential problems and rearrange the schedule. Masterful planning can be a reality if you use the right resources and if you follow your own rules.

*Jennifer Schuchmann is a management consultant from Marietta, Georgia, who formerly worked in sales and marketing for church-management software.*

# EXAMINING THE CAUSES OF MARITAL BREAKDOWN

by Teresa T.

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[This paper does not use inclusive language]

This paper examines the causes and consequences of marital breakdown within the minister's marriage, specifically in the areas of sexual intimacy, marital expectations, time management, and dysfunctional family of origin.

## Introduction

The top ten problem areas ministers identified in ministry and marriage were: (1) Finding the time for pastoral duties; (2) Creating time for personal recreation; (3) Finding time for family; (4) Dealing with criticism from church members; (5) Continuing professional education; (6) Handling lack of congregational loyalty; (7) Responding to unrealistic expectations; (8) Facing feelings of professional inadequacy; (9) Exercising pastoral authority; and (10) Handling job dissatisfaction. [1] Other problem areas were: struggling with perfectionism, conquering sexual temptations, coping with loneliness, and dealing with low self-esteem. [2]

## Causes of Marital Crisis

"Time with wife and family" is a problem for some ministers because ministry is "unstructured and unpredictable." [3] A compounding problem ministers encounter is that it is "easier" to dismiss their family's request of his time in favor of ministering to church members. If he decides to spend time with his family the congregation may misinterpret his actions as negligence of his ministerial duties, and his effectiveness will be hampered. [4] The minister would rather relinquish family time than risk "alienation of church members." [2] The minister often finds himself in a "catch-22" because if he spends time with his family and neglects some church responsibility, he is accused of being lazy, but if he spends time doing the church responsibility and neglects spending time with his family, someone may say that his priorities "aren't straight." [3] Ministers lack peer accountability, and feel lonely and isolated because they tend to have only "casual relationships" that never move to the deeper level of friendship due to the lack of time. [4]

A minister's church obligations may require him to be away from home on nights or weekends, to travel long distances during the week, or be involved in "confidential relationships" with many types of people. These duties may sometimes prevent the minister from participating in "homemaking" or daily housekeeping tasks; however, the minister may use church duties as an excuse to detach himself from his marriage or family commitments. [5]

The senior pastor's wife may feel resentful or "cheated" at the prospect of having the "same pastor" for the rest of her life. [6] Some ministers may use their theological knowledge as a way of "pulling rank," to belittle their spouse, or to express other kinds of suppressed negative feelings. The minister may even disguise an argument by "over intellectualizing" it in an effort to create a feeling of superiority within himself and in the process, producing a feeling of inferiority in the spouse. [7] It is the lack of self-awareness and elevating oneself without the accountability of another person that may delude ministers into thinking they are "immune" to sexual temptation or immorality. [8]

Perhaps the marital problem is due to the wife's discontent with her husband's profession. There are three basic types of minister's wives worth noting: (1) The Team Worker- who sees herself as the "unofficial co-pastor" or assistant pastor, and views ministry as a shared team effort with her husband (such as a co-laborer); (2) The Background Supporter- whose identity is enmeshed with her husband's because she has no identity of her own (she is "Mrs. Rev. so-and-so"), and her prime reason for existing is to meet the needs of her husband and family, and (3) The Detached Type- who has her own identity and usually works outside the home and has "minimal need" for contact with her husband's work. One author believes that the "detached type" wife creates the best ministerial marriage because the couple has autonomy yet support each other in their "professional choices." [9]

Although the marriage of the minister is basically very similar to the marriages of other people, ministers struggle with "unique pressures" and live in an unusual circumstance that demands additional requirements of marriage. Many minister's marriage are in trouble not because they are a minister, but because they have not done the basic things which are necessary to make a marriage work. [1] Marriage is "God's idea" but some ministers are oblivious to the fact that having a successful marriage is "tough work." Marriage is supposed to be a "one hundred-one hundred" arrangement—each spouse should be putting in a "one hundred percent" effort. [2] The minister's marriage however may be bombarded with "chronic busyness" that prevent each partner to give "100-percent." [3] If the minister is pastor of a small church, financial burdens create "havoc" on the marriage as well. [4]

Other causes for marital stress are the minister's dysfunctional family of origin, "unreasonable expectations" of marriage and spouse, "acute marital disappointment," "blaming others" including his wife, attraction to pornography and fantasy as a "refuge" and "substitute," formation of counseling relationships without "safeguards," and attraction to a sexual liaison as an opportunity to gain intimacy and admiration. [5]

## Dysfunctional Family of Origin

A dysfunctional family of origin can cause a “fear of intimacy.” Ministers suffering from a “fear of intimacy” may create a pseudo-intimacy through pornography, prostitutes, and “short affairs” with other women.

Unfortunately, his need for intimacy is never satisfied because it is not directed towards his wife. He is left feeling “empty, lonely, ashamed, and guilty.” [6] He becomes vulnerable to the development of an “unhealthy intimacy” as he finds his emotional needs being met by people other than his wife. [7]

The “residue” of a dysfunctional family of origin can result in “emotional scars” such as low self-esteem. [8] A minister who suffers from low self-esteem may hunger for acceptance to the point of avoiding conflict in an effort to “keep everybody happy.” [9] This need for acceptance inevitably affects his intimacy level and his view of sexuality. Often, low self-esteem leads to depression because the minister develops a “pseudo-self” because he fears rejection or harbors feelings of shame. [11]

Some ministers have a tendency to become “codependent rescuers.” They may have been raised in a dysfunctional home where they “rescued” or “enabled” family members. The problem with this type of dysfunction is that the person concentrates on the needs of others. For instance, if this type of person counsels a “hurting wounded woman,” he would be tempted to have an intimate relationship with her because of his incessant need to rescue, to be the “hero,” and to receive praise. [2]

Internal stresses can be caused by an insatiable need for approval that prevents the person from saying “no.” Some internal stresses may be due to an internal drive that keeps the person “pushing” to work more hours in order to get “more done,” but the work never seems to get finished and there is never an opportunity to relax. A minister might have the “Messiah complex,” which prevents him from delegating responsibilities because he feels that he is the only one capable of accomplishing the task. Discouragement and a “sense of failure” happens when ministers experience simultaneous conflicts at church and home, and are too busy taking care of others that they neglect their own basic needs for self-care. [3]

A male’s “exaggerated interest” in sex and “ambivalence” about his own sexuality can be the result of being raised by an aggressive and dominant mother (who “made most of the decisions in the home”) and a passive or “quiet” father. [4] When a mother’s method of curbing her son’s aggression is to withdraw affection from him, it can result in intense pain, bitterness, and deep-seated anger. This suppressed rage can cause the son to avoid conflict and in adulthood, trigger symptoms of headaches, intestinal problems, sleeplessness, and withdrawal from sex. [5]

The “bottom line” is that many sexual problems stem from emotional problems and developmental maladjustments. [6] When counseling ministers,

it is imperative to look into their sexuality because many have doubt and guilt concerning sex, and are unable to discuss it with anyone. [7]

### **Unreasonable Expectations and Marital Disappointment**

Intimacy is defined as a “vivid feeling of closeness arising from a purposefully selected and developed mutually committed adult relationship.” [8] When a minister has an “unhappy” marriage that is void of intimacy, it puts great pressure on him because he is not getting the “healing and support” of sharing his daily burdens with his wife. [11] He is “inwardly tortured” and “emotionally drained” because he feels disappointment, guilt, and failure in his marriage. [2] The wife also is suffering from stress because she must “put on an act” for the congregation or “risk running her husband’s career” by letting everyone know about their marital problem. A minister’s wife may harbor resentment towards her husband’s position, especially if she feels like she is playing “second or third fiddle.” Her resentment is exasperated because his “desires and schedule” often dominate their time. [3]

Ministers may have entered marriage with high expectations, such as believing all his needs will be met by his wife. [4] Though many marriages “start well,” with a high level of intimacy and genuine sensitivity to the other’s needs, their “sensitivity” towards each other may shift to children, careers, and community interests, resulting in “cooling” of relational intimacy. [5] Also, when certain expectations are met with disappointment, lack of intimacy and discontentment with marital sex results, which puts a strain on the marriage. [6]

Communication is “essential to relational intimacy,” however ministers neglect communicating with their spouse because they come home “tired of communicating” with others. [7] This lack of communication creates “isolation and alienation” between the couple in their own home. The minister ought to “reflect the expression of God’s love” through his marriage, as an “image and example” of how other people can grow in the quality of their love for each other. [8] When a minister’s marriage does not demonstrate the warmth and tenderness of “human love at its best,” it hampers their Christian testimony because “outsiders” will look at them and wonder if their religion is true. [9]

Ministers-in-training often believe that they can “compensate” for “anything they missed” while working on a Christian vocation. A wife will have feelings of resentment and hatred when the minister misses crucial life events such as the birth of a child in favor of ministry. [10] The truth is that some family experiences cannot be continually “neglected, delayed, or bypassed” without causing severe damage to their marriage and family life. [11]

Perhaps the couple’s marriage never aligned with God’s expectation of marriage. A study conducted by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary indicated that there were three qualities of a godly

marriage: (1) There is an establishment of a biblical foundation for marriage, in that each acts as a “servant of Jesus Christ” towards the other and are demonstrating “Christ-centeredness” in their marriage, (2) A sacrificial headship of the husband exists within the marriage, in which he places his wife’s concerns “first,” and (3) Husbands promote holiness in their marriage through personal example, which prompts their wives to grow and develop in holiness too. [1]

Unreasonable expectations may have been placed on the minister simply because he occupies the pastorate. [2] The most identified mark of the pastorate is that it is an “impossible job.” There is an extreme pressure to succeed and a constant fear of job security. [3] This creates “unexpressed anger” which is usually suppressed and surfaces as depression. [4] Spouses may not have examined the role expectations of a minister, and ignorance of the position resulted. For example, ministers might receive praise and requests for counseling from “attractive” and “romantically eligible” people following a worship service. This can create jealousy or anxiety in the wife. On the “flip-side,” some wives are more personable than their minister-husbands, which may produce “negative feelings” in the spouse, causing stress in the marriage. [5]

External stresses often hamper the marital relationship. Many are “unavoidable” to the minister. For instance, ministers may feel “overwhelmed” with all the work to be done and are continually frustrated because they cannot “do it all,” they feel pressure to “entertain the congregation,” pressure to “produce,” and “church shoppers” add stress by moving to another church rather than resolve problems or address difficult issues. [6]

### **Relevant Statistics About Ministry and Marriage**

Findings from a 2002 survey indicated that fifteen hundred ministers leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention in their churches, Eighty percent of seminary and Bible school graduates who enter the ministry will leave the ministry within the first five years, ninety percent of ministers said their seminary or Bible school did a “poor job” in preparing them for ministry, Eighty percent of minister’s wives feel their spouse is “overworked,” Eighty percent of minister’s wives feel “left out” and “unappreciated” by the church congregation, Eighty percent of minister’s wives wish their spouse would choose another profession, Seventy percent of ministers constantly fight depression, Almost forty percent polled said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry, and ninety-five percent of ministers do not regularly pray with their spouses. [1]

Results from Thorburn and Balswick’s survey, *Extra-Marital Sexual Behavior in the Ministry*, indicated “pastors have the highest incidence of sexual contact among professional helpers,” “pastors usually get involved with someone they know,” and “pastors are slightly more likely to have intercourse with a counselee or a friend.” A pastor may engage in an intimate sexual contact with a counselee because he became “caught up” in a momentary attraction based on his own unconscious needs or the neediness of the counselee, or he may be unconsciously seeking to express the “power of his position” in the relationship. [2]

### **The Long-term Effects and Consequences of Unresolved Marital Issues**

When marital stress is unresolved, the couple is left with a “superficial” relationship. They “put up a front” for appearance’s sake even though they are suffering deeply. They avoid seeing a marriage counselor because they fear being “downgraded” or becoming the subject of gossip. [3] They are inhibited from seeking help because there is intense pressure to model the perfect marriage for the congregation, which only intensifies the feelings of guilt and depression. [4] Because of this “secret,” the couple is unable to develop very close friendships with other couples in the church. [5]

“Neglected Spouse Syndrome” develops when the wife of a minister receives little to no attention from her husband for a prolonged period of time. The feelings of neglect and abandonment turns into resentment and anger, which is expressed as “nagging for more time,” “criticism of the spouse,” “getting even by reciprocal neglect,” and “getting physically sick.” [6] When negative feelings are not directly communicated, the possibility of “passive-submissive behavior” is likely, for instance an “unconscious passive-submissive punishment” is to withhold sex. [7]

The “battle for control” in a marriage may “feel like a fight” only to the spouse who is “giving in.” The spouse may have no idea that the expression “I’m sorry” is actually masking a “deep fear” of separation or violence. Meanwhile, the individual who gives in feels controlled and dominated. The resentment builds up and the relationship suffers. [8]

Sexual power struggles can occur when a wife views her husband’s sexual desires as “selfish demands,” and uses sex (either giving or withholding) as a way of gaining power or expressing anger. [1] Sometimes an inability to resolve conflict causes sexual power struggles, for example, a husband might feel manipulated by his wife’s use of sex when she “gives in” to him sexually only after he has given into her demands in other areas of their relationship. [2]

“Sharing” in ministry can result in competitiveness between spouses, or it can become a source of irritation for the couple, causing “relational fatigue.”<sup>[3]</sup> Sexual power struggles can happen when a minister’s wife feels powerless.<sup>[4]</sup> When sex in marriage becomes a “battleground,” it can make the couple feel powerless, angry, vulnerable, and tense.<sup>[5]</sup>

The broad definition of an “extra-marital” sexual behavior is “the sexual behavior which occurs outside the bond of marriage, by those who are married.”<sup>[6]</sup> The definition was narrowed, to “extra-marital sexual behavior, without emotional or spiritual investment is fornication, and sexual behavior with someone other than a spouse that includes an emotional or spiritual investment, is adultery.”<sup>[7]</sup>

A minister might become vulnerable to an affair (or “extra-marital sexual behavior”) when “common interests” and sexual intimacy with his wife diminishes.<sup>[8]</sup> The process is gradual and might begin with the minister becoming “preoccupied” with another woman in that he starts thinking about a counselee during his day, and shifting the focus from her problems to her “as a person.” Eventually the minister starts to compare the other woman to his wife, noticing that the other woman laughs at his jokes and is fascinated by him. He starts to tell his wife that she should be more like the other woman (in terms of characteristics and appearance). The desire to be with the woman becomes so strong that the minister starts to find excuses to be with her. He then starts to have sexual fantasies about her that may “intrude” during sexual intimacy with his wife. During a counseling session, the minister begins to share his own marital problems with the other woman (the counselee), which only intensifies his “perceived unhappiness.”<sup>[9]</sup>

Some women may see a minister (especially an evangelist) as a sexual object because his personality is “powerful and winsome,” his speech is persuasive, his dress and appearance are “attractive,” and his meetings are “conducive to openness and trust.”<sup>[10]</sup> There are many women who find this combination of factors powerfully “irresistible.” “Hysteroid” women who often seek “meaning” and “identity” are obsessively drawn to this type of male figure. Lonely wives, who are yearning for intimacy and lack “romantic excitement” in their lives, fill the void in their lives through fantasies to “overcome reality.” When these “available women” encounter an evangelist suffering from the pressures of ministry, loneliness, and “heightened levels” of testosterone, there is a great possibility for infidelity to occur. The minister may rationalize his sexual exploit by convincing himself that God had brought the two together.<sup>[11]</sup>

A minister’s wife may also be vulnerable to having an affair if she feels neglected by her husband, becomes concerned about “losing her attractiveness,” and sees in another man the qualities “she wishes her husband had.”<sup>[12]</sup> When the couple reaches their capacity of “marital discontentment,” the marriage often fails and ends in divorce.<sup>[3]</sup> Over the

years, there has been a notable increase in the number of “clergy marriages” ending in divorce. Divorce is disruptive to any family, but more so to the “clergy family.”<sup>[14]</sup>

There are consequences for certain actions, for instance McBurney recounted a time when “a young pastor” confessed an “adulterous relationship” he was having with a church member. His wife knew and had forgiven him, and when he was advised by McBurney to confess the relationship to his elders he was met with anger and lack of forgiveness and was quickly fired.<sup>[5]</sup>

## De-Stressing the Marital Relationship

Couples must learn to allow faith and love to “permeate” the core of their marriage. The permeation of faith and love within marriage is “manifested” in “essential elements”: closeness, conflict resolution, and cognition.<sup>[16]</sup> Couples also need to reestablish “covenantal commitment,” staking their “honor, their word, and their identity” on fulfilling their covenantal obligations toward the spouse regardless of what the other person “does or does not do.”<sup>[7]</sup>

To deescalate a marital power struggle, it is helpful for a counselor to help the “clergy couple” to do a number of things. (1) Help the couple to recognize the “battle for control” in which they are participants and to aid them into understand the “underlying reasons” for the battle, (2) “Negotiate a truce” between the couple and teach them how to resolve conflicts in a “creative way,” and (3) Explain to them the benefits of a “balanced, mature view of submissiveness.”<sup>[18]</sup>

Couples ought to take steps to “preserve a loving relationship” by learning to resolve conflict, and develop interests outside of marriage. They should also work on their communication skills, commit to spiritually growing together through devotions and worship, and keeping the sexual relationship “active.”<sup>[11]</sup>

Ministers need to be aware and conscious of “red flags” from other women, a few of which are: (1) a “growing dependence,” characterized as a woman requesting more time to meet and asks you to help her make personal decisions, (2) “affirmation and praise” from a person whom appears to ‘understand’ and ‘admire’ you, (3) “complaints about loneliness” that leads to a “confession” that her loneliness is subsided when you are with her, (4) “giving gifts” to you, which creates a feeling of obligation on your part to reciprocate, (5) “physical contact” that may start out as an “innocent” hug of appreciation, and (6) “other seductive behavior” such as sending non-verbal “messages” about her availability and her concentrating on sexual issues during individual counseling sessions.<sup>[12]</sup>

Ways of strengthening a minister's marriage should include, (1) Placing one's life, marriage, and family in God's hands day after day, and trusting His care in all events and circumstances, (2) Enjoying each other's successes and being supportive when one or the other partner fails, (3) Hearing one's spouse when he or she is hurting and making essential changes in life-styles to help the partner cope effectively, (3) Coming to terms with one's spouse as a real person rather than living with a fantasy or forcing someone into false roles, (4) Sharing each other's private life, (5) Permitting unique interests and activities to emerge and thrive as spouses age, change and grow, (6) Protecting the marriage/family as a unit against the disruptive forces sometimes imposed by community or church, (7) Keeping fit in all respects so that one possesses reserves of energy to handle schedules that are frequently overloaded and face crises when they arise, and (8) scheduling some "couple time" that remains "inviolable" and permits them to catch up with each other.<sup>[3]</sup>

In regards to infidelity, repairing the damage to rebuild a marriage means that "roadblocks to reconciliation" should be extricated from the marital relationship. These roadblocks include, "anger and unforgiveness," "pride," "fear," "the third person (the lover from an affair)," "old patterns of relationship" (especially those that are "destructive" or "negative"), "the cost of the affair," and "the counsel of the ungodly."<sup>[4]</sup>

The couple ought to focus on the strengths and unique aspects that "unify" a couple in a "clergy marriage," such as the "events of the day are shared with a common point of reference," "the wife is not left out of her husband's world, as in the case of most other professionals," "both are often involved together in the same tasks with the same goals," and "less 'fragmentation' of life because all the pieces can be 'put together.'"<sup>[5]</sup>

Ministers need accountability and should find other ministers with whom to build "mutual and trusting relationships" where there is "open talk and prayer without the fear of gossip." These types of friendships will aid in the reduction of stress and loneliness that is often accompanied with being a minister.<sup>[1]</sup> Finding a mentor who has the "wisdom, experience, and anointing" to minister to the minister in another good idea. A minister ought to return to his "first love" and devote time in studying God's Word because it is important for a minister to be "fed" by the Word. This can be accomplished in taking time for personal devotions, individual prayer time, and attending ministry conferences.<sup>[2]</sup> "The burden of the ministry" also requires "honesty and humility" and a comprehension of a minister's own human limits.<sup>[3]</sup>

Several things need to be recognized in order to "deal" with the problem of the neglected spouse, (1) "acknowledge the feeling of each spouse," (2) "identify patterns of behavior and communication being used," (3) "clear out the 'backlog' of hurt and resentment," (4) "become

aware of each other's needs and have permission to place those ahead of ministry demands," and (5) "educate the church of the legitimate needs of the minister's family."<sup>[4]</sup>

In order to protect oneself from "vocational vulnerability," married ministers have "three defenses": (1) He must "maintain" his marriages by having a "continuous romantic affair" by "rekindling fires of passion" with his wife, because being in love with one's mate provides the "best defense" against a sexual affair. This process of "relighting the fire" may take months of "inventive, energetic courting" but it is possible if the relationship is built on the foundation of a covenantal commitment, (2) One must "reassess attitudes" about falling in love. A "common path" to sexual immorality is the idea that feelings are uncontrollable, or that a person can be "genuinely in love" with two people at the same time. <sup>[5]</sup> This type of thinking "gives permission" for the person to "fall in love" with another woman without any regard of faithfulness for his wife. Finally, (3) A minister must avoid "every appearance and opportunity of evil." This means that a minister should never spend "long periods" of time alone with another woman because it may place him in a vulnerable situation leading to "false accusations" or "intense temptation."<sup>[6]</sup> A minister should "set limits" on his time with other women, protect his mind from "romantic fantasies," involve her husband in counseling, and stop himself from comparing other women to his wife.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Conclusion

There are many causes for the marital breakdown of a minister's marriage. Some ministers expect their spouses to be in full support of their long hours at church, but because they neglect to spend any time with their family it creates resentment in the spouse. Often, this resentment causes the wife to use sex as a weapon to manipulate her husband and as an outlet for the expression of her anger. The sexual power struggle may result in the husband's sexual needs being unmet by the wife, making him more vulnerable to sexual temptation as he unwittingly gets his needs met from another woman.

There is a "snowball effect" when lack of communication is experienced in a marriage. For example, the husband often comes home verbally exhausted from working at church that he neglects to communicate with his wife. If this happens continually, the lack of communication will cause "isolation" and "alienation" between the minister and his wife, and might manifest itself into unresolved conflict because there is an inability to discuss issues. Isolation and alienation causes marital stress. Sometimes the stress pushes ministers to put more time into ministry, which only compounds the problem within the marriage. As the emotional distance between the couple becomes wider, there

is a great possibility that spouses will divorce or have their needs met elsewhere. The latter leaves the minister or wife susceptible to sexual temptations. When either succumbs to the temptation, it can result into misplaced intimacy with another person, which only deepens the problems within the marriage.

Some preventative measures can be taken before the marriage reaches the point of isolation and alienation. (1) a husband should encourage his wife to use her gifts, (2) a minister ought to get his wife involved in his life and regard her as his “chief confidante,” (3) the couple should attend conferences together, (4) a husband should help his wife with child-rearing, (5) they should spend time together as a couple, (6) the minister can delegate certain church obligations to laypeople, (7) the couple should show continually appreciation for each other, (8) the husband should take certain precautions when counseling women, such as scheduling a session during times when someone else will be in another office, setting time limits on counseling duration and number of sessions, and counseling together as a couple, and (9) a wife should support her husband in his work, in his role as a husband, and through “physical expressions of love.”<sup>[11]</sup>

The “world’s” definition of marriage is “the legal union of a man and woman as husband and wife.”<sup>[12]</sup> but a Christian’s marriage ought to be more than just a “legal union” and should be held at a higher standard. A biblical marriage is defined as, “an intimate and complementing union between a man and a woman in which the two become one physically, in the whole of life (i.e. “one flesh”).”<sup>[13]</sup> The couple needs to return to the true meaning of marriage, which is “to serve God and to reflect the relationship of the Godhead.”<sup>[14]</sup>

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## SCALE OF DIFFERENTIATION<sup>15</sup>

### HIGH DIFFERENTIATION SOLID SELF

**100** | This quadrant is largely hypothetical. It represents the highest level of differentiation where emotional and intellectual processes are distinct and in dialogue.

- Persons are capable of deep union and yet keep their own SOLID SELF from being consumed by the union.
- Respectful interactions are experienced by a non-anxious presence with non-reactive responses.

**75** | This profile describes persons with basic differentiation between emotional and intellectual systems to function harmoniously within and cooperatively between the SELF and others. Anxiety does not cause the thinking to be flooded by feeling. There is a reasonable level of SOLID SELF on essential life issues.

**50** | This quadrant marks the beginning of differentiation between emotional and intellectual systems with most of the SELF expressed as PSEUDO SELF. Life is guided by the emotional system, but the person is more flexible and functions well when anxiety is low. When anxiety is high, this person regresses to the lower level.

**25** | Emotional fusion in this quadrant is so intense that the person lives in a feeling-dominated world in which it is totally impossible to distinguish feeling from fact. Such an individual is totally dominated by their relationships. So much energy is required in seeking love and approval that none is left for chosen life goals.

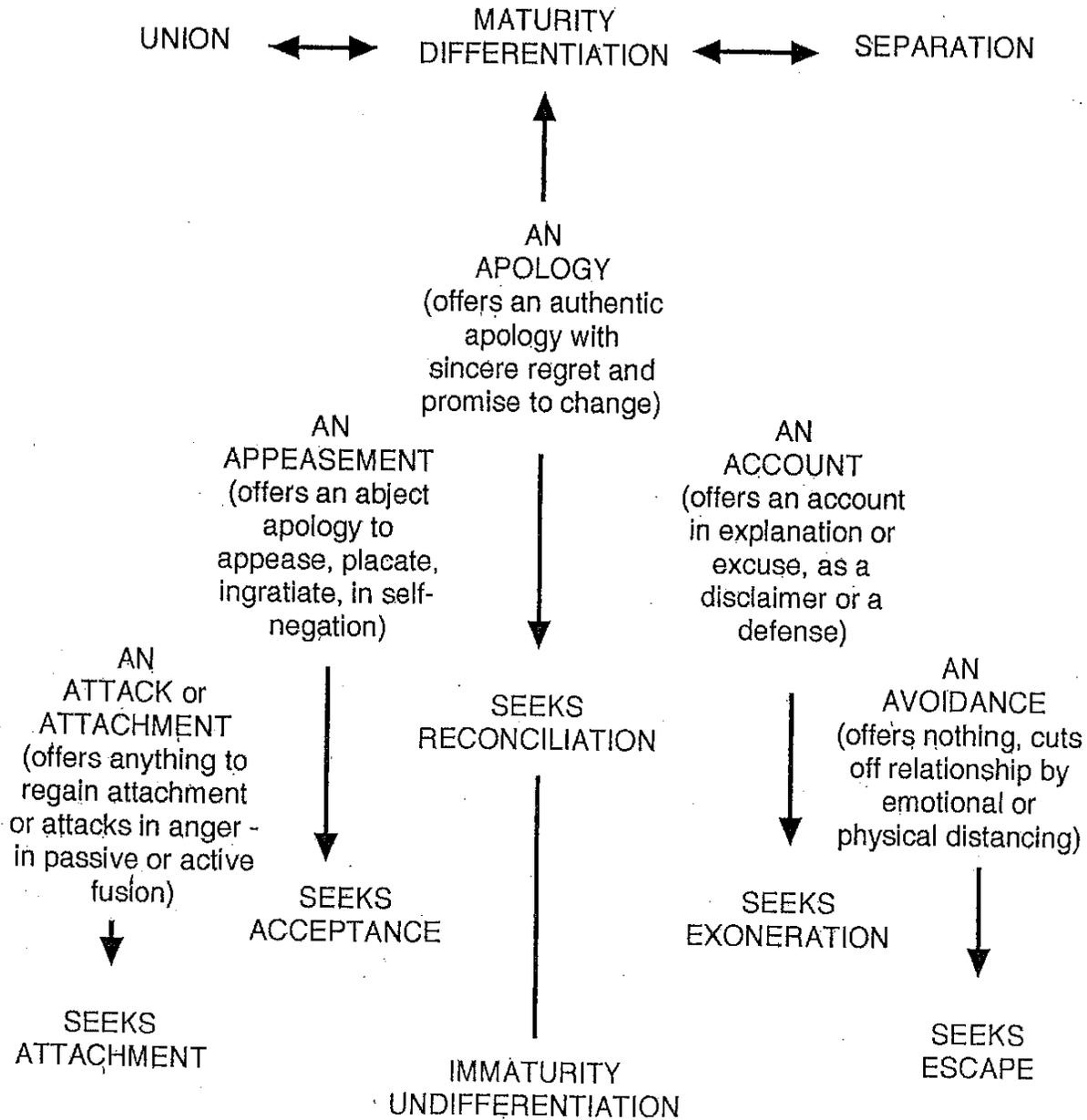
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### LOW DIFFERENTIATION and FUSION PSEUDO SELF

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<sup>15</sup> Adapted from David Augsburger, CN710, copied overheads.

## OPTIONS IN RECONCILIATION



Affective Domain		
Level	Definition	Example
<b>Receiving</b>	Being aware of or attending to something in the environment	Person would listen to a lecture or presentation about a structural model related to human behavior.
<b>Responding</b>	Showing some new behaviors as a result of experience	The individual would answer questions about the model or might rewrite lecture notes the next day.
<b>Valuing</b>	Showing some definite involvement or commitment	The individual might begin to think how education may be modified to take advantage of some of the concepts presented in the model and perhaps generate a set of lessons using some of the concepts presented.
<b>Organization</b>	Integrating a new value into one's general set of values, giving it some ranking among one's general priorities	This is the level at which a person would begin to make long-range commitments to arranging his or her instruction and assessment relative to the model
<b>Characterization by Value</b>	Acting consistently with the new value	At this highest level, a person would be firmly committed to utilizing the model to develop, select, or arrange instruction and would become known for that action.

## CASE STUDIES – Healthy Church Section - 1

You have been at your church for seven years. The congregation is stable, but doesn't seem able to grow. You work hard to make sure new people feel welcome when they come, but you notice that after just a few months, although they initially are very excited about being a part of the worship, most of the people seem to quietly go on.

You decide to ask one of the people, a woman in her 30's who is exiting the congregation in this familiar way and you are surprised to hear her say, "I just didn't feel secure."

You at first think maybe this is a theological difference about eternal security and try to explain the relational security of our Wesleyan theology, but you quickly realize by the vacant look in her eyes that you have entirely missed her point.

So you stop your theological defense, and ask, "What do you mean?"

She then rambles through what seems a disconnected series of events. How one family had invited her home and she was ecstatic, but when she sat around their table, she watched as the wife spoke to her husband in ways that were belittling and shaming. Then when she was invited by a woman her age to meet for coffee she enjoyed the light conversation until the woman started speaking about how she didn't like this other woman in the church. And still another time, after church when she came up to a group of people in the narthex, she noticed they all stopped talking as she entered their circle. The awkward silence only ended as an older man also came up and told a story that didn't seem that appropriate there.

When she stops, you know you have to say something.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are the issues?

What will you say? Why?

What will you do? Why?

What systemic changes will you make as pastor? Why?

## CASE STUDIES – Healthy Church Section - 2

When the pastor of the largest church in your conference calls you on a Saturday afternoon, you can tell in his voice that something is up. After a quick exchange of niceties, he simply says, “I am upset with you.” As you rapidly go through a mental list of your recent conversations and actions, you can think of nothing you have done to offend him, yet he is clearly offended.

Breathing deeply and saying a silent prayer for God to help you from reacting defensively, you hear him say: “I can’t believe that you chose Pastor Johnson instead of me to speak at the annual conference the night the Bishop has to leave early. What have I done that would cause you to treat me this way?”

Even though you could not see his face, you could sense the anger coming through the receiver of your phone. Thinking quickly, you suggest that this was far too important of a conversation to have over the phone and you set up a time to meet.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are the issues?

Where will you meet? How will you prepare for the meeting? Will you meet alone?

What recommendations as his supervisor will you make? Why?

## CASE STUDIES – Healthy Church Section - 3

As you settle in for a morning rest after a meaningful Sunday in your congregation, you are excited when your cell phone rings. Having given the number only to family members, your cell's interruption has only shown itself to be an enjoyable experience in the past. But as you cheerfully answer, you realize this call is different. The voice you hear is that of an older woman in your congregation who explains that she would not be interrupting, except that this is an emergency. (You make a mental note to track down how she got this number). You ask her what's wrong? She blurts out: "I saw Pastor Johnson with his secretary."

Knowing Pastor Johnson to be a responsible and respectful associate pastor with whom you have worked for over a year, you are skeptical that this could be anything of concern.

"Where did you see them? You patiently ask.

"In the Jackson Café. And they were alone."

Not wanting to encourage her suspicions, but needing to also be responsible in your own responsibility not only for a pastor on your staff but a fellow elder, you consider how to respond.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are the issues?

What will you say to his woman? Why?

What will you do? Why?

What recommendations as his supervisor will you make? Why?

## CASE STUDIES – Healthy Church Section - 4

It is the year before General Conference and you have been honored to be a ministerial delegate. In preparation, on a beautiful Saturday morning as you begin to pray for God's guidance in known the persons for whom you should vote as bishop, you hear your computer email chime. You open it to see a good friend who has included you in his email list encouraging all of you to band together and get a certain person elected. You don't really know the person he is trying to champion, but you like being "in the loop" and so you respond with an enthusiastic response.

As time goes by you realize your friend has created a movement. Emails are now increasing as your coalition has gained access to more and more delegates and the fact that you may all be successful seems possible.

Then, as you are preparing to teach a class on leadership you come across the material by Balswick on "tangled webs" and realize that this describes you, and your friend. The only reason you are joining with your friend to vote for his friend for bishop is because you want to support your friend and be a part of "the group."

You stop and consider the implications of this.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are the issues?

What are the implications for the type of organization the church will be if this is how we elect "leaders"?

How would a healthy organization choose leaders? How do we identify people with leadership gifts and not just ambition?

## CASE STUDIES – Difficult People - 1

As the conference leader you receive a call late one night from a pastor that he needs to see you as soon as possible. You have known Pastor Johnson for several years and know him to be a promising young leader. He has all the charms and charisma people look for in a leader and though you haven't seen his wife at any conference events, you have heard she is ideally suited.

You can tell that something is wrong by both the quietness of his usually animated voice, but aren't prepared for what he says when you get together the next afternoon in his office.

“My wife says that I have committed adultery.”

Before you have time to say anything, he quickly adds, “But I never had intercourse.”

Your mind begins to spin as you realize that you need to pray that God will keep you from going into shock. You did not expect this and will need God to help you stay calm and present in the next moments.

Your quietness is taken as an invitation to continue and so Rev. Johnson says, “We never really did anything. I know it was wrong, but it certainly isn't adultery. It's my director of the preschool. My wife found out that we went away last week together and said she was going to call you if I didn't. But I can tell you, we didn't do anything!”

As he says these last words in a rising anger you can feel your own temperature rising as well. Both as a pastor and as a supervisor you know this is not going to be easy, for anyone.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are the issues?

What Class of Affair is this?

Is this a confession or a discovery?

Will you use private counsel or MEG involvement?

What will you do to care for Pastor Johnson, for his wife, for the Director of the Free Methodist Preschool?

What systemic changes will you make as a leader to help other pastors?

## CASE STUDIES – Difficult People - 2

No one really knows how to interpret Mary's words or behavior. It is not that she is dependent on anyone, in fact at times she seems to pull back from the church and involvement, but invariably when she does she will give a call like she did just a moment ago.

"I don't think I'll be coming to the church any more," she said with a kind of lilt to her voice that made it difficult to know how she meant it. But even if you were sitting in person with her, you knew you wouldn't be able to read her body language any better than her voice.

"I'm so sorry to hear that! Why?" You ask.

"Because I have not been there for four weeks and no one even noticed."

Although you know the guidance that to engage a person in a dysfunctional way will only increase the dysfunction, you nevertheless bite: "I am so sorry. I didn't notice."

"Exactly. That's why I'm leaving. You are my pastor and you are supposed to notice when anyone is missing. What kind of a shepherd are you!"

Before you can even think of defending yourself, Mary adds now distinctly sad, "I don't know why I think that you would notice. Of course you wouldn't. You are so busy and everyone wants you, I know that I'm not really that important."

As you feel your heart and mind yo-yo to her twisted string, you consider how to respond..

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are you dealing with?

Can you provide adequate care for Mary to feel fine?

How will you deal with the rest of the congregation when Bible Study leaders and others come with requests to help them work with Mary?

## CASE STUDIES – Difficult People - 3

The church to which Pastor Johnson was assigned three years ago was only 35 people. Now the congregation has reached 300 and is growing exponentially. Although you yourself chose Pastor Johnson from seminary because of his “star-quality” charm and abilities, you find yourself uncomfortable around him. Chalking it up to your own insecurity and perhaps even jealousy, you push your concerns out of your mind and ask God to help you enjoy his success.

During a recent prayer time, as the pastors of the conference have joined together to pray for God’s blessing, Pastor Johnson takes a prominent place in this room of older, more seasoned pastors and proclaims that he has a “word from God” for them. Graciously, expectantly everyone waits for what God has for them.

But almost immediately, it is clear that what Pastor Johnson has to say is more about him than about God as he describes a special ability he has to do God’s work. As he continues the experienced pastors shift in their seats and look to you as their leader to intervene. When you do, in gentlest of ways, Pastor Johnson responds with an irritation that you have never seen before. He is both hurt and angry. He looks both like a wounded puppy and a defiant warrior. As you watch him sit down, you think of all the time he had come to you and praised you as his example and mentor and how he looked up to you, almost envious of who you are. Yet at the same time you feel somehow indebted to him. You know that when this prayer time is over your ministry with him is only begun.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are we dealing with? What are the clues?

What will you do? Why?

What recommendations as his supervisor will you make? Why?

How will you help other pastors work with him?

## CASE STUDIES – Difficult People - 4

When you first were elected to conference leadership, you were amazed at how this changed your relationship with other pastors. Some, it seemed to you, were more willing to hear what you had to say and seemed more willing to defer to your judgment. But there were others who you considered friends, who seemed to change to a more confrontational stance. No matter what you said, it seemed as though they would take exception. This was especially true of John.

John was a few years younger and had gone to the same seminary. You often talked around the tables at conference events and truly seemed to click. But now everything was changed. A switch within him seemed to have changed and now he seemed to see you as an enemy.

Coming up to you in the middle of Annual Conference, John said, “I disagree with your new program of getting all of us to have a mentor.” Since this was the central focus of your efforts this year in leadership, your own investment in the matter made it hard for you to not “jump on him.” But something inside you checked that reaction and you took a deep breath, asked God for wisdom, and responded “Why?”

As John began to talk, your mind went back to what had seemed like innocent conversations in the past. Times when John had told you about his first Senior Pastor and how he never really treated him with respect; And how his seminary advisor never understood his educational needs.

When he ends with the statement: “I really don’t think you realize how much of a waste of time it will be for all of us to be meeting with each other instead of doing evangelism and ministry,” you realize this is a far larger issue than a philosophy of ministry.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are the issues?

What is the source of this “mentor distrust”?

What will you do?

## CASE STUDIES – Difficult People - 5

When you got the call about Rev. Mary Martin, you were not surprised. You had watched the attendance numbers on her monthly report decline for several months and had intended to give her a call after you got back from the seminar. The call came from her sister who lived in the same town and went to Rev. Martin's church.

"You've got to do something about Mary." She said, almost as a command, more than a request. You didn't know Mary well, but you knew she was the middle daughter of three girls, and this older sister had taken over when their mother had died of alcoholism when Mary was a teenager. A very religious family who had been the backbone of their Free Methodist Church, the MAC had felt that it would be good for Mary to be assigned as the pastor of her sister's church FMC a few towns away. As a single woman, Rev. Martin had been there for three years and everything seemed to be going well until recently.

"She is becoming so overwhelmed with the amount of work that has to be done, she can hardly breathe!"

Thinking back to the responsibilities of a solo pastor in a congregation of about 40 people, you analyzed what more could be going on.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are the issues?

Was the decision of the MAC wise?

What will you do? How will you proceed?

## CASE STUDIES – Difficult People - 6

Knowing that the ability to lie is a byproduct of a sexual addiction, you are concerned when you discover Pastor Johnson in a simple little lie. It had to do with his attendance numbers. One of the delegates in his church mentioned at a conference event, “You know our numbers are a little inflated, don’t you?”

In further discussion you discover that it is standard practice to add 20 people to the count each Sunday since, “There are always people in the bathroom, walking around, and so on.”

Not wanting to be accused of “sticking your head in the sand” about one of your most successful pastors, you ask Pastor Johnson if his attendance figures are accurate. He assures you they are. When you press him, he not only seems surprised that other pastors don’t add on this additional count, but is deeply offended that you would accuse him of being a fraud, or even a liar.

Recognizing that you are now in a defensive posture before a righteously indignant pastor, you retreat to your room and consider what could really be going on here.

### **Discussion starters (if needed):**

What are the issues? Is this really a lie? Is the aggressive posture a part of the deceit? Is his response expected? What are you dealing with?

Assumptions often cause us to see what we expect to see rather than what is there. Knowing this, we often ignore our intuitions and “talk ourselves out of” something we should have looked into. How do you know which is happening here?

What will you do? How will you proceed?

# **A Spiritual Life Check-up by Dennis L. Wayman**

## ***Discovering spiritual illness must precede the cure.***

As your pastor, I am responsible for your spiritual health in much the same way as your doctor is responsible for your physical health. Both of us must be allowed the privilege of helping you. Often, unless a disease so overcomes us that our doctor or pastor is made painfully aware of it, there is no regular time when I can sit down with you and discuss the health of your spiritual life.

therefore I am requesting an appointment with you. I am requesting that you do the following 'lab work' not as a test, but as a tool for diagnosis, so that we might know your 'blood count' and decide together on a proper diet and exercise program that will bring about your best spiritual health.

Since pastors (or doctors) can help only if we allow them, this is entirely voluntary, but I am suggesting that you:

1. Set aside an hour of uninterrupted time in which to thoughtfully answer these questions.
2. Keep your answers only to yourself, to be shared with me and God alone.
3. Make an appointment with me for a one-hour spiritual check-up.
4. Get your 'lab work' answers to me a week in advance for my preparation.
5. Prayerfully and openly meet with me, trusting God to use this experience for you.

**I. Blood Type: Are you now a Christian?..... Comment on your answer:.....**

.....  
.....

Have you been baptized? ..... When? ..... Where? .....

**II. Red Blood Cells (oxygen carriers that prevent anaemia)**

**A. Devotional life**

1. How meaningful is Sunday morning worship to you? ... ..

.....  
.....

2. How meaningful is private worship to you? .....

.....  
.....

3. Do you feel you are becoming more acquainted with God? ..... In what ways?.....

.....  
.....

4. Is meditation a part of your spiritual walk? ..... Describe .....

.....

B. Intellectual life

1. Are your doubts and questions being answered? ..... If yes, how?.....

.....  
.....

2. Do you feel you know the Bible? ..... What help do you need? .....

.....

3. Do you understand basic concepts of theology - justification, regeneration, sanctification, gifts of the Spirit, etc? ..... What help do you need?.....

.....

4. In what areas of intellectual life (explaining your faith; theology; practical application; Bible knowledge; body life; etc.) are you strong, and in which are you weak?

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.....  
.....

**III. White Blood Cells (disease fighters for inner spiritual cleansing and renewing)**

A. Do you feel you are a more accepting, forgiving, loving person than you have been?.....

Expand:.....  
.....

B. Do you feel you are stronger against temptation (to be impatient, angry, greedy , lustful, etc.)?.....

Expand: .....

C. Do you feel your self-esteem is healthy? ..... Expand:

D. Do you see yourself becoming more pure in motive, thoughts, and lifestyle? .....

Expand:.....  
.....  
.....

E. Do you find yourself usually encouraging others or competing with others?.....

Expand:.....  
.....  
.....

F. Do you occasionally tear another person down in jest or in anger? .....

What triggers this? .....  
.....  
.....

G. How is the Holy Spirit helping you become whole?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

**IV. Platelets (blood clatters that stanch the wounds of living in a hurting world)**

A. Have you found someone to help bear the burdens of life? ..... Expand:.....

.....  
.....

B. Do you find you can share your inner joys, hopes, and dreams? ..... Expand:

.....  
.....

C. When someone in jest or in anger tears you down, how do you handle it?.....

.....

D. When you fail, what happens within you?.....

.....

E. When you succeed, what happens within you?.....

.....

**V. Blood Pressure (hypertension and exercise)**

A. Are you able to turn your finances over to God and tithe, trusting him to supply?.....

Expand: .....

.....

B. Are you able to turn your vocation over to God to use you how and where he wants?.....

Expand: .....

.....

C. Are you learning to let go of the desire for things? ..... Expand:.....

.....

.....

D. Are you able to exercise your gifts within the body of Christ? .....

What do you see as your gift(s)?.....

.....

E. Are you able to explain to others in the community why you are a Christian? .....

Any problems here?.....

.....

.....

F. How much are you concerned for those who are less fortunate, wanting to share with them the gospel and the helping hand?.....

.....

.....

G. How concerned are you with injustices and other social evils? .....

.....

**VI. Tired Blood (from imbalanced spiritual diet)**

A. Is your life balanced? How do you deal with pressure? Do you have regular time for family recreation, personal growth, etc?

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.....

.....

.....

B. Do you feel you have a balance of worship, study, and service to stay in shape?.....

Expand: .....

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.....

.....

**Free Methodist Church**  
***Pastoral Ethics Course***  
**A Process of Affirming what it means to be a Free Methodist Pastor**

Purpose: To provide an outline in guiding instruction and dialogue of pastors regarding the ethical responsibilities in their leadership as an ordained FM minister.

1. Establishing an ethical framework –
  - a. Love, Justice, Purity – serve as the threefold pillars on which an ethical framework may be developed to guide choices and evaluate results
  - b. Central core with radiating lenses of interpretation/application – an appropriate framework will have a primary point of reference while accommodating the variety of circumstances and variables which will cause apparently disparate perceptions in application and interpretation of individual situations. Not to be confused with situational ethics or relativism.
  - c. Absolute – is ethics absolute? Yes. In origin it finds its source in the image of God where in the characteristics of God are naturally or supernaturally endemic to the human condition thereby influencing even secular environments.
  - d. Relative – is ethics relative? Yes. In filtering the inner character which is imprinted with God's nature a variety of factors and contexts cause the impact of behavior to be relative.
2. Assumptions of ministerial ethics –
  - a. Image of God – the imprimatur, authorship of God.
  - b. Sin – estrangement with an intrinsic source.
  - c. Salvation – the restoration of the image of God.
  - d. The Bible – the written Word holding primacy of authority for truth.
  - e. Holiness – the condition of reflecting the wholeness of God's image.
3. Operational definition of ethics –
  - a. Ethics is behavior that proceeds from character that is influenced by the goodness of God's image in us.
4. Exegeting of the Ordination for Elder vows – (Par 8400)

*1. Do you confidently believe that you are called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to serve His church as an elder?*

a. Responding to the call of God, ministers faithfully serve the local church to which they are given leadership responsibility. This service is given as to the Lord and is conscientious in the prudent use of time, making sure to provide for the needs of both people and ministry.

b. As an elder within the FMC, ministers faithfully serve the conference to which they belong and the general conference which oversees the national and international efforts. This service is supportive and enthusiastic in both private and public communication, making sure to voice any concerns directly to those responsible.

c. It is the will of our Lord that the mission of His church be accomplished. In accordance with this will, ministers work diligently to see people come to faith in Christ, are baptized, brought into membership, taught the truths of God and equipped for their place of service.

*2. Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all doctrine necessary for eternal salvation; and out of these Scriptures are you determined to instruct the people*

*committed to your care, teaching nothing as necessary to salvation except what can be concluded from or proved by the Scriptures?*

a. Persuaded that the Holy Scriptures are sufficient and trustworthy, ministers teach what is in agreement with the Bible and does not add any doctrines that cannot be concluded from or proved by Scripture.

b. Persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain the truth of God, ministers will diligently and faithfully study His Word. This study will be both for private growth and professional instruction.

*3. Will you then faithfully give diligence always so to minister the doctrines and sacraments and discipline of Christ, as the Lord has commanded?*

a. Giving diligence to faithfully minister the Word and Sacraments of the church, ministers provide sacred moments for parents in their choice of baptism or dedication, baptismal services for adults and regular celebration of the Sacrament of Communion.

b. In personal and public instruction FMC ministers teach in accordance with FMC doctrine. If disagreement with FMC doctrine develops, then the minister will seek guidance and understanding from those given responsibility to do so. If such disagreement remains and is of a significant nature, then the minister will cooperate with the MEG Board in its investigation and decision.

c. Responsible to care those in need of instruction and discipline, ministers faithfully provide opportunity using both public and private warnings to help errant people find God's forgiveness as they repent of their sins. If such sin continues the minister will help the individual step out of leadership and/or ministry responsibilities.

*4. Will you be ready with faithful diligence, to banish all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word; and will you use both public and private warnings and exhortations both to the converted and unconverted as need shall require and occasion be given?*

a. With faithful diligence, ministers confront in an appropriate way all teachings by any person in that is contrary to God's Word and FMC doctrine.

b. With faithful preparation, ministers use public opportunity to confront the erroneous beliefs of people both within and without the church.

*5. Will you be diligent in prayers, the reading of the Holy Scriptures and whatever study shall enrich your knowledge of the same?*

a. Diligently striving to know God and His truth, ministers are faithful in prayer, both private and public, as well as in the study of the Holy Scriptures.

b. Understanding that knowledge requires education, ministers continue their education. This includes both formal and informal instruction, seeking mentors to assist in their personal and professional development.

*6. Will you diligently regulate and pattern your life (and that of your family) according to the doctrine of Christ so as to make (both) yourself (and them), as far as you are able, wholesome example(s) and pattern(s) for the flock of Christ?*

a. Recognizing the responsibility given in Scripture to be an example to the congregation, ministers are diligent in their care of spouse and children. This care recognizes that the responsibilities of ministry are no substitute for the responsibility in the home.

b. As a responsible leader of the church, ministers are financially wise and accountable in both their private and corporate finances. Responsible to establish and

maintain financial controls, ministers recognize that care for ministries is both a spiritual and organizational responsibility.

c. As a leader who is held to a higher standard by God, ministers take responsibility to disclose any sin in an appropriate setting, seeking pastoral care from a fellow elder. If such sin continues, elders voluntarily remove themselves from leadership and seek restoration through counsel and guidance.

d. As representatives of Christ and His church, ministers behave in private and in public that bring Him glory. When personal habits bring dishonor to Christ, ministers seek help to bring about change.

*7. Will you practice and encourage, so far as you are able, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people and especially among those who are committed to your care?*

a. Recognizing that quiet peace expressed through love is the expectation of Christ in a leader's life, ministers seek to be gentle in all dealings, both within and without the church. When such quiet peace is disrupted, ministers seek help to find God's peace through counsel, study and prayer.

b. Knowing that ministerial integrity is absolute, ministers keep faith with God and others in all their interactions, personal and public. This includes keeping all confessional conversations confidential. When integrity has been breached, ministers take action to seek forgiveness, restoration and restitution.

c. Knowing that a pastoral office has tremendous influence, ministers do not use their relationships for personal gain or aggrandizement.

*8. As an elder of the Free Methodist Church, and in keeping with the Holy Scriptures, will you respect and be guided by those in authority over you?*

a. Recognizing the authority of Christ and His church, ministers submit joyfully to the guidance of those whose responsibility it is to oversee them. When compliance becomes difficult, ministers speak directly with those supervising them to find a resolution.

b. As an elder of the FMC, ministers express their loyalty by being truthful in all their activities and interactions, joyfully working together to accomplish the mission Christ has given His church.

c. Acknowledging God's call to protect the unity of the church, ministers do nothing in a subversive or passive way that undermines the leadership of others with whom they work locally, in the conference or in the denomination.

d. Recognizing that the authority and responsibility of a fellow elder in the care of their church, ministers do nothing to harm the ministry of another, including proselytizing members or providing professional services (marriages, funerals, etc) without their pastor's permission.

e. Respecting the ministry of a fellow elder, ministers do not visit parishioners of former churches without the present pastor's permission.

f. Respecting fellow elders, ministers do not speak badly of other elders or defame their ministry. When the possibility of sinful behavior is present, ministers speak directly to those responsible for supervision and the approval of the character of a minister.

5. Conclusion –

- a. Representational integrity – consistency between who we are and what we do is the basis of integrity. Representing God and His institutions forces deeper consideration of a balanced iceberg forming our calling to leadership.

- b. Trusteeship – we hold in trust all things since God is first – prevenient and preeminent.
- c. Servant/Master Construct – personal identity as a servant implies a master who influences the servant by transformation of nature and reordered priorities.

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