

THE **PENTECOSTAL**  
**MINISTER**

EDITED BY J. L. HALL AND DAVID K. BERNARD



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# The Pentecostal Minister

Edited by J. L. Hall and David K. Bernard

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## Foreword

For many years, this book has been needed especially for the sake of young ministers entering the ministry. Many of our ministering servants of the Lord have had to learn by the hard road of experience, and in some instances the learning process is very severe. The men who have written these chapters on the role of the minister are men of proven experience who will leave the wise counsel of the years as a guideline for the future of those who need to be instructed.

The eleven chapters cover a good perspective of the ministerial area and will prove to be a great inspiration and edification to those who read them, and I include ministers who have been in the ministerial experience over the years.

The authors of the chapters have years of outstanding experience in the work of the Lord, and their observations and their learning through the school of hard knocks, as well as through practical experience, will give an insight into the considerable responsibility for the ministry.

Occasionally, the ministry needs to take stock of the course that it is taking. In the matter of the daily routine of the work of God it sometimes becomes too easy to lie back in contemplation of success that perhaps ministers have had in their lifetime. But we can never assume that we have reached the zenith of our ministry. We can never assume that we have succeeded. If there is success in the ministry, the story will be unfolded when we stand in the presence of the almighty God.

I Corinthians 3:9-11 says, "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God, which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This is a valuable scriptural admonition that fits the ministry precisely. We are taught in this instance that we labor together with our Lord and that any work of the ministry that will exist and continue in its eternal substance must be done upon the right foundation. If the foundation is not correct, there will be a terrible devastation of wreckage.

When I use the word *foundation*, I refer not only to doctrine but also to the manner in which it is presented. The preacher must not win people to himself. He must teach people to love the Lord above his own charm and charisma. People who are schooled to love the

Lord deeply can meet the test of time and the storms of life.

Let me urge you to read this book carefully and read it again as a reference work. Then pick it up and read it again sometime later and keep your direction strong and resolute so that Satan cannot destroy what you are attempting to do for the name of Jesus. To God be the glory for this rendering from outstanding ministers, and to God be the glory for your absorption of the truths within the lines of these pages.

We are grateful to Brother Yonts and the General Home Missions Division for proposing this project and helping to plan it. We are also grateful to Brother Hall, Brother Bernard, and Word Aflame Press for publishing a book of this nature.

*Nathaniel A. Urshan*  
General Superintendent, 1978-2001  
United Pentecostal Church International

# Chapter 1

## The Minister's Personal Life

by Cleveland M. Becton

*Cleveland M. Becton was the former general secretary-treasurer of the United Pentecostal Church International, assistant general superintendent of the UPCI, pastor of the First United Pentecostal Church of Nashville, Tennessee, and secretary of the General Youth Division.*

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- II. Character
- III. Devotional Life
- IV. Fellowship
- V. Priorities
- VI. Self-Discipline and Self-Motivation
- VII. Continuing Education
- VIII. Stewardship of the Body
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## I. Calling

The preacher's supreme task upon earth is ministering to the needs of the world and presenting the gospel to the lost and dying. Although he needs training, no one could ever learn the art of ministering simply by attending a school, class, or seminar. A person can never learn how to be a preacher. Technique can be taught; art cannot. A master chef can give an accurate recipe but conveying the "feel" in order to make food delicious is a different matter.

The preacher must have a sense of calling, as well as respect for the bidding of the Master, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). The apostle Paul expressed his sense of calling: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Galatians 1:15-16).

Every minister should be sure of the divine call that has brought him into the ministry of the Word. Otherwise, he may simply be choosing a career with demands that often seem unreasonable, concepts that are difficult to grasp, and realities that make "success" almost impossible to achieve. Only a divine call of God changes the demands from being unreasonable to reasonable, makes the concepts easy to grasp, and enables the minister not to be concerned about "success" anyway. A true minister does not labor for plaudits of men but for the approval of God; only eternity will reveal what he has accomplished.

The story of Samuel illustrates the importance of hearing and responding to the call of God. When Samuel was serving the Lord under Eli, "the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision" (I Samuel 3:1). Samuel, a young boy, had much to learn about the ways of God.

One evening as he lay alone in his room, he heard what he thought was Eli's voice calling his name. Three times he ran obediently to Eli; three times Eli said that he had not called Samuel. Finally, Eli realized that it was the Lord, and he told Samuel what to answer when he heard the call again. "And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth" (I Samuel 3:10).

Early in my own life, I felt a strong desire to work for God and was even willing to be a minister if it should be His will. I felt that if the Lord could call the boy Samuel to do a work for Him, certainly He could call me too should He desire to use me.

I really wanted a similar experience, thinking perhaps He would come and stand by me just as He had Samuel. I dared to hope for an audible voice and perhaps a bright light to shine on me, or maybe the touch of His hand on mine. The Lord did not grant that kind of experience, but His Word came to me. It was like a still small voice and I knew at that moment that I was definitely called into the ministry. I have never had the slightest doubt.

The call may come in a different manner to you, but if He wants to use you in the ministry, be assured that somehow it will come, and you will know it however it may come.

The Bible is filled with biographies of men and women whom God called to do a work for Him. In every case, God moved on the person; the person did not choose the work as a profession or a career.

God confided in Noah His plan to destroy the earth. Just having a strong desire would never have carried Noah through the many years of labor to build something that seemed but a joke to everybody around him. Noah answered the call and built an ark. Although his converts were few, the human race, which now numbers over five billion, was spared from complete annihilation. What an accomplishment!

Although Moses felt that he could not lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, he could not doubt the call of God when a voice spoke his name out of a bush that was on fire. Afterwards he led his people out of bondage to the Promised Land, undergirded by the call that came to him in the desert.

The ministerial call is more than just a call; it means being consumed, possessed, even losing strength, and yet finding it again as we meet the Master face to face.

The ministry must never be considered just a chosen profession, or career. The minister must have a divine call directing him into a lifelong work for God. If he does not, the minister will never last, nor will he be able to stand the pressures of such awesome responsibilities.

Paul said in Ephesians 3:7, "I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." To Timothy, his son in the gospel, he said of his calling, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (I Timothy 1:12).



## II. Character

The minister's private life with God is the secret of Christian character, the source of power for service, the lifeline of all that the minister must be and do. The inner life of the soul nourishes the outer life that everyone can see.

A missionary named Henry Martyn wrote in his journal, "Let me be taught that the first great business on earth is the sanctification of my own soul; so shall I be rendered more capable of performing the duties of the ministry in a holy solemn manner."

Our first responsibility is to be holy before the Lord and to seek to please Him. Only then can we adequately serve His people.

The word *integrity* is almost overused, but it definitely applies to the ministry. The Hebrew root means whole, sound, unimpaired. Simply stated, it means that a person is the same on the inside as he is on the outside. There is no discrepancy between his walk and his talk. His private life matches his public image. Integrity is the absence of duplicity (lying to oneself), and it is also the absence of hypocrisy (lying to others). Someone with integrity will not manipulate other people or use his powers for personal aggrandizement.

One of the greatest examples of integrity is Daniel. King Darius decided to appoint 120 princes to rule over the whole kingdom. Over these he appointed three presidents, and Daniel was one of these three. He was preferred above the others because he had an excellent spirit. His position caused jealousy among the princes and presidents, and they sought to find something against him, "but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (Daniel 6:4-5).

When Daniel was brought to Belshazzar's feast to interpret the handwriting on the wall, his reputation and character preceded him.

"Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spoke and said unto Daniel . . . I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee" (Daniel 5:13-14).

The ministry is a character profession. Politicians, attorneys, doctors, and other professionals may be highly successful in their profession despite flawed characters, but not preachers. What makes our calling unique is that our ministry to people is based on

their confidence in our walk with God. Confidence is not something we can demand; it must be earned over a period of time. We must not forget that confidence and trust are fragile. What has taken years to build can be shattered in a moment.

As ministers we may dazzle people with our pulpit oratory, leave them breathless over our talents and skills, and charm them with our pleasing personality. But if those we serve have reason to doubt our moral integrity, our ministry to them is finished. We may think of ministry in terms of preaching, but there is a ministry of character that is even more powerful. Long after people have forgotten what we have said, they will remember what we are. Some things can be faked, but we cannot permanently conceal what we really are.

We cannot find in the Scriptures one individual who had high visibility in ministry but compromised morally or ethically and who later overcame his past to such a point that he reached the same pinnacle again or continued his ministry with equal success.

Perhaps David came closest, for he remained a king. Yet it should be noted that he did not fill the office of prophet or priest. Moreover, David did not reach the same pinnacle as before his sin even though he was still known as a man after God's own heart. Further, his sin remained a blemish on his record. "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (I Kings 15:5).

The qualifications of those who labor in the work of the Lord are found in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The statements found in these chapters can be clearly understood; there are no hidden meanings. According to I Timothy 3:2-3 a pastor must be "blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." Every one of these statements has to do with character.

Verses 4-6 continue, "One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he falls into the condemnation of the devil." Satan has many tools to cause the destruction of a minister, but pride is the handle that fits them all. The next statement is very important: "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Timothy 3:7).

"Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" (James 3:11). It does not in the natural, and it does not in the spiritual. Although a minister may be ever

so popular and can attract great crowds to his meetings, flaws of character that may be unknown to anyone will bleed through and affect what he says.

Nothing is more repulsive than hypocrisy, and nothing is more attractive than sincerity. Preachers are not lecturers, who can speak on topics that are remote from their own experience and belief; they must be personally committed to their message. A preacher must mean what he preaches in the pulpit, and he must practice what he preaches when he is out of it.

He who proclaims the gospel must himself embrace the gospel, and he who preaches Christ must know Christ. Spurgeon gave this portrait: A graceless pastor is a blind man elected to a professorship of optics, philosophizing upon light and vision while he himself is absolutely in the dark!

He is a dumb man elevated to the chair of music, a deaf man fluent upon symphonies and harmonies. He is a mole professing to educate eaglets; a limpet elected to preside over angels.

The practice of preaching cannot be divorced from the person of the preacher. Paul admonished preachers in Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Nothing reveals the heart of the apostle Paul more than his statement in II Corinthians 6:3: "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed." There is the real issue: that the ministry be not blamed.

### **III. Devotional Life**

It may sound strange, but constant exposure to spiritual things can result in problems. If a minister does his work well, he is involved in "holy things" all day long, such as studying the Bible and praying with people. Perhaps he prays or intercedes five or six times a day as he makes his pastoral rounds. He typically reads many religious books and magazines.

One of the greatest problems that he faces in doing these things is professionalism. George MacDonald wrote, "Nothing is so deadening to the divine as a habitual dealing with the outside of holy things." A minister must be sure that his praying in the hospital room is sincere and not routine, and that reading the Word remains meaningful.

Unless a minister has a vibrant devotional life, he may soon begin to do the kind of perfunctory service that spreads death instead of life. Meeting the Lord at the beginning of each day will bring new excitement in the Word and fill the emptiness that can develop so subtly in one's life. Below are a few suggestions.

Start the day with at least an hour of prayer. Perhaps your first response to this suggestion is, "I don't have time to pray an hour!" Maybe you believe in daily prayer but have prayed so sporadically that you feel life is getting out of control. If so, you are actually going about things backward.

When you try to fit God into your schedule, you may find yourself praying five minutes here and ten minutes there, or perhaps even less than that. What you need to do is to fit your schedule around God, and you do this with a commitment. An hour or more a day is a commitment. The idea is to take a chunk of time big enough to mean something to you and to give that time to God.

To find that extra hour for God may mean getting up an hour earlier. And the enemy of your soul may say to you, "You will lose your most needed rest and ruin your health." When the alarm clock goes off and it is cold and dark, you may be tempted to curl back under the blanket for some more sleep.

However, you must force yourself to get up. When everyone else is asleep, the room wraps around you dark and gloomy, no one is singing, there are no church rituals, and it is just you and God for an hour. This makes the test of your commitment real.

You may glance at your watch, clear your throat, and say, "Well, God, here I am. Now what?"

I would like to tell you that God replies immediately, but there will probably be only quietness. As you try to pray, your mind may wander to inconsequential things—something that happened the day before or the long list of things you must accomplish during the day.

But continue. Gradually your erratic thoughts will slow down, and you will sense a stillness within. You may become aware of small sounds—the hum of the refrigerator, the wind blowing a branch against the house, or perhaps just the tick of the clock in the hallway. It is strange how they seem so loud. But when you feel the warm presence of God's love, the air and the very place where you are kneeling will seem to change as the ambiance of a house changes when someone you love is home. When you feel God's presence, you will pray earnestly, and it is not with the usual hurried words or your list

of “give me.”

You have always known that God loves you, but now you feel His love, and the immensity of it is so overwhelming that you may sit in quiet thanksgiving for long periods of time. You may even pray longer than you intended, and the rest of the household may get up before you finish. The ordinary day begins, but all through that day, you will feel warmed by the memory of the hour you spent with God.

The next morning the house may seem even darker and colder, but again force yourself to get up. Pray one more day, and then the next day, and the next. Day by single day will soon become a year that you have accomplished your commitment. And then you enter another year with a pattern of starting your day with the Lord.

There will be plenty of crises as you minister to the needs of your family and others, but through every crisis you will find a quietness of soul in that hour or longer that you spent with the Lord. It gives time to put things in perspective, to find God in every circumstance, and to know that His way is always best. Once you find Him, there seems to be no problem that cannot be resolved.

Some mornings you will be quickly filled with the wonder and glory of God. But other mornings you may feel nothing. There will be times when your mind just will not go into God’s sanctuary. That is when you spend your hour in God’s waiting room. But at least you are there, and God appreciates your struggle to stay there. Soon the door to His throne room will open, and the waiting will be worth it all as He sups with you and you with Him.

We must always beware of a “religious routine” that is only a pseudo-devotional life: reading the Scriptures, reading a devotional meditation, going through our prayer list, and leaving no better than we came. Actually, we will go away worse than we came because we have fooled ourselves into thinking we have had a spiritual experience with the Lord.

A minister must read the Word for more than a search for a new text and a new sermon. That is important, but he must read for his own spiritual refreshment when he is not even thinking about what to preach. He must also pray for more than the prayer requests that come to him daily. Again, it is important for him to pray for the strength that comes as he simply communes with the Lord.

To avoid professionalism in preaching, we must go to our knees before the Lord and

make a message our own possess or repossess it until it possesses us. Then when we preach it, it will not merely come from our notes or our memory, but out of the depths of our personal conviction as an authentic utterance of our heart. We need to pray until our text comes freshly alive to us, the glory shines forth from it, the fire burns in our heart, and we begin to experience the explosive power of God's Word within us.

Jeremiah felt his message like fire shut up in his bones to the point that he was weary with holding it in; in fact, he said that he could not. (See Jeremiah 20:9.)

The psalmist David, who was oppressed by the wicked around him, said, "My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spoke I with my tongue" (Psalm 39:3). The message that God gives to us should also be like burning fire. The pressure will begin to build up inside us, until we feel we can contain it no longer. It is then that we are ready to preach.

Every so often, a minister must ask himself the question, "Does the old story still give me a thrill?" If he must hesitate before answering, he really needs to do something about it. Since we are human, anything that we do over a period has the potential of losing its excitement. We live in a society that is easily bored, and after repeating an activity often, we tend to lose interest.

In the parable of the ten virgins, all the virgins had lamps, but only five of the ten lamps had something inside. For a period of time five virgins were content with empty lamps. Could it be they spent their time polishing the outside of the lamp rather than being sure that they had oil? We may need a little polishing on the outside, but not at the expense of being without oil. Lamps that are going out will never touch anyone in need. It is the burning soul, the Word aflame, that fulfills the purpose that God called us to do.

Even the deepest love will fade with time unless it is consciously and scrupulously kept burning. Shut off the supply of nourishment to the strongest plant on the earth and slowly it will begin to die. This must never happen to a minister. Every minister is at times frustrated by his lack of power. Paul explained that our trouble lies within: "For the flesh lusted against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17).

We need disciplines that will focus our attention on the Spirit and help us war against the desires of the flesh. Fasting is such a discipline. Victory will demand maximum effort, and such effort must enlist every available tool. "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

The physical is involved in every spiritual victory. Our body is the temple that houses God's Spirit. The temporary denial of temporal things in order to put priority on better things, on things eternal, is pleasing to God.

Paul disciplined the body as a spiritual exercise. "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection" (I Corinthians 9:27). The body will take command unless it is disciplined. And the flesh, pampered and exalted, will instigate all kinds of problems, because it resents and resists the Cross.

Fasting is one of the quickest and most available means at hand to reveal how much or how little authority I have over my body. I must have that authority, or I cannot be victorious.

Jesus employed fasting. His mighty victory over Satan followed His fast. Fasting brought Him into complete unity with the Word, and the combination overcame all the tactics of Satan.

Fasting is not bargaining with God. Neither does it acquire merit. It does strengthen determination. The minister must fast in addition to praying, worshiping, and studying. Christian disciplines strengthen him.

Fasting cannot supplant faith. Jesus pinpointed a Pharisee who bragged that he fasted "twice in the week" (Luke 18:12). It only added to his self-righteousness. Fasting is a physical discipline that can multiply our prayer and faith efforts. It says no to the flesh and yes to the Spirit. When we head into battle with the adversary, fasting adds strength to our prayers.

#### **IV. Fellowship**

John Donne said, "No man is an island." No minister should be a loner. Friendships and fellowship are of great importance in the life of anyone, but especially to a minister. A wife and children can meet many relationship needs, but as time marches on, other needs emerge that can only be met by other ministers, men who walk in the same shoes, men who share the same problems and the same experiences in life.

As ministers we live with a paradox. We sincerely want to have close friends, yet we fear letting someone get too close. We worry that if someone really got to know us, he would not like us. We need approval, to be accepted by another person, but we fear the opposite, that we will be rejected. So often we keep our distance. If we do not become

vulnerable with someone, then we safely avoid the risk of rejection.

But Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, wrote, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). A friend helps us defend ourselves against the enemy we cannot see. “And if one prevails against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Every minister needs to be accountable to somebody. It is frightening how quickly we can go off on a tangent. Most of us have the capacity to rationalize situations until we believe that our theories and ideas are always right. But just because we say something is so does not necessarily make it so. A friend keeps us on track. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel” (Proverbs 27:6, 9).

We all need someone to do a “reality check” on us occasionally to make sure we are not deceiving ourselves. Good counsel will help to keep us doctrinally straight and morally pure and will help us to avoid some spiritual wilderness experiences.

How often have we said, “If only I had someone to talk to”? And that is what friends are for. A friend can help by acting as a sounding board. Talking through a matter helps to crystallize our thinking in a way that no other method of reasoning can. “Iron sharpeneth iron; so, a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17).

Sometimes what we need is not wise counsel but wise empathy not words but compassion, someone just to listen. Often just by talking about a problem we feel much better. “A man that hath friends must show himself friendly” (Proverbs 18:24). Many ministers have a desire for a friendship, but many do not take the initiative. If you want a real friend, you will probably need to be the one who takes the initiative.

It cannot be stressed too much for young ministers to develop close friends early in their ministry. Getting close to the right kind of friends can help a minister develop into full spiritual maturity.

Of course, there is no friend like the lowly Jesus, no not one. No human can ever do for you what Jesus can do. He is truly “a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).



## V. **Priorities**

According to *Webster's Dictionary*, a priority is something to which we give precedence by assigning a degree of urgency or importance to it. Many ministers have not settled the issue of what their priorities should be. Among those who have, too few live according to those priorities.

Life's many options compete for our time, and will be worth to have any control over our lives we must decide in advance to what we will give ourselves. The object of setting priorities is to allocate limited amounts of time and money where God directs us.

What is important to God? The answer to that question reveals what our priorities ought to be. Priorities help us narrow our focus. Simply stated, God wants us to live by biblical priorities, to be ministers who pattern our lives according to the Word of God.

One day an expert in the law of God tested Jesus with a question: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:36-37).

If we comprehend the full scope of this great mandment, then our lives will take on a new dimension. We will set our hands to the task God has given or will give us, at the same time remembering that our most important work is to love Him. Whatever task He gives us provides an opportunity to demonstrate our love and gratitude for Him in a tangible way.

A minister's first responsibility is to guard his personal walk with God and to be loyal to Him. Absolutely primary to his calling and work is a minister's personal duty to cultivate his own spiritual life. Although spoken in another context, these words speak loudly to every minister: "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept" (Song of Solomon 1:6).

Unless we make our own spiritual life our priority, there is a real danger that we may become merely professionals. The coldness of professionalism will never get the job done; in fact, it turns off the flow of the Spirit, and the souls that we minister to will not respond. An individual or an audience to whom a minister is ministering knows whether or not he has a spiritual connection; it cannot be seen by the eye but certainly can be felt by the soul.

We can become extremely tired with all the many activities that call for our time and

attention. Ministering has never been an easy job, but now more than ever the demands seem to increase daily. Only the inner strength that we receive from God will keep us from burnout.

Theodore Roosevelt made the following statement with another application, but it gives an insight that applies to the ministry:

It is not the critic who counts, nor the man who points how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly. Who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions. Who spends himself in a worthy cause. Who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at the worst, if he fails at least fails while daring greatly so that his place will never be with those timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

The world system is far different from the spiritual life, and it competes directly with biblical priorities. But we must remember that we are aliens and strangers in this world, pilgrims who are just passing through.

## VI. **Self-Discipline and Self-Motivation**

The words *disciple* and *discipline* differ somewhat in their meaning, but they come from the same root word. Jesus laid down some stringent rules for those who would become His disciples: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26-27). He summed up the matter in Luke 14:33: "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

A minister must not be held in bondage by the desires of others or by his own possessions. He must cleanly sever all entanglements contrary to God's will and abandon himself utterly and uncompromisingly to God. If these conditions seem hard and severe, let us remember what depends upon them. Character and destiny depend upon a minister's willingness to discipline himself in the manner that Jesus instructed.

A minister must not allow anything to come between God and himself, so that he can know and do His will. Such an attitude does not rob the enjoyment of other things; rather, it adds greater enjoyment. The abnegation of self is self's highest development.

The job of being a minister in our day is just about the hardest job anyone is called to do. No responsibility seems to be more demanding. J. Wallace Hamilton, a longtime minister, put it this way:

The modern preacher has to make as many calls as a country doctor; he has to shake as many hands as a politician. He has to prepare as many briefs as a lawyer; he has to see as many people as a specialist. He has to be as good an executive as a college president, and he has to be as good a financier as a banker.

To be able to do all of this, a minister must be a master of self discipline. He must discipline every area of his life, especially his time, his reading, and his personal devotions. One man who usually spent at least an hour in prayer in the morning stated that he had so much to do one day that he would need to spend two hours in prayer in order to get it all done. This is discipline.

William Barclay, commenting upon the undisciplined life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, wrote:

Coleridge is the supreme tragedy of indiscipline. Never did so great a mind produce so little. He left Cambridge University to join the army; he left the army because he could not rub down a horse; he returned to Oxford and left without a degree. He began a paper called "The Watchman" which lived for ten numbers and then died. It has been said of him: "He lost himself in visions of work to be done, that always remained to be done. Coleridge had every poetic gift but one—the gift of sustained and concentrated effort." In his head and in his mind, he had all kinds of books, as he said himself, "completed save for transcription." "I am on the even," he said, "of sending to the press two octavo volumes." But the books were never composed outside Coleridge's mind, because he would not face the discipline of sitting down to write them out. No one ever reached any eminence, and no one having reached it ever maintained it, without discipline.

## VII. Continuing Education

Bishop Phillips Brooks said in his 1877 Yale Lectures.

The preacher's life must be a life of large accumulation. He must not be always trying to make sermons, but always seeking truth, and out of the truth which he has won the sermons will make themselves. Learn to study for the sake of truth, learn to think for the profit and the joy of thinking. Then your sermons shall be like the leaping of a fountain, and not like the pumping of a pump.

Since a minister is primarily called to the ministry of the Word, the study of Scripture is one of his foremost responsibilities. And the higher that he views the Bible, the more painstaking and conscientious his study of it should be. If the Bible is indeed the Word of God, it cannot be handled lightly. Taking time to penetrate the text until it yields up its treasures must be continually a part of a minister's education and study habits.

A minister must never forget Paul's admonition to Timothy: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Paul told the Colossians, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16). Every minister needs to continue to study the Bible diligently and to avail himself of various materials that can assist this study and expand his knowledge.

A young minister who is just starting out may be able to attend one of our Bible colleges where the concentrated study will be of great help to his ministry. If he cannot enroll as a resident, he can take correspondence courses offered by these schools, and they can become part of his daily study habits. This option is also available to those who have been in the ministry for a period of time. Continuing education is very important when sought with the proper attitude and spirit.

Many things can distract a minister from study. Joseph Parker, the first minister of the City Temple in London, began his studies at seven-thirty every morning. He refused to get involved in public life or business. He said, "I have lived for my work and that is all. If I had talked all the week, I could not have preached on Sunday. If I had attended committee meetings, immersed myself in politics and undertaken the general care of the Empire, my strength would have been consumed." Alexander MacLaren, an eloquent preacher who died in 1903, also declined many social and speaking engagements to concentrate on his study and preparation.

Whatever one must do to be absorbed in learning more about Jesus and to become His effective ambassador, it is doing.

## VIII. Stewardship of the Body

From almost the beginning of the Bible we see the importance of rest. "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Genesis 2:2). "In six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17). The

literal translation suggests, "He refreshed Himself." Of course, we know that God does not need to rest. He wanted to set a precedent for human beings by giving us an example.

Rest is not a luxury but rather a necessity. Could it be possible that we sometimes distort the meaning of rest as God intended? In place of the rest that God first demonstrated, we sometimes substitute things called leisure or amusement. Leisure and amusement may be enjoyable, but they only provide a momentary lift, and they will not last. We rarely overcome fatigue by amusing ourselves. As an example, how often the remark is made after someone has been on an extended vacation, "I had to come home to rest."

A prime duty for every person is proper care of the body. The minister will preach only as long as his physical body is properly cared for. A definite time for rest and recreation is a must for every individual and certainly for a minister. Many years ago, I heard that one sermon is equal to eight hours of hard manual labor. This does not include the many hours of preparation and certainly not all the other demands that are made on a minister.

Some ministers rest by setting aside a day in the week other than Sunday for a time of rest and being with the family. Of course, every minister should hold himself ready to spend and be spent. In emergencies he may go without sleep or rest for long periods of time.

The postman should not take a walk on his holiday, the taxi driver should not go for a drive, a carpenter should not build, and neither should a minister study on his rest day if he wishes the day to achieve its proper results.

Good health includes rest, diet, exercise, and recreation. And I Corinthians 9:25 shows us the importance of balance in all areas: "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."

## IX. Pitfalls

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Peter 5:8-9).

Satan would like to get everyone to fail God, especially a minister. The reason that he

wants ministers to fall is because of the great influence they have on those to whom they minister.

Many areas in a minister's life are subject to temptation. Let us list a few of them, beginning with finances. Included in the list of subjects that Paul wanted Timothy to be careful about was money. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10). A minister must be exact on money matters. All the preaching a person may do will not atone for financial looseness or irregularity. Everyone can make innocent mistakes along this line, but the minister should be very careful whenever he incurs any obligation that will be unusually heavy for him. Financial accountability in the ministry is one of the greatest subjects in today's news media.

A minister must keep abreast with the ever-changing tax laws so that he will arrange his finances to comply. The Internal Revenue Service is looking more and more into church and minister finances. It is not necessary to panic over this, but a minister should have a cooperative attitude and acquire basic knowledge of what is required. Of course, there is a higher power than the Internal Revenue Service to which a minister must be accountable; he will give account to God's law, which is above every other law.

Let us note another area that is a pitfall designed by Satan. Men in ministry are vulnerable to sexual temptation because they work with women of various kinds. Since ministers are by occupation sympathetic listeners to women with problems, they may find women drawn to them. Counseling sessions can expose them to potential romantic or sexual temptations.

It is important to maintain safety in this area. First and foremost, a minister must have a continuous romance with his spouse. Most of those who get into trouble have allowed marriage to become dull, unsatisfying, even unfriendly. Without a doubt, being in love with one's mate provides the best defense against adultery.

Some ministers have fallen prey to the idea that feelings are uncontrollable. An age old and often repeated myth is, "I had no intention of becoming involved with her, but suddenly we realized we were deeply in love."

Rationalization tries to give a man permission to fall in love with another woman without admitting unfaithfulness to his wife. But Jesus' words, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21), can apply to romantic relationships as well as to the kingdom of God.

A minister must avoid every appearance of evil and every opportunity for wrong. He must avoid being alone with a woman. Long periods alone with a woman will not only raise suspicion but can also leave him vulnerable to false accusations or temptation. No matter how safe and innocent a situation may begin, it can turn into a dangerous trap if precautions are not taken.

A heathen king by the name of Abimelech will stand in judgment against all fallen ministers. When he took Abraham's wife, Sarah, into his home, God came to him in a dream and warned him.

He replied, "In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore, suffered I thee not to touch her" (Genesis 20:5-6). God withheld Abimelech from sinning because of the integrity of his heart.

In Titus 1:7 Paul gave further warning about a pitfall: "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled." A self-willed minister builds the world around himself. He is his own authority. His love for power motivates him into thinking that he must always have his way about everything. A careful look at Romans 12:10 will correct this problem: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another."

In closing, two other verses of Scripture give a minister strength, encouragement, and direction: "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing" (II Thessalonians 3:13).

## Chapter 2

### The Minister and His Family

by Charles R. Grisham

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## The Minister's Calling and His Family

### *A. The minister's call*

Something takes place in every minister's life that he can look back and say: "That's when I knew for sure." The call of God brings some from remote and obscure backgrounds, while others are called from within the house of a parent who is a minister. While the qualifying and contributing factors may be as varied as the colors in a rainbow, still God conscripts those to whom He gives the charge and commission according to His will.

Some will say they heard the voice of God, and others will report that God continually prompted them in a subtle yet definite way. They simply followed Him in the menial tasks that were signs of their discipleship. In most cases God leads His man a step at a time until He orders the step for him that confirms the call to become a true minister of the gospel.

When we look back with hindsight it becomes clear how God has been leading, guiding, directing, and preparing us. Through the good times and bad times, He allows us to be proven and tested sufficiently to establish our relationship.

One of the awesome things about God's ability is His omniscience. He sees and knows everything even before it happens. In His foreknowledge He knows whom we will marry and what we will do for Him. As He reveals His plan to us through His word, we begin to work with Him. As most construction projects involve a model or prototype, so the family is a prototype of the church. What better opportunity does a minister of the gospel have to demonstrate the church to the world than through his family?

God is continually instructing us through the Scripture in the clearest of terms. He defines authority and submission in practical ways that are easily understood. He describes love and commitment and uses His own life on earth as the pattern. He beautifully promises the benefits of training our children properly, and on various occasions He cautions those who fail to provide for their family.

Most biblical instruction on the family relationship comes in the context of providing a spiritual foundation in the home. A brief glance at some basic verses of Scripture will set the framework for our understanding.

Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Ephesians 5:25).

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (I Peter 3:7).

Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).

But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (I Timothy 5:8). It is obvious that we are to build our families by working with God so that He may use us to His glory and that others might believe on Him.

Often a minister will become confused as to which comes first his family, his ministry, or his world. A brief survey of Scripture will help us to determine where our priorities should be. A man who is called of God must have a personal relationship with God. His family complements and affirms that relationship. The minister is called upon to minister in the pulpit and counsel those under his care. The lives of his family can confirm or annul his effectiveness. The minister and his family are the first examples of his ability and qualifications as a disciple of others. He must start at home, discipling them to biblical order. The man of God who has properly disciplined his own family can then more effectively involve his own family in reaching out to his world.

### *B. Assurance of the call*

The minister must have an absolute assurance of the call of God. This is a basic requirement for the well-being of the family. God calls the man with the foreknowledge of his mate, talents, and personality. Therefore, a minister needs to be assured that he is called. He also needs to know where he is called to labor. Uncertainty and indecision can frustrate the wife and cause great unrest among the children.

Many people have a great desire to work for God and apparently move too quickly into the ministry before being properly prepared. Perhaps both the person considering the ministry and the church body ordaining people into the ministry should not act hastily. The apostle Paul warned, "Lay hands suddenly on no man" (I Timothy 5:22).

There are many disappointments in the work of God, and the best of us are challenged to the very limit. For this reason, there is great merit in working with or under the guidance of an older or more seasoned minister for a period of time in a balanced development. There are numerous examples of people who were thirty years of age before they went into a full-time ministry.

The apparent glamour in the eyes of the aspiring minister is often just a mirage. This points out the need for a man to be called by God. Some people feel pressured into the ministry by a relative, friend, or mate only to find that they moved too quickly.

Those who have pioneered works can report many perils, such as those experienced in the early church. (See II Corinthians 11:26-28.) While conditions are not the same, there are perils in our day as well.

It is imperative that someone called of God experience intimate communion with Him. This is a prerequisite before we can serve Him in the ministry. Paul stated, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Corinthians 6:17).

The minister's wife and family must know him as a man of God before they can follow and respect him. All of this pinpoints the need for spiritual leaders who will instruct and counsel before sending someone forth into the ministry. (See Romans 10:15).

### *C. What is my ministry?*

There seems to be a great lack of understanding of what the ministry is on an individual basis. Many feel that it is simply an ability to stir people emotionally. But the ministry is much more than emotion.

Some obviously possess more of what it takes to stir emotions than others. Certain ones seem to minister with more anointing than others, but what are the criteria for our observation? Inasmuch as it is God who places us in the ministry, we should be careful not to measure ourselves among ourselves. Far too many think only of the ministry as it relates to the pulpit experience. But as the late V. A. Guidroz once stated, "The shallowest part of a man's ministry is what we see in the pulpit."

We must know what our calling is: assisting in the local church under a pastor, pastoring a church, establishing churches, evangelism, Bible teaching, and so on. A person can bring great confusion to a local church by acknowledging a call and then not

understanding where or how he is to minister.

This decision weighs heavily upon the wife and family. It is so easy to misread our circumstances. We can begin to feel that God has let us down, that other ministers have failed us. It is here that many experience wounded egos due to their situation. With no doors opening it is easy to develop a wrong attitude that will lead to even fewer opportunities.

#### *D. Establishing our priorities*

We must establish our priorities so that our family and others may clearly see true biblical perspectives.

The proper sequence of personal and ministerial growth is as follows: (1) ministry to the Lord, (2) ministry to the family, (3) ministry to the church, and (4) ministry to those outside the church.

As we examine the Scriptures, we easily conclude that everyone needs to minister to the Lord. Many scriptural passages affirm this principle. (See Ezekiel 44:15-16; I Samuel 2:18; Luke 10:38-42; 17:7-10; Luke 24:53 with Acts 1-2; Acts 13:1-4.) Every person needs to minister to the Lord until others can see the touch of God upon him. As our relationship with God begins to build, we can greatly affect our families by ministering to them of this power from on high. They will be greatly affected when the husband and father love and gives as Paul instructed in Ephesians 5:20-33. As he trains the children in accordance with Proverbs 22:1-6 and establishes order in the family in accordance with Ephesians 6:1-4, true ministry to his family will produce many benefits now and eternally.

As the husband ministers to the wife in his role as head of the family, so the wife submits and ministers to the husband. The children then minister to their parents, and together the family ministers to the Lord. However, it should be obvious that the husband is to be the pacesetter.

After a minister has (1) established the pattern of ministering to the Lord in prayerful devotion and Bible reading, (2) followed through with love and service by ministering to the family and its every need, then he is (3) prepared to minister effectively to the church family, the house of God.

We must have clarity of purpose in order to minister to the church (the house of God).

The man of God needs the support, strength, and understanding of his family as he carries the burden of the flock of God and continues to lead his own household. The Bible contains many instructions concerning ministry in the church. (See, for example, I Corinthians 11-14; I Timothy; II Timothy; Titus.) I Peter 4:10 states, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

In the Old Testament the priest had to change his garments before going before the people in his ministry to the Lord. Similarly, it is imperative for the minister to change "garments" as he performs his varied functions. He must not take frustrations from home to the church, and likewise he must not take home heartaches of the church to impose them upon the peace of his family. The church is the church and the home are the home; the minister should neither confuse nor contrast his roles as leader in each.

After the minister has clearly established his ministry to the Lord, the family, and the church, it will be easier for him to minister to those outside the church who are in the world. He will be freer to preach the gospel, teach the Bible and witness to sinners. (See Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20; Acts 2:38.)

Everything works more effectively for the minister and his family when they have a clear understanding of their priorities and place in God's work.

### *E. Finding our place*

After the family members feel comfortable in following the leadership of their minister leader, they will see where they fit in more clearly. The wife becomes a coworker as a helpmate. The children become co-workers and helpers.

Then the whole family truly becomes workers together with God. This is the will of God for the minister's family. Most Christians have three basic components to their lives: the church, their job, and their home. Their spiritual direction comes from the church, their financial needs are met through their job, and their basic relationships are built around the home. For instance, if a man has a problem at work, his home and church can help him to overcome that problem. Obviously, a serious problem may arise when any two of these areas develop difficulties at the same time.

A minister in full-time service for God finds all three of these areas so closely associated that it becomes difficult to separate them when problems arise. Therefore, he

finds it difficult to restrict negative influences in their original realm.

Perhaps the minister and his family are more vulnerable than others since the home, the church, and the employment are so closely tied together and there seems to be no place to find help when problems arise. For this reason, they must stay close to God lest the smallest problem affect the stability of their whole world.

## **I. The Minister and His Spouse**

### *A. The minister's wife and her needs*

Most woman have several basic expectations and needs that their husbands should meet. The first thing that a minister must provide for his family is *security*. This is a must! It includes many things such as food, shelter, clothing, spiritual guidance for the family, discipline, and family order.

There must be time for intimate communication, a time for personal expression, loving concern, sharing together, and showing the deep feeling for his wife that only he can do. A balanced life must include time for the wife, and communication must be a high priority.

It is well to remember the need to show sincere appreciation for everything. The minister must take care to notice little things, giving honor and expressing thanks for meals and a neat home. He should make certain that he recognizes her extra work and care when waiting on guests.

The minister must never ignore his wife's need for his *affection*. She needs to enjoy the tender expressions and romance that make a stable relationship. There must be a closeness in their daily life as God directs their ministry. The husband must be the leader, but he should never ignore the help and input of his wife. Every decision he makes will ultimately involve her. Therefore, it only makes good sense to work closely together so that many frustrations and conflicts can be avoided or quickly eliminated. Many ministers would be far more effective if they would involve their wife more in their ministry.

The minister's wife has the same basic needs as any other wife plus even more. Paul Harvey has reportedly said, "The minister's wife has the most difficult job in all the world."

It can be difficult for her to see how and where she fits into the busy life of her husband. When her husband is also her pastor, it can sometimes be difficult for all her needs to be met.

She needs to see in her husband the stability and direction of a spiritual leader who is firm in his convictions and holy in his lifestyle. The wife also needs to experience leadership in love. She needs to know that she, as a coworker in the ministry, is meeting the needs of her husband that no other woman can meet.

The wife needs to see and hear that her husband/minister delights in her as a person and understands her in the areas of her limitations. Moreover, she does not need to bear the whole load of the church.

The minister's wife needs to know that he enjoys setting aside time for intimate conversation with her. She must know that he is aware of her presence even when his mind is on other matters. Since ministers are often preoccupied and it appears that they always have time for others, the wife needs to know that her husband and minister is making investments in her life that will expand and fulfill her world. It is essential that the husband and the wife be united in the call of God. The number of ministerial families who experience deep personal problems in this area is staggering. One of the greatest pressures a couple can face is worry about finances, but if both are convinced of the will of God, they will find it easier to have faith for their financial needs.

### *B. The husband and his needs*

The one individual who holds the key to the success or failure of a minister is his wife. She must be aware of what he needs to receive from her. As she displays a quiet spirit, she will demonstrate that she is content with the providential leading of God in his life.

She should always display an appreciative spirit, showing gratitude to God and for her husband. Another powerful quality is the servant spirit, realizing that her service to God also includes being submissive to her husband in all things. Moreover, a reverent spirit brings great depth to a marriage, as a wife takes delight in and shows admiration for her husband and his ministry.

## II. The Children and the Home

It is an absolute necessity that families do as much as possible together, for they function as a unit, with each member having his specific place and function.

As the children mature through various stages, there must be order and discipline. The well-ordered family life should include eating together, praying together, and sharing devotional time. The problems of the church should never be discussed at the table. Instead, mealtime should be a time of fellowship and enjoyment.

The minister should not sacrifice his family life in the pursuit of his ministerial calling. There is a need for balance in everything, including the work of God. When God called us, He knew that we would have a family, and He would never want us to violate the basic principles of Scripture in fulfilling a ministerial call.

The minister is not only a leader at church but must also be the leader at home. Today's experiences become tomorrow's memories. For this reason, the minister should ensure that there is adventure, excitement, and fun for everyone in the family.

We must take care that we do not become so spiritual that we ignore the basic needs of each member of our family. The most effective ministers have found a happy balance, and as a result they have a more positive effect upon their children for the work of God.

If we ever send the signal to our family that God forced us to preach, they will very likely resent the fact that we are ministers. We should continually present the call of God to everyone as a special privilege that we are still awed by.

A minister should regularly tell those to whom he ministers how much he loves his wife and children. He should always speak respectfully of parents, other ministers, and leadership. We reap what we sow! As we sow righteousness and respect, we can expect to receive a like response from our family, church, and friends.

A minister should never impose the undue pressure of "extreme perfection" on his children because they are "PKs." They did not ask for that extra burden. Instead, he should show them their added blessings rather than the few additional difficulties. He should require no more and no less of them than of the other children and youth in the church.



Make time for your family. Take them places. Have fun and laugh. Relax and show them how a normal home should be. Some people refer to giving “quality time,” but that can be an excuse for not giving time in quantity, and it seems almost like a business appointment. Basically, your family just wants time. They want your undivided attention.

Every minister has his own set of circumstances and his own story to tell, but as we look back it is amazing how our valleys now look like mountains that God helped us climb together. Many of our battles condition us for our victories. How could we effectively minister to others if we did not have any difficulties? As our children see how we react in the tough times, they rally to assist us in every way. And when the wife sees that the ministry is really a calling and not just a human desire, she too will rally and willingly lend her support.

I will never forget how vital my wife and children were when we were pioneering a work in North Dakota during the late 1960s. There was no church of our kind for approximately two hundred miles and no jobs at the beginning. Everything seemed a bit rough, but we and the other missionaries literally felt as if we were living in the Book of Acts.

There was a constant need for togetherness. Every one of our children found something to do to contribute simple jobs, part time or whatever they could do. My wife made peanut brittle to sell at business establishments and so on. The wages that I was able to make were far less than what I could have made in other places, but we knew we were called to that place.

Neither time nor space would permit me to list all the names of ministers and friends who helped, called, or sent workers. God was faithful, and our children were eyewitnesses to the faithfulness of God. The call of God need not be looked upon as a hardship upon the children. It can be the making of them.

The work, no matter how meager it may have been, could not have been accomplished without my faithful wife, who shared my dreams and also felt the burden. Each one of our children found his place of service, as their talents were greatly needed.

### **III. Problems and Dangers**

With all the demands we face in the family and church, it is important that we stay close to God and not allow anything to endanger our walk with Him. Even though we are called of God, we must remember that we are still human. Time and experience prove

to us that as long as we live in this world our fleshly nature will oppose the Spirit in our lives. Not any of us would be saved except for the grace and power of God.

*Selfishness* has destroyed many marriages. For this reason, a minister should always allow his wife and family to have a key role in his life and ministry. He must not deprive them of the right to serve and to submit to God. He must also guard against *adolescent reflections*. These immature flashbacks, if uncontrolled, can destroy his family relationship. There is no age limit on immaturity; we must all grow up.

When children are born, he should be sure to remember his wife. There should be no loss of time for affection during the busy schedule around the birth of a child, for this could create a gap that will ultimately divide the couple. When a woman bears a child, she needs a little time to get spirit, soul, and body back on the same wavelength as before.

Another area that must be attended is the matter of *masculinity* and *femininity*. Men are to be men and women are to be women. Feminine traits in a man and masculine traits in a woman can greatly hinder a minister's effectiveness.

There is an ever-present need for a minister to be busy since *laziness* and *idleness* can destroy his effectiveness as a minister. He must stay busy planning, organizing, and following through on his plans. People will follow him if he knows where he is going. As it has been said, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."

One point of major concern is *overindulgence* and *gluttony*. We must be temperate in all things. We should remember how the world looks at us as living epistles. If we do not take care of ourselves, we may lack the energy to carry out our work effectively.

We also dare not forget the *neatness of our personal appearance and home*. Inasmuch as we are always being observed by the church and community, let us take care to be well kept. A clean and neat appearance and a well-kept home are powerful witnesses that we must remember to maintain.

While there are many things we must remember, there are a few timeworn pitfalls in the ministry that require particular attention. We have heard them repeatedly from our elders and leaders. My own pastor drilled them into my thoughts.

One of the major reasons for failure in the ministry is *women*. Every minister should mark well the risks involved in becoming too close to women on any level of activity. One

of the greatest dangers is counseling women alone. It is well for a minister to let it be known that he does not counsel women except when his wife is with him or close by. This policy may seem absurd to some, but a man's ministry belongs to him and he has a right to protect it. This policy will also strengthen trust in him on the part of his wife and others who know him. This principle also applies in making visits to a woman's home when her husband is not home. Once a minister sets a standard, he will find it easier to live by.

We should take special precaution regarding behavior that borders on flattery. It can be dangerous. Well intentioned compliments can lay the groundwork for temptation, either for us or for the other person. We must keep in mind that we cannot trust the devil. We must also rule out trusting our flesh. Moreover, others are watching, and they will read things into such behavior that may or may not be true.

One of the biggest temptations is *money*. We are to be good stewards over every penny that God entrusts us with. We are to live, if possible, from the tithe. It is also imperative that we not become entangled with the world's money.

Let us always keep in mind that every penny we receive comes largely from the labors of faithful saints. Many of them make great sacrifices, and we should live in a manner that speaks of simplicity rather than extravagance. That is the least we can do. Regardless of how large the church's income or budget may be, we must live moderately on a moderate income.

Finally, let us not forget the danger of *false doctrine*. We have been called out of the world and sanctified to fulfill our calling. We live in a day when many have departed from the faith and have turned aside to error.

If we want our families and saints to remain true, we must take special care not to have fellowship with those who twist, taint, or divert our minds from the truth. If we do so, we may pay dearly.

If we need to counsel with someone about a question or a problem, we should seek out proven men of God who firm in doctrine are and committed to the truth. There are always dangers when we take the risk of counseling with those who could through cunning craftiness turn us away from right doctrine. We should know those with whom we counsel, for we do not want someone in error to fill in the blanks for us concerning our questions.

The new birth is still the same. Holiness is still a must, and separation from the world is the right path.

As ministers we are curious by nature, and it is often tempting to try every new idea that comes down the pike. If we fail to stay close to God, we may experiment with some unproven idea or method that will twist or bend the proven. Let us stay abreast of what God is doing but always check our reference points to see if we are still on the right path. God's Word and God's ministers will confirm it by the Holy Ghost.

Let us agree together to protect our families. We are responsible for them.

## Chapter 3

### The Minister's Finances

by Jesse F. Williams

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- I. Honesty and Integrity
- II. The Use of Money
  - A. Attitude towards money
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## I. Honesty and Integrity

Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners and has committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation. The world has over five billion people who desperately need the salvation Jesus died to provide. The message of salvation is foolishness to some, and they will not embrace it. That is sad, but the greatest of tragedies is those untold numbers of people who will be lost, not because they rejected the message, but because they rejected the messenger. Great harm has come to the cause of Christianity because some of its messengers did not have integrity.

By far, most ministers of the gospel are sincere and honest men, but the failure of one brings reproach upon many. Such a failure is very grievous to God, as the words of Nathan to David indicate: "Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die" (II Samuel 12:14).

Due to the failure of some well-known televangelists, a shadow has been cast upon the Christian ministry in recent years. Warren Wiersbe declared, "Not only is the *conduct* of the church in question, but so is the very *character* of the church."<sup>1</sup> It is necessary that every minister be not only scrupulously honest but also very careful that his good not "be evil spoken of" (Romans 14:16).

The apostle Paul instructed, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17). Of all people, God's ministers should have the highest integrity, and their integrity should be obvious to everyone within and without the church. One of the requirements for ministry is that a man be blameless (I Timothy 3:2). It is a fundamental contradiction that one would feign to represent the holy God and not be honest.

Years ago, a man declared to me that God would overlook some of his actions (dishonesty) because he preached the truth of God's Word

There is no basis for such a statement; in fact, the Scripture definitely teaches otherwise: "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, . . . and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, we are delivered to do all these abominations? And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spoke unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not. I will cast you out of my sight.

Therefore, pray not thou for this people, neither lift cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee” (Jeremiah 7:8-16). “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

## II. The Use of Money

### A. *Attitude towards money*

There are many warnings in the Scripture concerning our relationship with money. The pitfalls are numerous, but we can negotiate around them if we will do two things. First, we must always ensure that our attitude toward money is proper, and second, we must stay informed in the right methods of accounting for it.

Since the spiritual element is certainly the most important, let us look at what our attitude should be concerning money. We know there is nothing inherently wrong with having money. There were both rich and poor among God’s servants in the Bible; however, “a man’s life consistent not in the abundance of the things which he possessed” (Luke 12:15). Jesus modeled the best life, and He chose to live very simply. The Scripture warns, “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare” (I Timothy 6:9). Keeping money in its proper place, as our servant and not our master, is of utmost importance.

If our attitude towards money is in accordance with Scripture, we will not be tempted to sacrifice honesty for material gain. We would do well to reevaluate our relationship with money often and keep ourselves free from its deceitful aspects.

Gary D. Erickson has explained the danger of money well: Money is not immoral, but it is dangerous, Jesus did not speak of money in a neutral way when he called riches “the mammon of unrighteousness” (Luke 16:9). He also spoke about the “deceitfulness of riches” (Matthew 13:22). Jesus seemed to be warning of an inherent evil connected with money. Paul saw this evil power in money when he wrote under inspiration, “For the love of money is the root of all evil” (I Timothy 6:10).

### B. *Bookkeeping*

Honesty in the ministry concerning finances requires some extra bookkeeping on our part. All money we receive for services rendered is considered income and should be recorded. Ministers have, almost daily, expenses that are job-related, and these expenses must be recorded if we do not want to pay for them out of our own income. One of Satan’s

traps is to compromise our honesty by getting us in the habit of “estimating,” whether it be income, professional expenses, or church attendance.

Recording all income and all job-related expense is the beginning of a trail of accounting that will help us stay honest. It will also help us become better stewards of the resources God provides. A minister will feel better about himself if he keeps good records, and he will always know where he is financially. This practice could mean the difference between success and failure in finances and the ministry. Some people are very honest, but, because they are poor bookkeepers, they bring about their own failure and perhaps shame upon the church.

### *C. Debt*

Having a proper attitude toward money and knowing where we are financially will go a long way toward keeping us out of financial trouble. Much burdensome debt is accumulated because people do not really know their financial position. This is not pleasing to the Lord. Scripture teaches us, “The borrower is servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7). Among the blessings God promised Israel if they would obey Him was that they would not have to borrow! (See Deuteronomy 15:6.)

Though it is not a sin to borrow or finance purchases, it surely should be avoided as much as possible. If one can so manage, it would be well only to borrow on items that appreciate. Certainly, no debt should ever be incurred that a person cannot service. It is wise to have plans for how a debt would be serviced in case of unusual circumstances such as sickness or anything that would cause loss of income.

Impulse buying is often the cause of someone unnecessarily depleting his financial resources. It is also responsible for the incurring of unreasonable debt. Planning ahead, keeping a want list, and taking time to talk over and think about expenditures before making them will eliminate much financial unhappiness.

The satisfaction and peace of mind that result from following the principles of sound financial management are worth the extra effort required. In addition, we are much less likely to be an embarrassment to the kingdom of God over financial matters. People who practice these principles also end up having more of this world’s goods, not less.



#### *D. Lifestyle*

Perhaps the largest expenditure a minister will ever make will be for the house in which he lives. He should exercise good stewardship in purchasing a home that meets his needs but is not extravagant. A home could be an asset or detriment to his ministry. It should be in keeping with his profession and image in the community, but not ostentatious. Likewise, the automobile a minister drives and the clothes he wears can help or hinder the cause to which he is committed.

We should make decisions in these matters on an individual basis while considering the need, the area of ministry, funds available, and the reasonableness of cost. We should always consider the One who called us to follow Him and what He would do in our time and place.

The lifestyles of people in the ministry now range from those who live sacrificially with bare necessities to those who enjoy many comforts far beyond basic needs. Whatever may be our lot, it is important to remember Jesus' words: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

#### *E. Tithes and offerings*

Of first importance in deciding the lifestyle we can afford is to determine it after we have fulfilled the scriptural admonitions on giving. "The tithe is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord" (Leviticus 27:30). A minister, of all people, should be diligent in returning a tenth of his increase to the Lord. Beyond that, we are admonished to be liberal givers to the needy and to the work of God on the earth. That the tithe is God's plan for equitable and regular support of His work is well documented in Scripture.<sup>3</sup> The tithe supports different areas and levels of this work.<sup>4</sup> It follows that ministers themselves should also return a tithe to the Lord, and the Bible so instructs.<sup>5</sup> Since Jesus is our High Priest, a minister returns his tithe to the Lord by putting it into the ministry of His church. Whatever the procedure that the members of our fellowship agree upon, we should follow it as faithfully as if we were returning tithes directly to our High Priest.

"The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). It is only when we have given beyond our tithes that we have given of our own. For their own sake,

and as role models for those to whom they minister, it is imperative that ministers be generous givers.

### **III. Compensation and Taxes**

#### *A. Reasonable compensation*

“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:14). Living off the income from preaching has not always been easy. We can be thankful that, for the most part, the days are gone when a minister barely subsisted with a meager income and whatever meat, eggs, and vegetables the generous church folk would bring. Along with better compensation, however, has come a greater need to be well informed and to use wisdom in this area. The day has passed when a minister could just put whatever he received into his pocket and then live out of it as best he could.

The church and pastor should agree on the method of determining the minister’s compensation. In the case of a smaller church, all of the tithes will probably be needed to support the pastor. For a larger church, however, the total tithing receipts may far exceed reasonable compensation in such a case the pastor should take a salary or a percentage of the tithes, releasing the rest of the tithes to support other aspects of the church’s ministry. This amount should be reevaluated annually.

However, the compensation for a minister is determined, a number of things need to be taken into consideration. (By compensation, we mean what the minister receives for the support of him and his family. Professional expenses are something altogether different and should be considered apart from his or her personal income.) Personal income should be equitable and reasonable.

Reasonable compensation should be determined after taking into account the cost of living in the locality and the financial level that would be proper for the minister’s position. Naturally, the financial strength of the church comes into play here. Sometimes it is not possible to support a minister to the level desired, and sacrifice is called for.

The financial level afforded the minister should give consideration to his position in the community and reflect his leadership and professionalism. Though it is usually not a problem, we must remember that a church, being nonprofit, can only provide “reasonable compensation” for services if it is to abide by the tax laws. (See chapter 11 under

“Churches and Tax Law.”)

The pastor does not need to discuss his compensation, benefits, and expenses with the entire church; the church board can act for the church in such matters

### *B. Employee or self-employed?*

At present, under United States law, a minister is always considered to be self-employed for the purpose of Social Security taxes. However, for income taxes, a minister could be an employee or self-employed. Traveling evangelists and people involved in special ministries are usually self-employed, but the Internal Revenue Service would consider most pastors of local churches to be employees. Some local pastors could be properly classified as self-employed, but if they are, it is doubtful whether all the employer benefits would apply to them. Most ministers will probably benefit from being classified as an employee because the church can purchase tax-free medical and health insurance for them and the risk of being audited is up to twenty times less than for a self-employed person.

If a minister is classified as an employee, the church should report his income on Form W-2; if he is classified as self-employed, the church should report his income from the church on Form 1099. In either case, most pastors will have some miscellaneous income from funerals, weddings, or other services that does not come from the church he pastors. These amounts should be reported on Schedule C as self-employment income and the net amount carried to page one of Form 1040.

A church is not required to withhold income taxes from wages paid to a minister even when the minister files as an employee. Ordinarily the minister (whether filing as an employee or as self-employed) is required to pay estimated taxes quarterly. A church and a minister who files as an employee can agree for voluntary withholding and thereby spread the tax payments evenly over the year. Simply filing Form W-4 with the church is deemed a request for voluntary withholding. The amount withheld can include enough to cover income taxes and Social Security taxes, thereby eliminating quarterly payments by the minister. This arrangement is reasonable when the church has other employees and is already filing quarterly reports of taxes withheld.

### *C. Insurance and pension plan*

When an employer/employee relationship exists, the tax laws allow certain parts of

the employee's total compensation to be tax free. They are employer-furnished benefits and should be paid directly by the church. First, the church can make contributions to an accident or health plan that compensates the employee for personal injury or sickness incurred by him, his spouse, or his dependents. This means a church could pay health insurance premiums on behalf of a minister and his family. If the insurance does not fully cover the cost of an injury or health care, the church may also have a stated policy of reimbursing the employee for those uncovered amounts. The church may also pay the premium for a term life insurance policy on the minister when the coverage does not exceed fifty thousand dollars employee. Both of these benefits are tax free for an employee but not for a self-employed person. These are some factors to consider when deciding whether one is an employee or self-employed.

One benefit a church can extend, whether a minister files as an employee or as self-employed, is pretax contributions to a tax-deferred pension plan. In some cases, the church can make such a contribution and it is not reported as income. The minister may also choose to set aside part of his pay through salary reductions and place it in a qualified retirement fund, and it would be tax deferred as well.

The point of the foregoing paragraphs concerning compensation that is not paid directly to the minister is that careful planning can save taxes and produce higher net income for the minister. If a minister receives all this compensation as his income and pays for these items himself, he will have to pay taxes unnecessarily on the money received to pay for these benefits. Moreover, it is important for all the matters concerning a minister's compensation to be specified in duly passed resolutions of the church membership or church board.

When the church provides the minister with a Form W-2 or Form 1099, the income it reports should exclude the designated amount for housing. If the minister spends less than the designated amount on housing, he must report the difference as income even though it is not on the W-2 or 1099. It is reported as unused housing allowance on Form 1040.

The housing allowance is not exempt from Social Security tax; it must be added back to other income for calculating self-employment tax for Social Security. All ministers are considered self-employed for purposes of Social Security.

If a minister lives in a parsonage provided by the church, he does not have to pay

income tax on the rental value, but he must pay self-employment Social Security tax on the rental value. Because the housing allowance is available for all ministers, there is no tax advantage to the minister's living in a parsonage, although there may be other advantages, such as not having to worry about buying, selling, or maintaining a home.

There are also advantages to owning a home. For example, for most people it is the best plan for long-term savings and investment. Therefore, if a church has a parsonage, a minister should carefully consider whether it would be to his advantage to live in the parsonage, to buy the parsonage from the church if the church agrees, or for the church to sell or rent the parsonage to someone else and let him by his own home.

#### *D. Professional expenses*

The foregoing paragraphs have dealt with compensation for a minister in areas where cooperation between the church and minister can increase net income without greater cost to the church. One other area of finances between the church and minister that needs to be mentioned is the area of business or professional expenses.

Ministers should not be expected to pay for the professional expenses necessary to perform their duties. These are rightfully church expenses and should be kept that way. The best policy is for the minister to report and document to the church all professional expenses, identifying the date, amount, and nature of each expense. He should do so regularly, such as each month. The church can then issue a check for the exact amount of those expenses. This money will not be considered income and is not reported to the Internal Revenue Service.

In many cases, the church can pay business expenses directly by check or credit card, so that the minister does not need to be reimbursed. If the church provides expense money in advance, the minister must account for it as already described, and he must return any excess reimbursements.

Accounting to the church for all expenses requires some discipline on the part of the minister; however, the benefits are well worth the effort. When he operates in this manner, the minister's personal income does not include business expense; therefore, his church income does not appear unreasonably high. Moreover, accounting is always required, either to the employer or the IRS. Obviously, it is better to report to the employer, who is familiar with the expenses. Further, if a minister who is classified as an employee chooses to report expenses to the IRS, he can deduct them only to the extent

that they exceed two percent of his adjusted gross income.

Some ministers would like the convenience of a checking account used at the discretion of the minister from which they could pay all business expenses. The problem with this arrangement is that the IRS will consider all the money put into this account as income to the minister if he has sole control of the account.

In short, the best way to handle professional expenses incurred by the minister is for the church to establish an accountable reimbursement plan. A sample resolution for this purpose can be found in the current edition of *Church and Clergy Tax Guide* by Richard Hammar.

Probably the largest single type of business expense that a minister encounters is automobile expense. The church could own a car, maintain it, and provide fuel for the minister's business driving. However, this arrangement has its limitations. Unless the automobile is left at the church and used only for business, it will produce some taxable income to the minister. Commuting from home to the church or office is considered personal use, not business use. There are other limitations, and it would be advisable to read IRS Publication 535 before making the decision. The simplest procedure is for the minister to own the automobile and to report his business mileage to the church at the currently allowed rate per mile on a monthly expense report.

Whenever an automobile is driven for both personal and business use, a log must be kept to substantiate the use. When the business use is included in a monthly expense report to the church along with other business expenses, no further accounting is required to the IRS. The reimbursement received from the church is not reportable income.

To document his expenses a minister should keep copies of all expense reports he turns in as well as receipts and other backup information.

### *E. Summary*

The preceding tax information does not cover all the details and is not offered as a legal or accounting service, but rather to point out some important factors to understand and consider. For further information it would be wise to consult a certified public accountant who is familiar with ministerial and nonprofit tax questions.

There are also a number of publications that address these issues well, including

*Income Tax Law for Ministers and Religious Workers* by B. J. Worth and *Church and Clergy Tax Guide* by Richard R. Hammar.

To summarize matters relating to income, a recommended clergy compensation package includes the following: (1) salary as an employee (for income tax purposes only), (2) housing allowance, (3) accountable reimbursement plan for professional expenses, (4) voluntary tax withholding, (5) tax-deferred retirement plan, and (6) tax-free health and life insurance. Such a plan provides for generous compensation to the minister while minimizing tax liabilities.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The three enemies of the church are the world, the flesh, and the devil. The three most common areas of failure in the flesh have to do with money, sex, and power. Neither the world nor the devil can defeat us if we walk in the Spirit, for if we do so, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Success depends upon a right relationship with God and with the world. With the world we must have contact without contamination (John 12:25; 15:19; 17:14-17); with God we must submit totally to His will (Romans 12:1-2).

For the minister of God, his attitude toward money and his handling of finances can mean the difference between success and failure. Both need to be in order before a man embarks as a representative of God. "If a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (I Timothy 3:5). "Let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless" (I Timothy 3:10). The principles suggested in these two verses indicate that a minister needs to conduct himself honestly and honorably in the sight of everyone.

#### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup>Warren Wiersbe, *The Integrity Crisis* (Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1988), 17.

<sup>2</sup>Gary D. Erickson, "The Concept and Use of Money," *Forward* (April-June 1989)

<sup>3</sup>Numbers 18:20-24; Nehemiah 10:36-39; Malachi 3:10; I Corinthians 9:7-11; I Timothy 5:17-18. <sup>4</sup>Nehemiah 10:37-39; 13:5, 10-13. <sup>5</sup>Numbers 18:25-28; Nehemiah 10:3

## Chapter 4

### Ministerial Ethics

*F.L. Holley*

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- II. Relationship to the Community
- III. Relationship to the Pastor
- IV. Relationship to the Laity
- V. Relationship to Evangelists
- VI. Relationship to Other Pastors and Churches
- VII. Relationship to the District Organization
- VIII. Relationship to the General Organization



## **I. Introduction**

Fundamentally, ethical principles are based upon the freedom of the individual to direct his own conduct. A person's obligation cannot go beyond this ability to choose. To the degree that he can respond to moral demands he can be held accountable for what he chooses to do.

Scripture declares, "As he [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Being and doing are inseparable. Thinking good and doing good spring from the same source — the character, the inner person. This introduces a very significant fact: a person does what he or she is at a given time. It is in the arena of action that one reveals what he is. It is not in his sentiments, aspirations, knowledge, or good resolutions; it is in his actions that the self is most completely revealed.

Our foundation of ministerial ethics, then, must be more than a formalized list of dos and don'ts. Ministerial ethics is a study of standards of conduct as it relates to the minister. Yet it is more than that. Since all action is the outward expression of the inner person, the study of ethics must include both conduct and character.

The word *ethics* is derived from a slight variation of the Greek word *ethos*, which has to do with "habit." Acts that spring forth from character are expressed according to a learned standard. Behavior so learned becomes habit through practice. Ministerial ethics, then, should be predictable behavior patterns that are learned and reduced to habit.

Our study of standards of conduct and moral judgment, then, will be incomplete until they become habit through practice. As we learn principles, they are to become our guide in behavior. We learn by doing. Our goal is to incorporate Christian standards of conduct into habit through practice.

We can start at once by evaluating our deeds by biblical standards. Relationships with people will reflect our relationship with God. To know and obey Him is to know and love our fellow human beings. While we cannot alter the behavior of others, we can, and therefore have the obligation to, conduct ourselves in accordance with Christian ethics.

## **II. Relationship to the Community**

While it is quite true that we are not of this world, it is equally true that we are in it. And we are in this world for a purpose. That purpose is stated in I Corinthians 10:31:

“Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” We are God’s ambassadors, His representatives. Everything we do must glorify Him!

As a practical self-evaluation, examine your relationship to the community in which you live. Have you labeled your neighbors? If so, by what standard? Do you really know them? Do you love them? Do you make yourself helpful to them in any way? Are you warm and friendly? A minister must do no less.

To look a little closer, are you honest and upright in all your dealings? Do you have any outstanding debts that are not current? Is there an obligation of the past that, for one reason or another, you have failed to honor? Flaws of character and conduct in this area will affect your relationships severely. Total honesty must mark all your business involvements.

Have you engaged in gossip with neighbors? Are you prone to speak ill of people? Do you tend to be critical or caustic in your reference to others? To talk with one neighbor about another is to destroy any influence you might have had with either of them. Soon the word gets around as to your behavior.

Even your enemies (if indeed you have any!) are to be prayed for, not discussed in a derogatory manner (Matthew 5:44). Make it a habit to speak ill of no one and to say all the good you know about everyone. Love your neighbors (Matthew 22:34-40).

A minister “must have a good report of them which are without” (I Timothy 3:7). His honesty and integrity must be above reproach. He must not be greedy, selfish, or petty. He must not be argumentative or abrasive. Kindness and concern for all are to be the hallmarks of his life. A willingness to respond and assist in times of distress or disaster is essential. Floods, storms, accidents all of these call for involvement by someone who cares. Words will not warm those who are caught in freezing snowstorms. The minister has an obligation to help those of his community who are in need.

A careful examination of the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 will help us get a better grasp on the relationship we are to have with our neighbors. The Lord asked the lawyer which of the three was a neighbor to the man who had fallen among the thieves. “He that shewed mercy on him,” was the reply. “Go, and do thou likewise,” instructed the Lord.

So, in all our dealings, we must remember our primary purpose on earth. We glorify

God by living according to His teachings. To be ethical with his neighbors, someone does not have to be a Christian. But someone cannot be a Christian and be unethical in his community. Aloofness and lack of concern for others mark a person and speak louder than his proclamations of personal piety.

### **III. Relationship to the Pastor**

In one sense, all ministers in a local assembly are assistants to the pastor. In other words, they should assist him in the furtherance of the work of God. Perhaps the most significant aspect of a minister's relationship to his pastor is his attitude. It affects all other areas very much.

First, see yourself as a servant. This should not be difficult, for we are all to submit ourselves to one another (Ephesians 5:21). The only difference is in the areas of submission. As you spend the necessary time in preparation for your own ministry, you should look for things you can help your pastor accomplish.

There should be no task that you consider beneath your dignity. If you offer to take a load off your pastor, be consistent and faithful in maintaining it. As you faithfully carry out mundane duties, both your pastor and your God will take note. Then you will find yourself with more responsible roles. Second, you see yourself as a disciple, a learner, a student. Analyze the many different facets of the pastor's role. Observe the ways your pastor leads the congregation.

I doubt the possibility—or the value—of adopting your pastor's methods and mannerisms to the point that you are a mimic or a replica of him. But learn to accept his leadership even if you do not understand why he handles certain matters as he does.

Should you be unable to understand why he handles something differently from the way you would, say nothing. Recognize that you are not acquainted with all the facts. Further, keep in memory that God talks to the pastor. Even if you were right on some point of question, you would be wrong to strive for your view, or even mention it to anyone for that matter.

The pastor is your teacher, your mentor, your guide. When you become a pastor, you will reap what you have sown. And the last thing you will need is a "sidewalk superintendent" who feels he is obligated under God to keep you in line with his "deep insights and wisdom."

Finally, do not try to knock down doors to get into a pastorate to activate your full-time ministry. God will open doors as you seek Him diligently and labor faithfully in your present area of responsibility. On the other hand, do not spend your life contemplating the possibility of eventually stepping out by faith to preach. There is a middle ground. Lean on your pastor. He will help.

In the meantime, do not allow anyone to talk to you about your pastor in a derogatory manner. Honor his spiritual authority. Do not criticize. If he is wrong, he is still the pastor. Refrain from getting so close to someone in the church that you displace the pastor's authority.

Remember, you are not your own; you are called of God to a noble, lifetime task! Your relationship with your pastor will greatly influence your effectiveness in the work of God.

#### **IV. Relationship to the Laity**

There is much truth to Lincoln's maxim, "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time." While there should be no conscious effort on the part of a true minister of Jesus Christ to fool anyone at any time, there are traps into which he can fall. To be aware of the danger is to avoid the calamity, for the most part.

A good relationship with laity is dependent upon their confidence in you. Therefore, you should always treat everyone as you would have them treat you. (See Matthew 7:12.) If you are kind and considerate, you may expect those courtesies in return. If you are harsh and reluctant to forgive, the same attitude and behavior will meet you at every turn. Patience, forgiveness, and longsuffering towards everyone will surely return to you. Your life will be affected by the law of sowing and reaping. (See Galatians 6:7.)

When you begin to seek a pastorate, there are a few things you will be wise to consider. First of all, if you should have a dream or see a vision of yourself in the pulpit of the church under consideration, keep it between you and God. If God has shown you this, He will bring it to pass. He does not need for you to call different members of that congregation and tell them. In fact, your calling could well be the cause of your not being considered at all. What if two aspirants of a pastorate have a similar dream and relate it to the people?

Next, you should work through the district officials. They can help you find and follow the will of God. After all, that is what you want to do. It is a sad situation when a minister evades the proper procedure in order to achieve his goal. The first problem that arises will cause him to wonder (or possibly remember) whether he should have relied on God.

If it ever appears to the congregation that you were placed by someone or that you manipulated them or circumstances to get the pastorate, you are in troubled waters from then on. Ethics are vital to your ultimate success.

When you assume a pastorate, you should not attempt to make yourself look good by pointing out the sudden improvements you have instituted since becoming pastor. Especially is this so if there is even a hint of unfavorable reflection on the former pastor. Indeed, you run no risk when you speak about all the good you can concerning the former pastor. He is no threat to you.

If the people loved him, they will love you for honoring him. If they did not quite appreciate him, they will not think ill of you for being kind. Moderation in remarks regarding your predecessor is wise.

Begin your pastorate with a wholesome attitude. Build trust without making sudden changes. Recognize the value of communication. Listen as well as tell. The listener lasts the longest! You are not expected to have the answer to every question. To give a matter careful consideration before giving an opinion—or, worse yet, an ultimatum! Will gain you a better hearing.

You will have people who will want to change membership from your church to another. If you undertake to persuade them to stay, do so from the standpoint of their own spiritual welfare. That is, do not beg them to stay because of your need for them. Neither should you threaten them with calamities or hellfire and brimstone if they dare leave. To keep them under those circumstances is to keep loose cannons on board. You never know what they will do next. It is better to let them go with a favorable spirit if it can be than hold them with dire methods.

Do not let church members who change churches divide and destroy your relationship with your fellow minister. If some troublemakers are leaving you, you should inform the receiving pastor for his protection, yet you should tell him in such a way that he feels the assurance of your goodwill and your prayers. Let him know that you sincerely hope he can work with them and develop them into worthwhile members. Often this is possible.

If so, rejoice!

If members of a neighboring church visit your services on a church night in their assembly, let a red flag run up in your mind. If you speak to them, explain your ethics. Then call their pastor. If he is wise, he will appreciate your ministerial courtesy. At any rate, it is never ethical or profitable in any way to bait people for a move to your congregation.

When people leave your congregation as a result of their employment or other normal circumstances, help them by providing the names of churches in the area. If you have a preference, take great care to avoid any derogatory reference to those you have questions about. Remember, by tearing down confidence in one minister you can tear down confidence in all ministers!

The key to your relationship with laity is love—sincere Christian love. If you love the saints of God, you will respect them. You will be kind and considerate. Your love will show through even when you find it necessary to admonish, exhort, or discipline them. And they will know instinctively that you do love them.

## **V. Relationship to Evangelists**

Wise is the pastor who recognizes that his ministry is strengthened by the ministry of others. In no phase of the work of God is this truth seen any better than in the relationship between pastor and evangelist. Each complements the other and each strengthens the other.

By the same token, each can weaken or hinder the other. This can happen in the natural course of events unless both take steps to prevent it. Since the work of God and the salvation of souls are involved, diligence in this area is vital.

Full confidence must be a mutual state of mind. As pastor, you are making an initial expression of confidence when you invite an evangelist. Do not forget how fragile confidence can be. Keep it alive by communication and concern.

Let the evangelist know you have full trust in him. Then allow him to minister as God directs him. Perhaps the following is not a perfect analogy, but as you would put your child under the care of a dentist with full confidence in his skill, his work, and his ethics, so should it be with the church and the evangelist. Of course, this trust and confidence

calls for a reciprocation of attitude and effort on the part of the evangelist.

Prepare for the evangelist. Be certain that his needs are met. Liberality will not only bless him, but it will also be to your advantage and that of the church. Let him know that you respect his need for privacy and follow through on that pledge. If at all possible, secure separate lodging for him. This will not cost; it will pay.

Do not burden the evangelist with pastoral problems. Certainly, you should not suggest that he preach on some theme to correct a problem. Do not fetter the pulpit. Let him know there will be unsaved souls in every service. Then grant him liberty to follow God.

Should he follow a path that, in your opinion, is unacceptable, take care how you approach the matter. Rarely is a church damaged by a visiting minister's remarks. You will have time when he is gone to clarify any areas of confusion. But even that should be done adroitly and with great care.

The key lies in using an evangelist who is not known for working on the outer edge of truth. That kind might get a crowd out for his "special" ministry, but when he is gone, you have to pick up the pieces. And sometimes doing so is not easy – if it is possible at all. So, use the type of evangelist who labors in the Word and not so much in unusual theatrics.

By your doing so, in the long run your people will trust your selection of evangelists. This means much in the success of a revival meeting. The congregation is not hesitant to invite their friends and relative.

They are comfortable with the evangelist, beginning with the first service. They will support him in every way. It is this atmosphere that you are seeking. Prize it highly. Rejoice when your people compliment the evangelists preaching. Join in and be lavish in your expressions of praise. They are like bread cast upon the water; they will return.

## **VI. Relationship to Other Pastors and Churches**

Ministers are involved in a very weighty task. As members of a common profession who are serving the same Lord and Master, the relationship between pastors should be one of brotherhood, comradeship, cooperation, openness, and frankness. This can be achieved by total adherence to and compliance with the teaching of our Lord. And doing

so is not difficult. The only difficulty lies in failing to behave in this manner.

We must recognize that it is unethical to interfere, directly or indirectly, in the pastoral efforts of a brother. "Second opinions" are rarely—if ever—beneficial. Avoid involvements with members of another congregation. Consultation, sympathetic expressions, and even prayer can be less than profitable in some situations. It is wise to exercise great care in all matters related to members of a sister assembly.

Open communication with a fellow pastor when faced with a questionable situation is always proper. Further- more, a phone call may save you many hours of labor and grief not to mention the possible loss of confidence of a neighboring pastor.

Proselyting must be avoided. Beyond that, it is ethical to help those who are disturbed with some situation in their own church to become reconciled, if at all possible. To simply allow people to come into your flock from another congregation can give birth to charge of proselyting on your part. This not only hurts you among your ministerial brethren but eventually it will also mar your image with your people and even with those you take in indiscriminately.

Yet there are situations in which it is proper to accept people who have had problems adjusting in another congregation. It is wrong to assume that any change in church membership is the result of a bad spirit or sinful behavior. It is right to approach each situation with an open mind and tender heart, realizing that you are dealing with eternal souls. And it is possible that you may be able to help a troubled soul become stabilized and fruitful. Wisdom dictates and directs our steps in such matters.

Do not accept invitations to conduct funerals or officiate at weddings of another pastor's flock without discreetly contacting him. Such action is a violation of ministerial ethics. Even in cases where those who call upon you are members of a congregation where you once pastored, this rule must not be violated.

Do not speak ill of another pastor to anyone, especially to members of his or your flock. To the degree you destroy the image of one minister, you can inflict damage on all ministers. If his behavior is of such a nature that it requires any action, follow the biblical pattern of going to him in private. Then, if he does not hear you, take the matter to the proper parties.



Let us go back to the fundamental principle of ethics: the freedom of an individual to direct his own conduct. It is here that the relationship between pastors has its basic foundation. The ability to do unto others as you would have them do unto you is applicable here as in few other relationships. You can do this because of what you are: first, a Christian and second, a pastor dealing with a pastor. As a Christian you have the power, the ability. As a pastor you have an understanding that only a pastor can have of a fellow shepherd. Furthermore, you have the ethical obligation to deal on the highest plane of behavior possible.

Therefore, without making a list of dos and don'ts, you can and must deal with your fellow pastor in an ethical way. Always give him any benefit of the doubt. Assume he is acting from proper motives. Attribute to him all the credit due him. You cannot err in this.

Practical applications of this principle are of extreme importance when the other pastor is your predecessor. It is equally important to follow this principle in any reference to the work or the character of your successor. Differences of opinion or of pastoral methods should be minimized. Virtues and abilities should be maximized.

Avoid a competitive stance in relation to your fellow ministers in order to secure some post or place of honor. Rather, serve their interests with courtesy and respect. Never embarrass a fellow minister by speaking disparagingly of his work or his manner. Say all the good you can and speak no ill of your fellow pastor.

Develop a relationship of mutual trust and respect. Should a fellow pastor share a confidential matter with you, never break that trust of confidentiality. Strengthen his hands by showing genuine confidence in his walk with God. Be slow in offering advice or outlining specific steps for him to take. Rather, allow him to verbalize whatever seems to be troubling him. Often the greatest need a fellow pastor can have is for a friend who listens and understands. Confidentiality is paramount.

If you borrow spoken or written material from another person, always give credit publicly. Never plagiarize. To quote another is a high form of commendation. You can pay a person no higher compliment. But to take from others and fail to credit the source is a form of theft. Retired ministers are worthy of honor and respect.

However, complimentary statements repeated too often can cause the minister to feel ill at ease. When respect and love is in your heart, it will find expressions in nonverbal ways.

In the absence of love and respect, however, no amount of verbiage will conceal the fact.

## **VII. Relationship to the District Organization**

The balance between an unfettered pulpit and a loose cannon is delicate and easy to disturb. To have the necessary freedom to lead a church under God, it is essential that a pastor honor the vows of the covenant he makes with his brethren. Each of us adopted the Articles of Faith and the Constitution as the basis of our fellowship when we entered the organization. We must adhere to them.

From time to time, individuals become loose cannons in their determination to maintain freedom. This is not necessary, nor is it pleasing to the Head of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ. Freedom is never free.

Neither does liberty come without a self-imposed bond of responsibility. True liberty functions within prescribed guidelines.

Those who want to maintain the freedom we have in God's service know the essentiality of holding onto the bonds of unity. When we are in harmony with our Head, the body can unify its actions. If we are not in harmony with one another under our Head, then we are obligated to seek unity in conference rather than to splinter in confusion.

To do so we must maintain a healthy organization. First, let us consider our relationship to that organization on a district level. Then we will examine our relationship to the general organization.

The district elects officials who serve their brethren in their specific branches or divisions of service. These officials carry out the wishes of their brethren in accordance with the Constitution. In doing so, officials appeal to the ministers who elected them for their cooperation and support in carrying out policies and programs. Each of us has an ethical obligation to extend that cooperation and support to the best of our ability. The duty is reciprocal.

This principle applies in a number of ways. The policies of the district are involved. The programs of the general organization are also included here because they are carried out through the district organization.

Matters such as district meetings, functions, programs, and promotions are vital to the

growth and development of the movement. Each district also has to formulate a financial plan or policy. The operation of the entire district apparatus is dependent upon the cooperation and support of its members in these areas. Conferences are essential, both district and sectional. Every decision of direction and purpose on a district level needs the input of both the voice and vote of its entire membership. It is less than ethical to ignore these meetings. And it is worse still to criticize decisions made in one's absence.

Votes on issues that concern all need to be considered from all viewpoints. Then there is a need for every-one to vote. Adopted projects must then be supported. This involves each of us, and it is an ethical obligation. We either fulfill our obligations of membership in this regard or the structure eventually falls apart.

Functions such as camp meetings, youth camps, special ministries, ladies meetings, ministers seminars, and many other endeavors also need each minister's endorsement and support. Indeed, it is incumbent upon us to make our district functions all they are capable of becoming by our wholehearted cooperation and participation.

In cooperating with the financial policy of the district there should always be a voluntary compliance. Never should the district official be forced to remind us of neglect in such a vital area. Even if the district has no need at all, each minister must honor God with the tithe. Furthermore, the person who honors God will be honored by Him. Never should it be otherwise, nor could it be.

Ministerial ethics obligate each minister to deal with one another collectively or individually as he would like to be dealt with. As a part of our covenant with God and our brethren, let us never be slack in our obligations. The relationship with the district is not as impersonal as it is with the general structure. The officials of the district are more closely involved with the individual minister. Of course, this relationship calls for mutual respect and understanding. Every district official must function in accordance with good ministerial ethics, and the minister must reciprocate if there is to be progress and growth.

For instance, fund-raising divisions are charged with appealing to the entire constituency for their support. Ministers must welcome this appeal. A minister should not withhold his support from an approved program simply because he dislikes the manner or demeanor of the official. For example, how can it be justifiable before God to let the missionary program go lacking simply because one individual has a low opinion of another? There is a proper way to correct a situation that is in need of correction. But certainly, we should never let the work of God suffer simply because of a personal

grievance of some sort.

The Third Epistle of John provides a very clear lesson in matters such as this. A careful study reveals a scenario that provides the proper path of action. John, the elder, wrote to a pastor whom he loved greatly. He urged him to take care concerning those he followed or was influenced by. Diotrephes was mentioned as the type of minister one should not follow (imitate). John said Diotrephes refused to support missionaries who were sent forth by the church. He would not receive them, and he put those who would out of his assembly. Furthermore, Diotrephes was guilty of speaking maliciously against those in leadership.

John urged Gaius to adopt the attitude and employ the methods of another pastor, Demetrius. The point is clear: we must not imitate the manners and methods of those who love to have the preeminence to such a point that they refuse to cooperate with the body of Christ.

Each pastor must take care in whom he puts his confidence. We are influenced strongly by those we respect and admire. To imitate a good man is to develop habits that will mold us into honorable, ethical leaders. To follow the patterns of activity of those who are immature, insincere, self-aggrandizing, or anything of that sort is to adopt the same character that produces such conduct.

## **VIII. Relationship to the General Organization**

One of the position papers printed in the last section of the Manual of the United Pentecostal Church International is an expression of the General Conference in 1964. It is placed under a general heading entitled *Ethics (Ministerial)*, and it is reproduced here for easy reference.

### **My Code of Ethics**

(Not laws to govern but principles to guide)

Striving to be a good minister of the Lord Jesus Christ:

I will constantly prepare myself in body, mind, and spirit.

I will safeguard the good name of the ministry; [I will] speak the truth in love, live honestly and avoid embarrassing debts.

I will hold as sacred all confidences shared with me.

I will exercise the authority of a spiritual leader rather than that of a dictator.

I will seek to minister rather than to be ministered unto, placing service above salary and personal recognition, and the unity and welfare of the church above my own personal welfare.

I will seek to lead my church to accept its full responsibility for community and world service.

I will seek to build my church without discrediting other churches, soliciting members therefrom, or casting reflection on other ministers.

I will not compete with another minister for a call to a pastorate in an unethical manner.

I will, with my resignation, sever my pastoral relations with any former parishioner and will not make pastoral contacts in the field of another pastor without his knowledge and consent.

I will not accept the pastorate of a United Pentecostal Church unless I am in accord with the Articles of Faith and Constitution of the general church body.

Having accepted a pastorate, I will not use my influence to alienate the church or any portion thereof from the fellowship or support of the United Pentecostal Church. If my convictions change, I will be honorable enough to withdraw.

A careful study of this adopted statement reveals a thoroughness of ministerial ethics that will resolve many difficulties, if adhered to by all concerned. Elaboration of a few of these will help clarify them all.

First, the continual preparation of the body, mind, and spirit of the minister touches every facet of his life. It keeps him in an attitude of growth. His stance will be one of spiritual progression. Rather than adopting the position of an old and foolish potentate who will no longer be admonished, he will be in the position of a young, or a least a growing, child of God.

To safeguard the good name of the ministry is not only vital to the individual minister but also to the ministerial body in general. Preserving the integrity of the individual builds the body through the bonds of love, honesty, and Christian character.

It is wholesome to see honorable people who do not abuse or in any way misuse authority. There is no room in the kingdom for someone who is deceived into thinking authority is meant for control or manipulation of others. Authority is best exercised through the strength of integrity and honor. The spiritual leader and the dictator are not one and the same person.

The high role of service cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, the pastor who recognizes his servanthood is best qualified to lead a flock. Above salary, above personal recognition, above personal welfare, the flock of God is the very reason for the existence of the pastor. He is ordained to serve them, not the reverse.

Every congregation should recognize its universal responsibilities—to the community, to the country, to the world at large. Through the various divisions of the general church, a local assembly – no matter what its size in number – can serve the whole world at the same time. The service is not meant to be in some sequence such as home first, community next, then the country, and finally the world. No, the whole world must hear the whole gospel. We cannot ethically exclude any part!

To discredit others, to cast reflections that are unfavorable, or to seek to build a church from members of a sister church are all beneath the lofty level to which we are called as servants of God. Only on the love of God as it is expressed through the gospel truth can a true church be built. Truth will stand all tests and will still be standing when the world is on fire! Build on it. Stand on it and with it. You will stand forever!

To compete with another for a pastorate is to adopt the value system of the world. The worst place in the world for you to be is in a pulpit where another belongs. Seek to find and follow the will of God, and in doing that you will hold the pastorate that is right for you.

Nothing could be more miserable for an honorable person than to hold a pastorate in the United Pentecostal Church and not hold to the tenets of faith it embraces. To attempt to take a church on another doctrinal path after having accepted it under the banner of the United Pentecostal Church is an unethical path of action, to say the least. The honorable minister will never embark on such a course. These are high and lofty ideals. But they are well within the reach of people of character and integrity. May we ever hold them, and should God tarry, pass them on to generations to come!

These ethical statements are not vows of subservient people made to superiors.

Rather, they are mutual pledges made by all to each other. Every official is privileged to commit himself, along with every pastor, evangelist, missionary, and teacher of truth, to a set of principles to live.

## Chapter 5

### **Pastoral Leadership**

by J. T. Pugh

*J. T. Pugh served as pastor of the First United Pentecostal Church of Odessa, Texas, superintendent of the Texico District of the United Pentecostal Church International, and director of the General Home Missions Division.*

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## I. The Pastor as a Servant

People lead according to their motivation, drive, and response under various conditions. The incentives that motivate the average leader of the world to lead people are vastly different from the principles of true Christianity. Usually “power” is the thing so greatly desired by the average leader of the world. Power can exist in the form of money, popularity, fear, or accepted policy.

The tremendous force that impelled our Lord to take His place among humans was love. The same force must motivate a minister of the gospel. Love always places itself at the disposal of the cause or the people loved. Love serves. Thus, true Christianity stands in stark contradiction to worldly motivations that cause people to aspire to leadership.

The true principle of leadership that Jesus Christ showed to us is servanthood. The apostles in time came to recognize the supremacy of this principle and to espouse it in all of their leadership in the church. Paul wrote in Galatians 5:13, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

Jesus taught a lateral love that was not possible outside the practice of servanthood. “He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

He saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (John 21:16).

Servanthood is not optional. It is the true law of Christ. One of the tasks of a servant is to bear burdens, to carry loads. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

James 2:8 says, “If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.” Jesus said that loving our neighbour was the second most important commandment (Mark 12:28-31). It is greater “than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mark 12:33).

One of the greatest drives of the flesh is to have preeminence. “Ye shall be as gods” was the compelling factor that at last brought Adam and Eve down (Genesis 3:5). Peter thought it necessary to warn ministers not to be “lords over God’s heritage” (I Peter 5:3).

Jesus explained the proper role of leaders in the church: “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matthew 20:25-27). The word *minister* literally means a servant.

There came a time when the church at Philippi needed a pastor. Though Paul desperately wanted Timothy by his side, he sent him to the Philippian church. The reason was simple: that church did not need a “Gentile prince.” It was in need of a minister, a servant. Thus, Paul wrote, “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (Philippians 2:19-21).

What a wonderful thing to say about any preacher: “He will naturally care for you.” What was the beginning of this selfless lifestyle that characterized Timothy? The answer is that for some length of time he lived with a tremendous example.

Timothy came under the influence of Paul’s great life about year a 45 a.C. Paul was on his first missionary journey and came to Lystra, Timothy’s hometown. Timothy witnessed a ministry that was empowered by the Holy Spirit. He saw a lame man healed before his eyes.

Then he saw something even more impressive. When the population of the city sought to fall down and worship Paul and Silas, he saw men who did not seek glory but who almost frantically declared, “We are men like yourselves.” (See Acts 14.) He also witnessed selfless commitment. After being stoned, left for dead, and then miraculously healed and perhaps raised from the dead out from under the rock pile, Paul did not flee from his sheep.

He rose up and went back into the city. No doubt the fate of the Lystra church and of this young convert hung upon such selfless acts as he witnessed that day. They all saw “a minister” go to death and back for the sake of the church. Paul was an example of the devoted love of the Great Shepherd, who “loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25).

Jesus stressed the importance of all Christians and especially leaders espousing and living out the principle of servanthood by Himself assuming that role. After stating that leaders were to be servants, He said, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered

unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Philippians 2:7 explains that Jesus "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

It would probably amaze every one of us if we knew how much time, consciously or unconsciously, we spend in attempting to make a reputation for ourselves. Jesus was not fettered with this nongrowth motive. He walked among the people of this earth completely free from selfish ambition.

This concept of greatness confused the Jews and caused most of them to miss the identity of the Messiah altogether. To this day it is impossible for members of the Jewish religion to fully explain Isaiah 53. The words of this prophecy march in stately tread straight to the cross. Word by word, step by step, it drums out the funeral march of a certain slave. It does not give His name, but from the vantage point of history we know who He was. We recognize "the man of sorrows." We know about the stripes for our healing. We know who was silent in judgment, and who bore all our iniquities. This passage, however, identifies Him simply as "my righteous servant" (Isaiah 53:11).

For this reason, Judas received exactly thirty pieces of silver for betraying Jesus. According to Exodus 21:32, if a slave died on the horns of a neighbor's ox, the neighbor owed thirty pieces of silver to the one who had lost the servant. If Jesus had been held hostage as a king, the ransom for Him would have been vastly more. But He was simply sold as a slave. This role was His by choice. It was to be the foundational principle of an entirely new culture that was to grace this world: the principle of servanthood. If a pastor has not espoused the principle of servant-hood, it is very doubtful that he will lastingly do very much for God. In many instances service is the only thing that a pastor can offer. Being a servant is often the only thing that will save a floundering church. When a man is called to preach the gospel, he is called to be a servant.

## **II. The Biblical Role of the Pastor**

Leadership always has certain responsibilities, either directly assigned or understood. Those responsibilities are almost impossible to execute unless commensurate authority is also conveyed to execute them. Authority is ineffective unless both the person who receives it and those who are to respect it understand that it has been conveyed.

## *A. Authority under Christ*

Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). He announced to His disciples just prior to His ascension, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Even after His ascension, He remains the absolute authority of the church: "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:21-22)

The Lord Jesus has instituted authority under Him in the church. He chose the twelve apostles to found and lead the church in the beginning. He sent them to do their work with the same authority that He as a man had received from God: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). He commissioned them to preach the gospel, to baptize the believers, and to set the direction of the New Testament church. The church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20).

Since the establishing of the New Testament church, God has chosen people to preach the gospel and carry forward the work of God. The apostle Paul recognized such a calling upon his life: "He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (I Timothy 1:12); "whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle" (I Timothy 2:7). Paul called the ministry of the gospel an "office": "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Timothy 3:1).

The anointing and authority that go with this office should be respected: "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father" (I Timothy 5:1). "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the labourer is worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (I Timothy 5:17-19).

The early church ordained people who received a call from God to preach the gospel and lead the church. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5).

The universal church has the authority to recognize God's calling upon a person, to

ascertain his qualifications, to send him forth into the ministry, to evaluate his subsequent teachings and actions, to ask for a report of his activities, to recommend a course of action, and to establish standards for continual fellowship. (See Acts 13:2-3; 21:17-26; I Timothy 1:19-20; 3:1-7; III John 9-12.

Divine authority comes to us only as we submit ourselves to authority. One reason for the outstanding characteristics of Christ's ministry was that the people listened to Him and recognized that He spoke with authority (Matthew 7:29). How was Jesus able to do this? The centurion gives us the key: he understood that a person who is "under authority" can exercise authority (Matthew 8:8-9).

The pastor has been given authority by Christ to lead the local church, but he must exercise his leadership role under the authority of Christ and Christ's church.

### *B. Extent of authority*

I have been asked more than once, "How much authority does a pastor have?" As a starter I usually simply reply, "You have as much authority as the people will give you." God conveys an authority to the pastor and supplies an anointing. However, for a person to have an effective ministry, the people must recognize the authority and anointing of God. They in turn will extend their goodwill, trust, and consent for him to be the under shepherd over them.

One of the things that made David great was that he sought to have more than a kingship. With great sensitivity he sought a real relationship with people. The people of Judah came by their own choice and free will to anoint David as their king (II Samuel 2:4). Samuel had anointed David many years earlier, but David waited for the second anointing, the consent of the people. The respect that David showed by his patience in waiting for the consent of the people made a tremendous difference in the high degree of loyalty that they gave to him.

The pastors who do the most for God are pastors who can lead in such a way that a warm relationship exists between themselves and the people they lead. Invariably when a person senses security, peace, acceptance, and love in a local assembly, he will find that the pastor values the consent or anointing of the people greatly. It is possible to have this consent without compromise. In fact, the goodwill of the people enhances the possibility that the preacher can implant the true Word of God in every respect in their hearts.

Even Jesus Christ Himself waits for the invitation and consent of the people. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). Though God of heaven, our Lord respectfully asks permission to enter. The object of His effort is to pursue a relationship.

God is love (I John 4:8), and as such He reaches out continually to communicate, give, and relate. He seeks to create loving relationships. From this divine motivation and activity, the church evolves. Thus, the church itself is a spiritual community of people in relationship with God and each other. Significantly, a loving relationship is always initiated and maintained by the choice of the people involved.

It follows that the most important necessity of pastoring is willing consent of the congregation. No relationship can be a loving relationship unless the participants are free to choose.

The pastor, as the under shepherd, is to lead the church and not attempt to drive it. “Neither as being lords over God’s heritage but being ensamples to the flock” (I Peter 5:3).

Admittedly, it is possible for a person to rule a group of people for some length of time by strength of human will and human spirit. The force that perpetuates such control, however, is usually fear. Psychologists tell us that there is only a thin line between fear and hate. Sooner or later, the entire relationship degenerates into a situation that is absolutely non-Christian.

It may still be called a church, but in spirit and in actuality it ceases to be what God intended. This catastrophic situation occurs simply because it was founded upon the wrong principle. A lack of mutual love and respect affects the relationships in the assembly.

In such circumstances a desire for power is usually the motivating factor that activates the pastor. He tries to force people to do something that they do not want to do. The tragic fact is, however, that no one can exercise force and love at the same time. Not even God Himself makes an appeal from the standpoint of power and love at the same time. The New Testament reveals to us a “powerless” God in flesh, in the sense that Jesus Christ refused to force people to do anything that they did not choose to do.

Love is always vulnerable. It is impossible to love without pain. Love prompts the true under shepherd to be willing to wait for consent of the people. How wonderful it is

when the pastor senses love and trust flowing to him from the congregation! How precious and assuring it is when he feels the second anointing, the anointing of the people!

We should also note that the pastor's authority is based upon and subject to the Bible. He only has authority to teach what the Bible teaches, to require what the Bible requires, and to establish standards that are based on biblical principles. In other areas he can exercise leadership, give advice, and express preferences, but he must not claim biblical authority outside his biblical role. Even if the people give consent, he has no authority to endorse error, condone sin, or act unethically.

A person receives authority in order to carry out certain assigned duties and responsibilities. Let us discuss some of the duties and responsibilities for which God has given the pastor the authority to carry out.

### *C. Communicating Jesus Christ*

The pastor is responsible to communicate Jesus Christ to the congregation by his preaching, his teaching, and most of all his example. (See I Corinthians 11:1.)

W. C. Parkey once stated, "Many things are conveyed to us by being taught. Many more things are learned by us by being caught." We learn more by the examples we observe than by words we hear.

Consciously or unconsciously, everyone has a mentor. Ideals will not remain for consideration in our consciousness unless we are able to personalize them. Leaders become points of reference toward which followers gravitate in some measure. A leader will have a profound influence on some of his followers. He may have a small influence on other people he is responsible to. But over a period, he will influence in some way everyone who is under his jurisdiction.

As Christian leaders, it is extremely important that our example be correct, and the correct example is Jesus Christ. The most important thing that any pastor can do is to demonstrate the character and principles of Jesus Christ to his congregation.

Whatever the supreme purpose of God is for each saint, it is the duty of the preacher to help bring that purpose about in the life of the saint. After all, is not the pastor a servant of God to the people? According to the Scripture, the supreme purpose of God for each saint is for him "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29).

No pastor can be truly instrumental in conforming his congregation to the image of Jesus Christ unless he has an intimate relationship with Jesus himself. To truly bring a Christian influence into a church congregation, the pastor must have assimilated Jesus into his life. If he does not do so, there will not be any real "Jesus life" either in himself or in those who follow his example.

It is possible to preach often about Jesus and yet never truly introduce Him to a congregation. Jesus is not only the Word but also the Spirit. A true relationship with Him is spiritual. It is important to preach Jesus Christ correctly in word just as He is. It is equally important that we preach Him not in our spirit but in His Spirit. If we do not, we may find ourselves standing with Jesus in doctrine but demonstrating the world, the flesh, or the devil in principle.

Paul described two kinds of motives of preaching Christ: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, . . . but the other of love.

What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached" (Philippians 1:15-18). We could confidently add to this description that under either kind of ministry some sort of congregation is raised up. One kind of congregation is gathered by the persuasion and influence of man. It is a product of a turbulent human spirit that is not at peace with God or man. Consequently, such congregations are often adversarial, defensive, and without the quality of peace that Jesus alone can give. (See John 14:27.)

The pastor has a responsibility to communicate Jesus Christ to the people by the Word of God. The teaching and preaching of the Word was never meant to be for the sake of entertainment, but it should always communicate truth, for it is truth that will convict, instruct, encourage, and warn. (See II Timothy 4:2.)

The preacher's great concern should be that he truly is communicating the Word to the people. A preacher defrauds his congregation if he merely plays upon their emotions. Of course, as Pentecostals we should have strong emotional experiences in our services. But emotion alone is not sufficient. The deep, solid principles of God's Word must become a part of the very lives of the people that we attempt to pastor. If the Word is communicated and people receive it, the results are always positive. But if the preacher because of himself, circumstances, or the people is not able to communicate the Word, the results are negative.



It does not take very much sensitivity to know whether people are understanding and receiving what a preacher is attempting to say. Many times, I have come from the pulpit and walked slowly down the aisle with a cordless microphone, I have spoken slowly and deliberately, looking straight into the faces and the eyes of people. I have often reached out to touch people with my hand as I spoke. I wanted to demonstrate that the Bible lesson or the sermon was not simply a performance but a very sincere effort on my part to communicate with them.

Sometimes the sensitive under shepherd will know that people are not capable or willing to receive some particular portion of God's Word. To attempt to force it upon them through constant repetition is usually not productive. Sometimes the Word simply needs to be spoken to them as a witness prior to judgment, but this is not often. Jesus Himself did not attempt to teach things that people could not or would not receive. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). Jesus taught us not only to respect people but also to respect the Word of God and the principles of the Word. He told us in Matthew 7:6, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine."

Paul refrained from attempting to communicate truths that the Corinthians were not able to receive. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (I Corinthians 3:2). Paul believed that in time the Corinthians would be able to receive a more solid and sound teaching from the Word of God. In the meantime, while the church was in the process of learning and maturing, he communicated to them on their particular level of growth.

The caring undershepherd will sense the ability of his congregation to receive particular types of teaching. Inasmuch as he desires above all things to truly communicate with them, he will do as Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul did adapt himself to the circumstance, yet always attempt to mature them and lead them into greater truth.

#### *D. Encouraging*

It is the responsibility of the pastor to bring encouragement to his people. (See Acts 15:30-32; II Timothy 4:2.) His communication will be enhanced if he remembers the environment that most of his people live in. Many precious laypersons work in situations that deplete them spiritually. Some working environments are filled with dirty words, profane jokes, and curses. In other environments, the value system may be one of materialism. Day by day, Spirit-filled Christians have to struggle to keep their priorities

straight as they continuously move among people whose only concerns relate to this world and this age. In such an environment, a Christian may change his values unless he is ministered to by a caring pastor and church.

It is much easier for me to preach sermons that relate to the needs of the people I pastor if I pray personally and individually for them. I often attempt to group them in my praying. As I pray for the older people of the church, I see them struggling with their physical limitations. I feature them in their loneliness. As I pray for housewives of the church, I try to remember those who have no transportation during the day and who are confined to a house with several small children. I try to sense the monotony of day-by-day housework. I attempt to go in the spirit of prayer with the brethren as they work on their jobs. As I pray in this manner usually particular passages of Scripture come to me that address these situations. This prayer is often the basis of my preaching to the church family.

When people experience trauma, they certainly need the loving care of their pastor. I once heard a good layman make a statement that he did not mean to be critical: "At that time my pastor did not seem as sensitive to my pain as I had hoped he would be." As pastors, we should strive to be closely attuned to the needs of our people so that we can minister encouragement and grace to them.

### *E. Managing*

It is the responsibility of the pastor to oversee and manage the activities and departments of the church. (See Acts 20:28; I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17.) He must "feed the flock taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (I Peter 5:2). Obviously, the church needs leaders such as department heads, but the pastor must bear the ultimate responsibility. When some aspect of the church's work seems to lag, it is the duty of the pastor to offer encouragement, suggestion, and help to the departmental superintendent.

It is the responsibility of the pastor to manage the cash flow of the church. If he is unorganized in his personal budgeting and wasteful with personal money, then he will probably be careless with the church's money also. The apostle Paul asked, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (I Timothy 3:5). His duty to govern and take care of the church includes the management of money. This does not mean that he must handle the money. In a smaller church, this may be necessary, but as a church becomes larger, other arrangements are more appropriate and efficient. But it does not matter how large the church gets, the final management of

the money is going to be the responsibility of the pastor.

There are two areas especially in which a pastor can never afford to fail. One is in morals. "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isaiah 52:11). The other is the astute management of the church's money. The church will not forgive a pastor who has no respect for these factors in his pastoral responsibility.

The pastor should have a very strong concern not to allow the church to be overly burdened with debt. There are times to restrain a church board or a church congregation from voting for a mortgage that the church is not really able to handle. The pastor is in a position to know more about the income and expense of the church than anyone else.

The pastor is responsible for the monetary condition of the church. I heard a man defend himself before a district board once by saying, "Those bills belonged to the church." A board member responded by saying, "When you took the pastorate, it was similar to a marriage. All of the affairs of the church became your responsibility. You became responsible for those bills."

#### *F. Equipping for growth*

It is the responsibility of the pastor to be progressive in his leadership. He should have in mind a spiritual level to which he desires to lead his congregation. He should have a growth goal in mind. Of course, to do so he will also have to think about the physical expansion of his church, or perhaps a new location.

The most important aspect of growth is the spiritual growth of the church. The Lord has placed various ministries in the church that are effective in generating growth. It is doubtful that one man would possess all of these ministries. For this reason, a good pastor reaches out for varied ministries. He wishes his congregation to be balanced in their spiritual concept and growth.

How wonderful it is that God has provided all that is needed for the spiritual growth of any congregation. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). These five categories of ministry are given to the corporate body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:12-13 describes the purpose for the fivefold ministry: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all

come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." In other words, the fivefold ministry equips the saints so that they can fulfill their proper function in the church. The result is the spiritual growth of the body.

The movement described here is purposeful and objective: it is toward a perfect man, toward the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This movement occurs with a spiritual attitude or mindset: seeking the "unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God." This is to be the mindset of the maturing church.

Perhaps our churches will never be absolutely the same in the methods that we employ, but if we truly believe in Jesus and the basic doctrines of salvation that introduce us to Him, and if we come to truly know Him in intimate personal relationship, our movement toward "the stature of the fulness of Christ" should be a natural development. Thus, it is a duty of the pastor always and in every way to proclaim and exalt Jesus. Jesus must be at the center of all things and in all considerations. He is our reason for being, and He should be the reason for everything that the church does.

### **III. Motivating Lay Leadership**

As a conscientious, Christ-loving minister does his best with the objectives we have described, he will eventually come to feel one with his people. He will develop a sensitivity relative to where they are spiritually. He will come to know and be able to identify the various mood swings that are a part of the life of a church. He will be able to anticipate the high moments of the congregation and use them for the lasting good of the church.

He will not attempt to handle all the responsibilities and experiences of pastoral work alone. The wise pastor understands that he will do most of his work through other leaders whom he has developed. This concept is scriptural. At the counsel of Jethro and the instructions of God, Moses divided much of his responsibility among the elders of Israel (Exodus 18:13-26; Numbers 11:16-17). Paul instructed Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

The wise pastor will attempt to raise the level of talent and expertise in his congregation. In time a pastor should witness an improvement in the maturity and lifestyle of his people. People's lives are changed for the better through the influence of

God's Word.

I have found it helpful to offer a series of studies to the entire church on lay leadership. I do not mention the particulars of office-holding in such a series. We simply work from the premise that every Spirit-filled person should be a leader. All Christians should be able to cope with life in such a way that they are looked up to in their community, on their job, and wherever they are. It is much better to cultivate the qualities of leadership long before a title of leadership is fixed to an individual.

Offices and titles should be bestowed upon people with great care. But there is no problem at all in creating leadership qualities in the entire congregation qualities such as patience, kindness, self-control, creativity, objectivity in life, and so on. These principles are good for anyone to implement.

As the pastor sees particular people respond to such teaching and grow in the congregation, perhaps he can select a smaller group and give further teaching to them in order to qualify them for a position of leadership. At no time should he convey to them the hope that they will occupy an office in the church, for the love of preeminence displaces true service to Jesus Christ.

Blessed is the church that has adopted the Local Church Government in the Manual of the United Pentecostal Church. It provides the fairest and most well-balanced arrangements that I have seen. It provides for the pastor to appoint all of the leaders of the local church. He should do so with great consideration. Not only should he consider the ability of each individual for the office but also the overall representation and balance within the church. Loyalty to God, the pastor, and the church should be some of the deciding factors.

When a leader is appointed to office, the expectations relative to that office should be spelled out. He should receive a written list of duties.

Regular staff meetings on various levels of leadership in the church are a necessity. They provide time for clarification, projection, and the impartation of good, solid leadership tips. At least once or twice a year, a special luncheon or dinner should be provided for the leadership of the church. Many progressive churches have leadership meetings every week.

Toward the end of the year, it is important that the pastor meet collectively with his

departmental leaders in order to create a church activity calendar for the coming year. He should set a certain time schedule for them to make tentative projections. He should meet individually with each one of them, going over what they have in mind and adding his direction. His input is extremely important, because the pastor should have the mind of Christ and know the overall direction in which God would have the church to move. Each department according to its own personality should contribute to this forward movement. Each department head should meet with the responsible personnel of his department and together with them create the projected activities of the coming year.

The next step is for the pastor to meet with all of the department heads collectively. At this meeting he furnishes them with a calendar that has enough space in each date block for activities to be written in. At this point he explains the direction in which he desires the church to move. Each of them submits the proposed activities of his department. Obviously, there will be conflict relative to dates, and so on. Some of the projections will need to be canceled entirely because they will not fit into the purpose of the next year's thrust. Others can be adjusted so that they do.

The pastor should plan a projection night in which each department reveals to the entire church the gist of their activities for the next year. Usually this is an extremely exciting night. If rightly done, the congregation comes away from such a service happy to be a part of a moving church that indeed knows where it is going.

Usually, people who may yet be uninvolved are motivated to become an active part of the church's program. For this reason, applications should be made available that give people an opportunity to indicate the particular church activity that they would like to be a part of.

Leaders must be motivated. They can be very effectively motivated by proper recognition of the good work they are doing. It is hard to overdo this. Genuine appreciation goes a long way toward causing people to be willing to go the extra mile.

Leaders can be motivated by motivational meetings. Many good, printed materials, audio materials, and video presentations are available to boost the flagging spirits of tired leadership. Outside speakers from other churches who have been successful in particular areas can share the good things they have experienced. Ever and always the pastor should be alert to speak an encouraging word and to pass along a deserved compliment.

Meetings of evaluation that reveal to the leaders how effective their work actually has been are very helpful. For people to see how far they have come in a particular year

usually provides a good lift.

Good management is one of the greatest sources of encouragement to church leaders. If they feel that they are well led, that they are respected, and that their work is appreciated, most church leaders will work untiringly.

Another factor that contributes to a smoothly run operation and a motivated staff is for everyone's responsibility to be clearly defined. It is not enough simply to go over these particular responsibilities when a leader is chosen. Nor is it enough to give to that leader a detailed list of expectations. There must come times of clarification. Once each year, the pastor needs to hold up the big picture before the church staff and then before all of the leadership of the church. He needs to discuss the church's mission, its present position, and the projected accomplishments with all of the leaders, and he needs to define anew the assignment and responsibility for each department and each leader.

In this way, the lay leaders will feel a sense of importance as well as a sense of belonging. Confusion is a severe hindrance to proper motivation. It will eventually bring the entire operation to a halt. Consistent pastoral communication with lay leaders is essential to weed out confusion and to clarify the purpose and importance of each operation.

#### **IV. Evangelism and Missions**

Missions is the mission of the church. In fact, the church is a mission. The divine Missionary came almost two thousand years ago on the greatest mission the world has ever known. He gathered to Himself followers. Finally, prior to His leaving, He gave to them a "co-mission," commanding them to join Him in His mission.

The mission of the Lord Jesus Christ continues. The mission of Jesus Christ is our mission, namely, "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Of course, included in this responsibility is the discipling of the people whom we succeed in winning. Each convert in time is to grow in grace, knowledge, and holiness, and to understand that he has a ministry in the body of Christ. The successful pastor helps each member of his congregation to discover his or her area of ministry.

It is impossible to have a growing church without the congregation having a strong sense of mission. Every believer should be destiny conscious. Each of us should feel that our local church is on a mission. We must realize we have a divine assignment to our

particular sector of the world. Obviously, all of us cannot go into the entire world, but all of us can go into the world immediately around us. We have an emphatic assignment to our environment.

The church should establish organized efforts to reach the unsaved. One of the most effective tools is home Bible study. Other avenues of outreach include bus ministry, deaf ministry, nursing homes, jails, campuses, and ethnic outreach. The General Home Missions Division provides information and tools for the various types of outreach, as well as books on church growth.

Its sense of missions justifies a church's existence. In fact, when a church ceases to be a mission, it no longer has a reason for being. When a church is no longer on a mission, usually it is in a state of stagnation, and very shortly it will be going backward.

The church should be selfless in its concept. It should contribute to the salvation of souls beyond its perimeter. The church should contribute to causes through which the church has no hope of return to itself. This type of selfless giving is a part of our Christianity.

The pastor should remind his assembly of the countless unchurched cities. Our Christian love and burden is not complete until we recognize our responsibility beyond the fellowship of our own assembly. Thus, the pastor should lead the church to contribute to home and foreign missions.

In many districts, the local church has an opportunity to participate in home missions work immediately in its own district. Through the Christmas for Christ program, the church can support the General Home Missions Division, which covers the United States and Canada. This is not simply a monetary activity, but it offers a good opportunity for missions education and for a faith experience for the congregation.

Missions consciousness must emphatically include the unreached in the regions beyond. There is no excuse for a local church not to have an exposure to foreign missions. Continuously missionaries travel throughout our fellowship, and they help transfer the burden of missions to the congregation. Every church can support foreign missions through Faith Promise and Partners in Missions.

There should be no distinctive difference in missions, whether it be locally, in the district, in the country, or in another country. A broad concept generates more energy



and lends a greater sense of worth to the individual saint. Suppose, for instance, that you came upon a couple of people on a given street who were knocking doors, and you asked them what they were doing. How delightful it would be if they said, "We are out reaching the world for Jesus." Such people would believe that the street where they were doing mission work is simply a part of the world. The larger our concept, the more energy we have.

It is the duty of the pastor to put together a program that enables the individuals of his church to participate readily in a world missions endeavor. He can tremendously facilitate such participation by a yearly missions conference in the local church that includes every facet of missions. Such a conference offers an excellent opportunity for the pastor to emphasize the mission of the local church. Over and over, saints need to be reminded of their responsibility to win the lost of their city. Then, of course, the missions conference should include the needs of home missions and foreign missions. Ideally, a home missionary, a foreign missionary, or both should present the need and burden.

Faith promise cards should be passed out at the first part of the conference and offered all during the conference to people who have not yet received them. Everyone knows that he will be expected to make a faith promise near the end of the conference. Faith builds, excitement grows, and a feeling of individual responsibility heightens as the conference moves along. The high moment of the conference comes when the faith promise cards are received and totaled. The pledges subscribed on the cards constitute a projected missions budget for that local church for the coming year.

Some pastors allot a certain percentage of the budget to home missions and a certain percentage to foreign missions. All Partners in Missions are paid out of this missions budget. The pastor and the church board are able to know how many Partners in Missions they can support that particular year. Thus, the church is not continually asked for additional funds. Most members would rather make a one-time commitment for the year and pay it monthly than to be challenged over and over through the year. In this way they can keep their own personal budgets in line at home.

## **V. Conducting Congregational Services**

### *A. General principles*

Every congregational service is extremely important. When we consider the spiritual depletion that occurs to the average person during the process of a week, we should be

concerned for each meeting.

Not only do people face a spiritual erosion by the daily contact of a sinful environment, but they also encounter frustration in simply trying to cope and make ends meet in a stressful world. Thus, people need the very best each time that they meet for worship. No service should be taken casually. It should be well prepared for, and the minister himself should be well prepared to lead the service.

Jesus said that we speak from “the abundance of the heart” (Matthew 12:34). We can only give to others what we have inside. Thus, we ourselves should be thoroughly cleansed of frustration, negativism, and nongrowth attitudes and be filled with a positive, strengthening, and encouraging attitude. Whatever is inside the preacher, he usually projects outward into his congregation.

Everyone who attempts to preach a message to a congregation should thoroughly prepare his heart to do so. He should be a channel of God’s love, God’s Word, and God’s purpose for that particular service. He should be thoroughly harmonized with God in spirit. Thus, prayer is a necessity. Most successful pastors wish to arrive at the church with time to spare. They conscientiously set aside some time to seek the Lord. Some pastors pray with the people before the church service. Both saint and minister should be prepared to worship and to preach and receive the Word of God. A good prayer service before church is invaluable if the congregation wishes indeed to be in tune with our heavenly Father.

In larger churches where a staff is involved with the leading of the church service, the pastor and his staff often meet before church, and all pray together. They briefly review a projected outline of the service and mention the special songs. Various leaders of the church thus have an opportunity to communicate with one another. Of course, they understand that the Spirit can change these projected plans.

The opening statement means a lot to the climate of the rest of the service. Many successful pastors state that they are as concerned about the first three to five minutes of a service as they are about any other part of a service. I know men who diligently seek God about what to say to the people in the first minute after the congregation stands. Everything is important in a public service, even the way we ask people to stand.

Our statements and even our gestures should be clear, concise, and definite as we invite the congregation to stand. This is a way of gathering the people in one mind and

one accord immediately. If we are led of God's Spirit in conducting a public worship service, invariably there will be variety. What the Spirit says at one time may be altogether different from His leading at another time. Two factors should determine the content and spirit of the service. The first and preeminent factor is God.

I truly believe that the Lord has a supreme purpose for every worship service. The pastor should know the mind of the Spirit. The second factor is the need of the congregation, and what the Spirit says will harmonize with that need. The spiritually sensitive pastor senses the mood and spirit of people. Somehow deep inside he can feel where the people are spiritually and what the paramount need for that service is as far as they are concerned. It is always the will of God to meet the needs of the people.

Some services should be more relaxed than others. Sometimes people simply do not need to be pressed to achieve a spiritual high. Jesus sometimes took His disciples apart to the desert to rest, and the Lord wishes at times to gather His people close for a restful service. At times I have chosen to devote the entire service to singing. It was simply a time of rest in which the people were not asked to press hard to achieve a higher spiritual level. Sometimes I have felt that the service belonged entirely to the congregation. I have simply had micro-phones placed on the congregational level, told the people that the service was theirs, and then sat down and turned the service to them. I have been amazed under such circumstances at how God caused the laity to minister one to another.

Of course, I have reserved the right to break in with comments as I led the service along or to ask for particular choruses. I do not know one service that I have felt led of God to conduct like this that has not been a great blessing to the people.

At other times I felt to open the Word of God at the very beginning of the service and speak from it. After the Word of God, I have always trusted God to let me know what else He wished for that service.

Most of the time however, our services have a particular form. In every service, there should be prayer, worship, and the Word of God. There should also be an opportunity for people to respond to the Word of God.

### *B. The weekly schedule*

The format of the midweek Bible study in our church usually does not change very much. I prefer to begin teaching by thirty minutes after the service has begun. I usually

teach for an hour. We usually do not have a long prayer service after the Bible study. I try to be mindful of the fact that this is a work night and also a school night. People appreciate my being mindful of them and respond readily to the Word.

Sunday morning is the time when many people in North America go to church. Though our culture is changing somewhat, more people are likely to attend church on Sunday morning than any other time. I do not know of anything better than to teach the Word of God in Sunday school. All ages need to be taught. Sunday school offers a way to teach God's Word to all ages and groups according to the ability and needs of the students. In individual classes, we may adapt particular methods that seem to convey the Word of God better to that particular age level. Sunday school affords a tremendous opportunity for the entire family to gather in a study and worship experience. In all church services a smooth, easy flow from one activity to another is more preferable than abrupt endings and beginnings. On Sunday morning usually the adult Bible class is in the auditorium. It is extremely advantageous for the teacher of that class to close on time and have the class to stand and begin worshipping. Thus, the other classes come into a worship service that has already begun without having to make a clumsy adjustment.

Sunday morning is usually the best time to reach the unsaved, simply because there are usually more unsaved people present on Sunday morning than at any other time during the week. Woe to the church that ceases to be evangelistic! A positive and deliberate reach for the sinner should be built into the plan of the weekly church services. Normally, Sunday morning lends itself to this emphasis better than any other service of the week.

The preacher should be well prepared to preach. Some ministers complain that it is difficult for them to teach a Bible lesson and then to transfer their thoughts immediately to an evangelistic sermon. It helps me to make this transition if I retire immediately to my office after I have taught the Bible lesson. I like something to drink and a few minutes of quiet as I go over my Sunday morning notes. I like to place my hands upon the open Bible and once again ask God to make me a true instrument of His Word. Someone else, of course, is conducting the Sunday morning worship service in the auditorium. When I make my entrance into the auditorium, I want to be prepared in spirit and also have my mind refreshed as to my sermon outline. Thus, I am ready to give my heart and my all toward reaching the unsaved.

The Sunday evening service in most of our churches lends itself to joyous worship, and it is often a great evangelistic service as well. Many pastors do not feel as pressured

on Sunday night as on Sunday morning. Sunday night is often a family night. It is a good time to stress the church's programs and coming events.

Many of our churches invite the entire church family and visitors to gather around the front for a time of prayer. When this approach is used, the unsaved seem far less reluctant to move up to the front and stand with others in prayer. This offers an excellent opportunity to minister with them and to pray with them for the Holy Ghost.

## Chapter 6

### Church Administration

by Kenneth F. Haney

(Excerpted and adapted from “I Sought for a Man,” copyright 1991 by Kenneth F. Haney. Used by permission.)

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- I. The Importance of Organized Effort
- II. The Administration of the Local Church
  - A. The pastor as administrator
  - B. Establishing a leadership team
  - C. Selection of personnel
- III. Business Meetings
- IV. Building Programs
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## I. The Importance of Organized Effort

God's ultimate purpose and plan for His church upon earth is basically threefold: (1) Christ should become the center and the object of our devotion and admiration. (2) The church should minister to the great body of believers. (3) The church should evangelize the world in obedience to the great commission.

If we are to fulfill this purpose and plan, we must bring together the body of believers and organize them to execute the plan. Therefore, planning programs and uniting our efforts are essential to the well-balanced development of the church.

In this regard, it is instructive to study the tremendous progress of private enterprise, large organizations and corporations that became worldwide in scope. These large corporations have definite objectives. They choose the finest talents they can and bring them together. They have a president, vice-president (in some cases several vice-presidents), and many administrators. Each one receives a job description and an area of planning for which he is responsible. They departmentalize, or break down into small segments or groups, but before doing so they have an overall objective or statement of mission. They know where they are going.

I am convinced that the church of Jesus Christ should be no less organized. If we are to meet the needs of a growing body of believers, we must be well organized with every person in his place.

At the top of each of these great corporations is an administrator. He is well balanced, he knows where he is going, and the plan is clear and precise in his mind. He gives to each of his subordinates vision and direction, and they are carefully schooled and trained. He gives oversight to the total plan of achieving greatness. Likewise, the church of the living God must be organized. There is a place for everyone, and when every person is in his place the church will surge forward.

God is a God of organization. We see this truth in His creation plan in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis. From the very foundation of the world everything was organized properly. Throughout the Old Testament we see God as a God of organization. Jehovah instructed the nation of Israel in minute detail how to organize each step of their journey and how to construct the Tabernacle. Every man was in his place. Every man had his duty to perform.

The Tabernacle was so uniquely organized that it could be assembled and disassembled easily. The nation would travel on until they were instructed to stop, and there they would erect the Tabernacle. Everything about this great body of people spoke of organization. They did not have microphones, automobiles, and air-planes. With about three million people crossing the desert, everyone had to be in his place, and everyone had to be submissive to someone.

Jesus, being the God of organization, called many disciples, and from those disciples He selected twelve men who were to change the world through the power of the Holy Spirit. From the twelve there was an inner circle of three who were very close and dear to the Lord.

He also organized His disciples into groups referred to as the “seventy,” who were sent out as witnesses for the Lord. He sent them out two by two. When He fed the five thousand with the loaves and fish, the disciples divided the people into groups of fifty. We must conclude that Jesus desires organized effort.

In Luke 14:28-32 Jesus explained that someone who is going to build must first sit down, plan, count the cost, and make sure he is able to complete the project. Likewise, a king who goes to war against another king needs to sit down first and consider whether he is able to conquer his enemy. Planning has always been important to Jesus Christ. He intends for His church upon the earth to be well orchestrated and planned and motivated by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ has always chosen people who were dedicated, committed, and able to lead and administrate His work upon the earth.

Turning to the Book of Acts, we see from the very beginning of the church on the Day of Pentecost that God had an order. The believers were empowered by the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit moved upon men of God to give leadership and direction to the church. Throughout the Book of Acts and the Epistles, which were letters of instruction to the churches, we find a well-organized church with a precise plan, a definite direction.

Christ has placed in the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to perfect (equip) the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12).



## II. The Administration of the Local Church

### A. *The pastor as administrator*

The pastor must be a well-balanced person of good name and good report. He must also be an administrator. If the church is to have well rounded growth numerical growth, financial growth, and spiritual growth the pastor must be a balanced administrator. He must see the vision clearly, know where he is going, and work from biblical principles.

He is the general overseer of all facets of the church organization. His numerous responsibilities as the administrator call for much planning, recruiting, and selecting of leaders, delegating of authority, coordinating and communicating with those in authority, and supervising the total work of the church. As the administrator he must provide direction for the entire church organization. He must keep all members of the body constantly motivated and inspired if they are to achieve their goals. He must be able to evaluate, to recognize pitfalls and snares.

As a leader he must be able to detect signs of weariness and discouragement when those under him have fallen prey to the work of the adversary. As administrator it is imperative that he help the various leaders through training and planning so that they will be able to properly conduct committee meetings and other necessary functions of the organization.

The pastor has total responsibility for the overall administration of the church; however, the priority of the pastor is to keep the spiritual flow of activities in the church. It is the work of the Spirit that will generate the most strength to the church. Therefore, the pastor must set the example in prayer and fasting. I have found as a pastor that if I keep the revival fire burning and the pulpit anointed with the Spirit of God, I will rid myself of many church problems.

The church must not always look inward; the church must look outward as the pastor points them in the direction of winning the lost. Keeping a revival atmosphere in the church will keep the world out of the church. Keeping the Word of God constantly before the people through prayer and fasting is an assured way to keep friction out of the church. There must be a constant flow of new babes coming into the church.

It is important to keep the body busy teaching and nurturing newborn babes. When there is a constant flow into the church, the members can become involved in discipleship

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classes, counseling, fellowship, visiting, and praying—all the ingredients that go into developing a newborn babe.

Of course, there is also the social aspect of the church, such as baby showers and bridal showers. There should be social events for the different groups. The different departments of the church must have their time for socials and fellowship, but all must be balanced, and the balance will be determined by a godly pastor who is God's man placed as the leader of the church.

Conducting worship services is of vital importance. A pastor must keep the services lively, to the point, and centered around Jesus Christ. He must plan evangelistic meetings to reach the lost, keeping announcements to a minimum. Services must never drag; they must not be lengthy unless the Spirit of Songs and worship are necessary, but the preaching of the Word to reach the heart of the lost man or woman is what an evangelistic service is all about. There should be time for altar work and prayer.

Some services should be designed primarily for the saints, to teach, nurture, and encourage them. These functions are of great importance. The church must be anchored in the Word.

All in all, much depends upon the pastor's own spiritual condition. Just as water reaches its own level, so the church will never rise above its leadership. If a pastor loves God, seeks His face, and walks with Him, the congregation will seek God and walk with God. If the pastor is worldly minded or materialistic, the congregation will follow in his footsteps.

The pastor must know exactly where he is going. He must have a plan for his organization. For this reason, it is very important that he spend much time in prayer, searching the Scripture, reading as much material as possible on organizational structure, and if possible attending seminars and training sessions on church organization and growth.

It is helpful to visit progressive churches, even those of other organizations, to carefully analyze their format. They can inject some new ideas and concepts that can be useful. A pastor should not copy others exactly and precisely in every matter, however, for in doing so he may pick up some of their mistakes. Even if they have good concepts and organization that have worked successfully for them, it is vital for a pastor to modify these to suit his own particular set of circumstances. Most churches are at different plateaus of progress, and for this reason modification is essential.

While we as pastors want to see our churches grow numerically, we must first consider the basic responsibility that is ours: we must first minister to our people. The church must be established upon the solid rock, which is Christ. This is the biblical foundation. The church must grow spiritually before it grows numerically, for if it is not predicated upon the Word and Spirit it will be like the house that was built upon the sand. (See Matthew 7:24-27.) Testing times will come like storms, winds, and floods, and when they do, the house built upon the sand will be quickly destroyed. But the house built upon the rock will stand the test. The church must be built on a solid foundation; then as growth comes to the church it will stand the test of time.

### *B. Establishing a leadership team*

Before selecting a leadership team, the pastor must determine the different departments or ministries needed in the church in order to succeed in achieving his goals. Often ministers ask, “Why do I need a team? Why do I need departmentalized leadership for ministries in the church?” The answer is very simple. First, no one, regardless of how brilliant or talented he may be, can do every- thing. At best he is limited. Human instrumentality has its limitations. Second, it is important to use people. An invisible sign hangs around the neck of most members of a congregation, and it simply says, “Use me or lose me.” Everyone in life wishes to feel needed, important to the work. For this reason, everyone should be placed into the harvest so that he can pull together with others.

On occasions, visiting pastors will come to Christian Life Center to observe different ministries. Often, I have heard them say something like this: “If I had a man [speaking of the leader of a particular ministry] in my church of that ability, we could do great things.” Often, I reflect over the years and remember when that man got his starting the rough, without the skills, even without the vision. All he had was desire, but through training, counsel, guidance, and perseverance, over the years he has developed into a tremendous leader. Many pastors have within their congregations the potential for outstanding leadership, but they must develop it, which takes much patience, training, and faithfulness.

Several years ago, when our children were smaller my wife and I gave each of them chores to do—bringing in the wood, sweeping floors, washing dishes, vacuuming carpets. Sometimes at the end of the day we felt exhausted and even exasperated because it seemed as if overseeing the different delegated responsibilities required more effort than simply doing the work ourselves. The temptation was great to go ahead and do the

work without bothering the children; however, we had a responsibility to train our children so they could mature.

In years to come they would have jobs, responsibilities, and their own families. If we were to develop mature and well-rounded children, we had to teach and train them. Likewise, training team or personnel is not always easy. It requires much patience, effort, and perseverance. But over the long haul an outstanding leadership will develop that will enable the church to go much further than if the pastor had attempted to do everything himself.

In establishing a leadership team, the pastor must remember to look for certain qualities and ingredients in potential leaders. These are of great importance if he is to make the proper choice to enhance the organization.

First, the leader must be a God-fearing person, spiritually minded, kingdom minded. A leader must be able to submit to authority. He must have a teachable spirit, and he must be one who perseveres and follows through. A team leader must be a person who can work with others, who is people oriented. He must be able to admit to his failures and to give God the glory for his successes.

One of the most vital requirements is that a leader be a team player. The church of the living God does not need stars. Christ is our Star, and we are His team players. Together we can conquer, achieve, win the race, and succeed in anything we do.

In establishing the organization, the pastor must plan a well-balanced ministry throughout the entire church for the young, the old, the middle-aged. In developing the whole person, he must understand that people are spiritual beings, but they also have a physical part and an intellectual part. There must be balance in developing those who are a part of the kingdom of God.

In breaking down the different aspects of the total church organization, the pastor realizes that the church needs a very good Christian education department, a youth department, and an outreach department. Under outreach there could be numbers of teams and leaders – such as a home Bible study department, street ministry, ministry to the homeless, and ministry at the hospitals. The opportunities are endless when the church reaches into society to help those who are struggling. Care groups can be instituted into the church to minister to those in sorrow. Home services, which some call sheep- folds or cell groups, are important in larger assemblies. Groups for young

marrieds, single adults, and college ages can be organized.

Each of these ministries or departments must be carefully organized, and the leader of each ministry should be given a job description. Many times, the job description will grow with the ability of the leader. In many cases God increases the vision of that leader to take in a broader scope.

A job description is of importance because it is vital that leadership stay within a framework that will not infringe upon the territory of other ministries of the church. We are workers together, and to assure a feeling of togetherness we must all pull together within the framework of our own responsibilities.

### *C. Selection of personnel*

While I was assisting a pastor in setting up his team of leaders, he asked me, "What if I have people on my staff who are more qualified than I am?" My response to him was, "That is exactly what you want." For a pastor to have men and women who are specialists in certain areas does not discredit him at all. In fact, it is a credit to his ability as an administrator. If the president of a corporation believed that he could not have anyone on his staff or in the corporation who had more ability in certain areas than he, he would not go very far. But the president of a progressive corporation looks for the finest leadership he can find to head up the various divisions of the enterprise. Likewise, a pastor who wants to go forward with his church organization will look for the very finest men and women who are qualified in the areas that they will be leading.

Certain keys are of great importance in working with those who have tremendous ability. The one word that is of vital importance is *communication*. The pastor must communicate on a regular basis with those on his team. Most breakdowns and problems develop when there is a lack of communication.

The bottom line in choosing good leaders is to pray, seek the will of God, and carefully choose the team. If I must choose between ability and spirituality, it is imperative that I place spirituality above ability; however, it is possible to have both.

After the team leaders have been selected for the various ministries, they should meet together with the pastor *weekly* for the sake of communication, direction, and encouragement.

There has been a great deal of emphasis in the last several years on delegation. Delegation is no greater than the delegator. Everybody's business is nobody's business. An administrator may tell somebody to do something, but if he does not follow through, the responsibility always falls back upon the shoulders of the delegator.

Christian Life Center has a number of pastors on staff. Each Monday morning at 10:00 all pastors meet in the conference room for a one-to-two-hour session. I give them some direction and some inspirational thoughts, speaking to them from my heart, keeping the vision constantly before us. Then we take turns around the table, and each pastor gives a report of the ministries under his leadership. We also have a time for interacting with one another and perhaps helping each other with difficult decisions. Keeping a good feeling throughout the team lets one another know that we love and appreciate each other and that we are all working for one common objective to minister to the body of Christ and to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

A good pastor will constantly observe his congregation, looking for people with special gifts, abilities, and talents that can be developed and used for the kingdom. Much of the leadership in our churches is volunteer labor, a labor of love. For this reason we must spend a great deal of time in training and preparing our lay leaders bringing in special guest teachers, conducting seminars, going through instructions, and spending special time with individuals to help them develop their skills. If the church is to go forward, potential leaders need to be trained, and the pastor, as administrator, has this responsibility.

Often many people in the congregation are already skilled in needed areas. They work in various businesses or functions that qualify them for certain leadership positions in the church. The pastor takes this into consideration as he looks for leaders.

### **III. Business Meetings**

We are to be accountable to God as faithful stewards, men of good report, and examples to the church of God. (See I Corinthians 4:1-2; I Timothy 3:1-8; 4:12.) Romans 12:11 admonishes us not to be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Since God's business is the biggest business in all the world, we should carry out His business accurately, precisely, and in a businesslike manner. All things must be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40).

Many pastors are reluctant to carry out business meetings, but government is

scriptural. We are to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (I Peter 2:13). God has set government in the church (I Corinthians 12:28). The church was born at the conclusion of a prayer meeting in Acts 1-2, and after those days of prayer we know that there were 120 together in one room. Names and numbers are important to God. The process of business relates to every aspect of the church and pastor.

The church should do its business with diligence. The annual church business meeting is an exciting and important part of the administration, for it allows each entity or ministry to come forward and give a report to the body of believers. The reports of God's faithfulness, miracles of finance, and blessing should be a testimony of faith in practice.

Any meeting that is to be conducted in an appropriate manner requires preparation. The pastor should prayer- fully plan the business session, going over each aspect of the work, meeting with the team leaders so that they can give their reports to the church family. The pastor should give a "state-of-the-year" address to the church, giving them a progress report spiritually, numerically, and financially. A healthy church must and will be an informed church; nothing should be held back.

It is important to give these reports in an upbeat manner. Sometimes we must face our weaknesses and short- comings, even as the Bible itself tells us candidly of failures. The business meeting must be properly announced in advance and in accordance with the bylaws. Usually two weeks ahead of time the pastor should begin to announce the meeting to the church family, clearly stating the areas of concern that will be presented to the church. As a rule, the bylaws provide for the order of the business meeting.

The bylaws should state who is eligible to vote, and these qualifications must be followed carefully. It is wise to open the meeting with praise, worship, prayer, the reading of Scripture, and perhaps a comment from the pastor to set the tone for the meeting. Then the pastor should call the meeting to order by requesting the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting. After the reading of the minutes, he should entertain a motion to receive the minutes as read; the motion is then seconded and passed by a majority of the constituency. Following the reading of the minutes will come the reports of the various officers of the church. At the conclusion, the church should pass by majority vote a motion to approve the acts and decisions of the officers and the church board.

When we discuss church government, we can identify three basic types in local assemblies. Under the dictatorial type, the pastor controls everything. The democratic type goes to the other extreme and often evolves into laity control over the pulpit. The third type is theocratic, in which God is the chief shepherd and the pastor is the

undershepherd. (See I Peter 5:1-4.) It is neither dictatorial nor completely democratic; rather, the pastor is the leader under God, and he does answer to the members of the local church body.

Theocratic government seems to be the most scriptural. (See I Thessalonians 5:12-13; I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17.) As an example, under a theocratic government the pastor may make the appointments of the church board and bring those names before the congregation for ratification. He would do the same with committees appointed for special jobs. If the committee's task is to do research, it would bring its findings before the church board and later to the church body for final approval.

The Bible gives some guidelines for selection of deacons in the church. (See Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13.) Since the pastor is in the awesome position of making decisions and selecting church leaders, he must follow these guidelines. Wisdom is certainly vital in a member of the church board. Being full of the Holy Ghost, kingdom minded, and godly are also of great importance. A board member needs to be a man with a good reputation, a man whose life is above blemish.

The pastor needs men who will work with him. These men should not be rubber stamps or yes men but thinking men, men who will take a situation in hand and weigh out all sides before making a decision. And, yes, they should be men who have a great respect for and loyalty to their pastor.

A board of such men can be of great value to a pastor and church by helping to make wise decisions, marshaling church support for those decisions, and representing the church well in the community.

#### **IV. Building Programs**

When a church must expand its facility or relocate, a number of wheels need to be thrust into action. First, the church board needs to sit down and talk over the matter. Then, if the board decides to purchase new land, a research committee needs to look at the city map and explore the various areas of town—progressive areas. Location of the land is of tremendous importance. The research committee should look for property suitable for future development and accessible to the public with good exposure. They must also consider where the utilities and city services are, because bringing services from a long distance can be an expensive aspect of development. Finally, this property must be priced so that the congregation can afford the purchase.



The next phase of development in a building program is finances. A financial committee should be established for fund raising or stewardship. They should bring before the entire church body a program whereby people can make systematic contributions to the building program. The congregation's faith must be inspired. The men who lead the financial committee must be men of tremendous faith, loyalty, and steadfastness. They must be men who can inspire the entire body to give sacrificially so that the church can be built. The basic concept is "not equal giving"—for different members of the church receive different incomes but "equal sacrifice."

Finally, two other committees are of great importance, the architectural committee and the building committee. The architectural committee works hand in glove with the pastor in designing the facilities phase by phase. For example, perhaps a church is considering a three-phased program. A master plan must be designed so that an addition will not look like an afterthought. A building should be designed for beauty as well as maintenance. When considering the maintenance of the building the committee must consider the economics of operation. It should be energy conscious. Good planning by this committee will save money, result in an attractive and commodious structure, and provide for the future.

The last committee for a building program is the building committee itself. Many congregations use volunteer labor. In going this route, a superintendent must be selected to be responsible for the complete construction job. If the members of the church are not going to build the building themselves, then the job will be contracted. We sometimes refer to this as a turn-key job. For a turn-key job, the building committee must investigate different builders and contractors. They need to look at their work, visit some of the churches they have built, determine that they are of good report, and be careful in signing contracts. Any contracts should be viewed by legal counsel so that the church is protected.

The building committee should establish, with a contractor or the job superintendent, what is referred to as a "critical path," which takes the project step by step from the excavation to the digging of the footings to the laying of the foundation to the rough plumbing, rough structure, rough wiring, the roof, and on to completion. The critical path must be followed as closely as possible.

Building programs are very challenging and can be a great strain upon the church family. For this reason, the pastor must keep the people encouraged. If the members of the congregation are doing the building themselves, they need to take time out from

building for a refreshing and spiritual renewal to encourage the body. Then they can attack the job again and give it all they have.

## **V.Christian Education**

Churches with a strong arm of Christian education training, teaching, and indoctrinating are churches that will stand the tests of time. From the very beginning the apostolic church realized the importance of a good educational system. After Pentecost, the apostles continued to teach the Christian converts (Acts 2:42). Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch to teach the Word of the Lord (Acts 15:35). Paul had sat at the feet of Gamaliel and was skilled in the teaching processes of the best Jewish schools (Acts 22:3). Paul and Silas had to do much teaching on their missionary journeys in order to present the Christian interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The director of Christian education must be qualified to head up the entire educational system of the local church. Unlike other departments of the church, the Christian education department is an instructional division that must educate a diversity of ages, from infants through the elderly. It requires broad understanding to select teachers compatible with the different age groups and then train them in these areas of education. Different teachers will have different responsibilities determined by the age group they teach.

The director must provide aid, instruction, seminars, and constant motivation. Under his direction will be the departmental superintendents and secretaries. All child evangelism should fall under the category of Christian education; most churches refer to this area as children's church. It is a tremendous challenge to develop and control the Sunday school division of a church.

In the last several years there has been, in some cases, a leaning away from Sunday school; however, the churches that are progressive and steadfast in growth have retained very aggressive Sunday school departments. Their success is partly due to a leader in the Christian education field who is faithful in his work.

# Chapter 7

## Church Finances

by Ken Gurley

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- I. The Pastor and Church Finances
  - A. Delegated authority
  - B. Authority and security
  - C. The pastor's financial leadership
- II. Financial Management for the Church
  - A. Cash control
  - B. Example: cash control in the church
  - C. Bookkeeping
  - D. Budgeting
  - E. Reporting
- III. Fund Raising
- Conclusion

## I. The Pastor and Church Finances

Today's pastor assumes a vital role in the church's administration. According to an extensive study by Samuel Blizzard, a professor of sociology at Pennsylvania State University, the average pastor spends at least forty percent of his time in administration. Another survey indicates that the pastor's burden of administration increases proportionately with the size of the church. It is small wonder that the chief source of pastoral burnout is church administration.

Church administration includes planning, organizing, motivating, coordinating, and controlling. While each of these functions is crucial, the controlling or directing of church finances becomes of paramount concern to the pastor.

Scripturally, the pastor has the oversight of the church finances. The Holy Ghost makes the pastor the *overseer* of the local church (Acts 20:28). As an overseer, he is the *steward*, or manager of the goods entrusted by God to the local church (Titus 1:7). The early church's offerings were given to the apostles as custodians of God's funds (Acts 4:35, 37).

### A. *Delegated authority*

As the early church experienced growth, the apostles found themselves unable to devote their time to preaching and prayer, so they delegated some financial responsibilities to seven men of honest report (Acts 6:2-4). These seven men appear to be the forerunners of the deacons mentioned in several of Paul's letters (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8, 12).

The deacons' authority for handling church business is delegated by the pastor or overseer. While it is comforting to seek the counsel of trusted men in managing the church's finances, the pastor remains ultimately responsible. A deacon, in the purest sense, is a servant to the congregation in the areas of business that the pastor delegate.

In the recent dissolution of renowned national ministries, it is interesting to note whom the public holds responsible for financial excesses. While a grand jury might scrutinize the ministry's treasurer, controller, and board of directors, the public holds one man accountable the pastor.

This same principle of accountability is seen in the local church as well. A true pastor

and shepherd of a flock cannot expect to abdicate or delegate his ultimate responsibility as overseer of the church. Accountability starts and stops at the pastor's desk.

The pastor's relationship with the church is based on simple trust. In the area of church finance, the pastor can impair the church's confidence in him through a lavish lifestyle, exorbitant expenditures, and sloppy church administration. On the other hand, the pastor has a unique ability to enhance his position of trust through careful stewardship of church finance. This, in turn, enhances the possibilities of church growth.

### *B. Authority and security*

Some churches have traditionally operated their finances without any pastoral input or oversight. While this system might evolve from the highest of motivations, it often leaves the pastor feeling extremely frustrated by having little or no input into the financial operations of the church.

Growth is stymied in many instances by possibly well-meaning church secretaries and board members who feel the pastor has little if any authority over church finances. With no financial authority, the pastor is subject to the whims and wishes of those who might not have the church's continued growth at heart.

Conversely, in other churches, some pastors take little thought of the congregations' wishes in the area of finances. Too often pastors steer churches into substantial mortgages only to resign the church for another position, leaving the church to meet this obligation. At the best, this "strong man" style of administration can result in hard feelings.

It is possible for the pastor to provide fiscal leadership in the church and still secure the input, cooperation, and approval of the church or church board. The Local Church Government in the Manual of the United Pentecostal Church International provides the pastor both authority and security. Article III, Section 6 describes the pastor's authority in this vital area of church finance: "He shall have the oversight and superintendence of all interests of the church and of all departments of its work, both spiritual and temporal."

The safety of securing the insight and approval of the church is found in the same document (Article III, Section 5): the church board, "together with the pastor, shall care for the business affairs of the assembly, submitting all transactions to the assembly for its approval or disapproval."

In selecting a form of church administration, it is worthwhile to consider this form of local church government. It provides specific procedures that give security to both the pastor and the church, without infringing on the pastor's ability to provide financial leadership.

### *C. The pastor's financial leadership*

When the pastor assumes his scriptural role as overseer of the church finances, offerings will generally increase. The pastor can complement the work of a church board or church treasurer by leading in several key areas. *The pastor is to be the first giver in each offering.* This might seem inconsequential, but it is very important. The order of giving should be as follows: the pastor, others on the platform, and then the congregation. As the ushers receive the offering from those on the platform, confidence is generated in the hearts of those on the pew.

When the pastor leads in giving, others will naturally follow the example.

The pastor should also be the first to pledge or sacrifice in any fund-raising drive. In this, the pastor demonstrates his commitment to the mission of the local church. As the flock follows the shepherd, so the church will pattern its giving after that of its pastor.

*The pastor should correspond periodically with contributors.*

When a church member gives an offering, he gives it to the Lord. He is not giving per se to the church, pastor, or church treasurer. Consequently, it is healthy for each church member to receive a periodic statement of his contributions to the Lord.

Ideally, each contributor should receive a statement of his contributions every three months. Attached to the front of this statement should be a warm letter of thanks from the pastor for the sacrificial giving. Whether the pastor reviews a church member's contribution report is a matter of personal preference. When consistent communication of this nature takes place, it not only provides for timely detection of errors in posting but it also builds trust in the pastor's oversight of the church.

*The pastor reviews purchases and expenditures.*

The pastor should approve all anticipated purchases above a predetermined dollar amount. It is surprising how much less is spent when people know the pastor must

approve a purchase. This is good stewardship.

Not only should the pastor review such purchases, but he should also approve any check written in excess of a predetermined dollar amount. This can be accomplished through either a dual signature on the face of a check or through a written check request procedure. A proper check request procedure is highly efficient.

A check request form contains the following information: the check's payee, the amount, the fund to be drafted, the item to be purchased, a place for the church treasurer to acknowledge that funds are available, and a place for the pastor to approve the expense. The church's financial procedure would then prohibit the church treasurer from writing the check until the pastor initialed his approval.

How does a check request procedure serve the church? It provides the pastor with a knowledge of important transactions. Nothing of substance is done without his knowledge or approval. It gives also the church treasurer additional security. This system relieves much anxiety from those responsible for receiving and disbursing the church's assets.

*The pastor conducts an annual business meeting.*

An annual business meeting provides the pastor an excellent time to conduct much of the vital business of the church. In addition to the ratification of board members and department heads, the pastor can call for a financial report.

A pastor who refuses to provide his congregation with at least a basic report of church receipts and disbursements is in a perilous situation. Besides the problem of many federal and state laws that require openness of records, the pastor faces a greater problem: the morale and confidence of givers are destroyed through a lack of proper reporting. Thus, offerings are diminished, and the church's mission is jeopardized.

In this meeting, the pastor can assure the members that the church has exercised good stewardship in the use of their contributions. The pastor can confidently report that the money received for a specific purpose was disbursed for the same. Additional confidence is generated among the members, and offerings usually increase. The pastor can exercise considerable liberty in the conduct of a business meeting. The treasurer can read financial reports, pointing out anything that might be irregular or easily misunderstood. Questions regarding the financial reports can be heard in this meeting or afterwards in private.

Rather than being a negative experience, the meeting can build trust and present the church's goals for the forthcoming year.

## **II. Financial Management for the Church**

The proper management of a church's finances includes the recording, classifying, analyzing, and reporting of monetary transactions. The pastor needs to obtain help in this area from someone who is familiar with accounting procedures for churches. Just as pastors find that many tax specialists know little concerning the unique tax status of a minister, it is equally true that many accountants know little about the unique circumstances involved in church finances.

The unique circumstances in church finances are varied. First, contributors are extremely sensitive about the need for privacy concerning the amount and frequency of their donations. Second, money has been the cause of much dissension in churches. Third, the persons responsible for handling the church finances are usually volunteers, possibly appointed by a previous administration. Fourth, formal nonprofit accounting procedures often create reports that are confusing to most churches.

Nevertheless, the unique nature of a church does not preclude the possibility of having adequate financial management. Three general areas of financial management are worthy of consideration and further study: cash control, bookkeeping, and budgeting.

### *A. Cash control*

One of the major functions of financial management. To secure the monetary assets of the church, access to these funds should be limited. Only a few people should be selected to handle cash, write checks, purchase items, or encumber a church financially. The purpose for this is not to question the integrity of the church member but simply to secure the monetary assets. The goal is to have as few people as possible to handle the finances, while still maintaining a proper separation of duties.

Good financial management also calls for a proper system of checks and balances. Generally, the person who makes the deposits should not record contributions. Likewise, the person who signs the checks should not reconcile the bank statement. Duties that could lead to collusion and fraud should be separated and assigned to different individuals. In smaller churches, this may prove impractical. However, as a church grows the separation of duties protects the church's assets and the reputations of the people involved in



finances. Additionally, it allows for greater opportunities to share the responsibilities of handling the church's finances.

The proper safekeeping of funds is of great interest to the pastor and church leadership. All funds should be deposited as quickly as possible. With the exception of small expenses that are well documented through a petty cash system, no bills should be paid in cash. The church may also provide fidelity bonds for all of the people responsible for handling its monetary assets.

### *B. Example: cash control in the church*

To illustrate proper cash control procedures, let us consider the hypothetical case of the Smithville United Pentecostal Church, particularly noting the controls regarding the financial assets of the church. These reflect good stewardship and accountability.

The pastor of Smithville UPC encourages members to use offering envelopes. These envelopes provide a place to write the donor's name, the type and amount of offering given, and the total offering inside the envelope. Offering envelopes are especially useful if cash and not a check is given. Smithville's church treasurer keeps all offering envelopes for at least five years, knowing that they serve as vital documents for verifying contributions in case of an IRS audit.

From the moment the offering plates are passed at Smithville UPC there is a distinct separation of financial duties. After the offering is received, two of the ushers retire to a private area to perform an initial count of the offering. They provide the total of this initial count to the pastor and to the church treasurer.

The church treasurer sometimes makes the deposit immediately after service if he has the time. If not, he places the funds in the church safe. Before the church had a safe, he placed the money in a locking bank bag and deposited it in the night depository of the First National Bank of Smithville. The following morning, he retrieved the bank bag and prepared the deposit. He explained to the pastor any difference in the deposit's total and the ushers' initial count.

Many years ago, Smithville's pastor recommended that only a few people be authorized to disburse church funds. At the time, the church had fourteen checking accounts one for every major department and activity of the church. This meant numerous individuals were responsible for signing checks, reconciling bank state-ments,

and making reports.

In due course, the church reduced these checking accounts to a single account. Through proper record-keeping procedures, the fourteen major departments each have a separate fund within this single account. When the department head needs a check, he completes a simple check request form, which must be reviewed by the pastor prior to the church treasurer's issuing a check. The completed check request form is attached to its corresponding invoice, receipt, statement, or other documentation and then filed.

All bills at Smithville are paid by check. This procedure provides an accurate and permanent record of disbursements. Since all cash is deposited, no one is reimbursed from the actual cash received in the offering. A petty cash box, which keeps a balance of one hundred dollars, is kept in the church office to provide for postage and other incidental expenses. Receipts for these expenses are periodically tallied, and a check is written to "Cash" to replenish the petty cash to its proper balance.

Each year, the Smithville church treasurer updates a report of the church's assets. This report contains an inventory of the major church assets and includes their description, cost, location, and date of purchase. In case of a fire or other disaster, a copy of this report is kept in a safe deposit box located off the church's premises.

### ***C. Bookkeeping***

Another area of financial management is bookkeeping. There are many excellent resource materials on this subject. Perhaps the classic in this field is *The Complete Handbook of Church Accounting* by Manfred Holck. A suggested recordkeeping system for church finances is available from the UPCI Church Administration.

An adequate bookkeeping system includes a cash receipts journal and a cash disbursements journal. The cash receipts journal classifies the funds received as Tithes, General Offerings, Sunday School, and so on. The cash disbursements journal classifies the funds disbursed as Office Supplies, Salaries, Church Note, and so on. In the simplest church bookkeeping systems, the church's checkbook register often serves as both the cash receipts and cash disbursements journal. Yet, in most cases, the checkbook is insufficient to properly classify and organize receipts and disbursements.

A detailed treatment of this subject would require a book, complete with debits, credits, and spreadsheets. However, there are a few vital signs that indicate the health of

a church's bookkeeping system. Let us briefly discuss them.

*Financial records should be accurate.*

A healthy record keeping system will be accurate. While it may not be complex or sophisticated, at the very least, a bookkeeping system should accurately portray the church's financial transactions. Moreover, the bookkeeping system should reveal errors in a timely manner.

Even if a pastor has little expertise in bookkeeping, he can examine two key bookkeeping areas to check the health of the church's system: the individual contribution ledgers and the reconciliation of the bank statement. The degree of accuracy in these areas will generally help reveal the soundness of the accounting procedures.

Individual contribution ledgers are the summary of an individual's contributions on a weekly basis. The accuracy of the church treasurer's posting to these ledgers can be checked on a random basis, comparing the offering envelopes to the ledger. The church treasurer should be able to reconcile any selected weekly deposit to the sum total of the amounts posted on all contribution records for that week. The church treasurer should also be able to reconcile the weekly deposit to the ushers' initial counts of the offerings for that week.

The monthly bank statement reconciliation provides a handy starting point for verifying the accuracy of both receipts and disbursements. The total deposits in the bank statement can be compared to the amounts recorded in the checkbook and the cash receipts journal. The reconciliation should also reveal any errors in the disbursing of funds. The disbursements can be compared to their original check requests and invoices to ensure proper coding and authorization.

*Financial reports should be understandable.*

A bookkeeping system should generate internal reports that are understandable and inclusive. The pastor should be able to comprehend quickly and easily any financial report prepared by the church treasurer. Some reports are either too complicated or too incomplete to give a clear picture of the church's financial activity.

A summary report is always worthwhile. This report gives the balance of cash in every fund (i.e., general, building fund, and so on) at the beginning of the year. Next to these numbers are the receipts for a certain period of time, followed by the disbursements for

the same period. Finally, an ending balance is listed, which is computed by subtracting the disbursement column from the total of the beginning balance and receipt columns.

Detailed reports for each fund can also be prepared. Each report has the beginning cash balance, followed by a summary listing of the various types of receipts and disbursements posted to this fund, thus arriving at an ending balance. The items placed on this report are extracted from the cash receipts journal and cash disbursements journal.

On rare occasions, a church will need to prepare a balance sheet. The balance sheet reflects the assets and liabilities of the church, with the difference being the equity or net worth. Generally, any financial reports that are necessary for financial institutions should be reviewed or audited by a certified public accountant.

*Financial reports should be timely.*

A vital sign of a healthy bookkeeping system is its ability to produce timely information. Perhaps the major complaint of pastors in the area of church record keeping is the inability to obtain timely reports.

To make good decisions regarding the growth of a church, the church leadership must be aware of the church's current financial status. An attractive feature of many computerized accounting systems is the ability to expedite reports so that better decisions can be made. There is no reasonable excuse for habitual tardiness in the preparation of financial reports. By the end of January, all the preceding year's reports should be finalized and distributed. These include the individual contribution ledgers, the year-end financial reports, and the federal and state payroll reports.

#### ***D. Budgeting***

As a church experiences either growth or financial distress, budgeting becomes a higher priority. Budgeting, or the process of forecasting receipts and disbursements, provides some interesting benefits.

*Anticipation versus reaction.*

Effective budgeting calls for a church to leave the knee-jerk, reactionary mode and enter into an anticipatory mode. Rather than saying, "We will cross that bridge when we come to it," budgeting says, "Let's start building some bridges. We will need them soon."

Anticipating tomorrow's needs causes some fairly thoughtful and creative solutions. The solution of the moment, although expedient, is usually more expensive than one that is foreseen and planned.

*Comparison.*

By budgeting both receipts and disbursements, a unique tool becomes available to safeguard a church's assets. The ability to compare actual receipts and expenses with budgeted ones is effective in locating bookkeeping errors. For example, if a church budgeted three thousand dollars for office supplies and spent five thousand, this disparity will prompt a question. Proper budgeting enhances the ability to ask the right questions.

*Goal orientation.*

Finally, most people are goal oriented. A church tends to reach toward predetermined goals. Without goals, a church drifts. If the goal or budget for Sheaves for Christ is set and communicated, the youth are more apt to achieve it. This process of budgeting complements the activities of each department within a local church.

### *E. Reporting*

The communication of financial data is crucial to removing all sorts of misunderstanding. Outside of reporting to financial institutions, there are two major recipients of the church's financial reports: the church itself and the government.

*The church.*

As discussed previously, the church's financial data should be communicated to the church. The church's bylaws determine much of the formal procedure for releasing this information. However, no church bylaw should contravene state or federal laws regarding finances.

Openness in the reporting of finances to the church is the best approach. While certain sensitive areas such as salaries or benefits might only be reviewed and approved by the church board, it is reasonable for church members to have access to as much financial information as possible. Christian stewardship is open for examination.

An annual summary of his contributions should be sent to every church member. This summary should go out no later than the end of January for the preceding year to allow the contributor adequate time to prepare his tax return. Noncash contributions such as property should not appear on the contribution summary; rather, a separate schedule should list them. To determine the proper method of handling gifts of property and services, a tax professional should be consulted.

#### *The government.*

A pastor should verify that the church treasurer is trained in preparing various reports to state and federal tax agencies. All employees of the church should receive a W-2. The church should withhold the appropriate taxes and file quarterly reports with the Internal Revenue Service summarizing this data. Self-employed individuals should receive a 1099-MISC from the church for their compensation. Mistakes in the area of employee withholding and reporting cause most of the problems between churches and taxing authorities.

Other reports may be needed, such as those for federal and state unemployment, worker's compensation, and so forth. Since the laws regarding this are in a constant state of change, the church treasurer should keep himself fully abreast of governmental reporting requirements.

Some churches get involved in businesses that generate profits unrelated to their tax exempt status. As a result, these churches may be subject to state sales and use taxes as well as federal income tax. This unrelated income would require the filing of additional reports. Consultation with a tax professional may be necessary if a church is considering any sort of business outside the traditional scope of a church's ministry.

### **III. Fund Raising**

Certain funds received by a church should be treated differently from ordinary offerings. When a church raises funds for a certain minister, project, or function, this money is restricted for that use.

Funds are often raised for the endorsed projects of the United Pentecostal Church International such as Christmas For Christ, Sheaves For Christ, Mothers Memorial, Harvestime, Save Our Children, Partners in Missions, Compassion Services, Bible colleges, and so on. Monies raised for a national, district, or local program like these

should not be utilized to repair an air conditioner, furnace, or vehicle. Ethics demands that funds raised for a specific purpose be spent for that purpose.

While awaiting disbursement, these designated funds should not be commingled with other funds. Failure to maintain the integrity of designated funds could not only cause contributors to lose trust in the church leadership, but it could possibly have legal ramifications. For example, the Federal Communications Commission is very active in investigating funds solicited via the broadcasting medium that are not used for their advertised purpose. And displeased contributors could be successful in a lawsuit against the church or its leadership.

Raising funds for particular needs can often be conducted outside of the church. Annual bazaars, gift wrapping booths, and craft sales expose the church's goods and services to those outside the local church. This method of fund raising can meet a congregation's needs without jeopardizing its normal giving patterns.

It is becoming increasingly popular in certain circles to use professional fund-raising companies for major projects such as a new sanctuary, educational wing, or family life center. These companies usually have a coordinated pledge program with attractive brochures and themes that generate enthusiasm for the project.

However, several things should be kept in mind in this area. First, the church should recognize that there is a fairly hefty fee involved for such services. Ordinarily, this is payable up front, prior to the money coming in. Therefore, the reputation and soundness of the fundraising company should be carefully considered.

Another factor to consider is that the money is being generated from the church's members and those associated with the church. Some people will resist giving to something that appears to be slick and overly professional and prefer giving sacrificially to a simple, heartfelt appeal.

Finally, most of these fund-raising companies are geared for churches that are accustomed to formal budgeting and annual commitments on the part of their members. This is foreign to most United Pentecostal congregations. Consequently, it is a more arduous task for them to achieve success in such an endeavor.

In considering the use of such a company, the pastor should involve as many people as possible in the decision-making process. This will provide for both a better decision and greater commitment to the overall project.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Since church administration occupies at least forty percent of a pastor's schedule, it seems wise for each pastor to familiarize himself with various manual and computerized bookkeeping systems. Knowledge in this field can prove invaluable to the pastor's role as steward of the local church.

While Bible colleges rightly emphasize theology, doctrine, and homiletics, it is necessary to place due emphasis on the vital areas of church finance and administration. In sectional, district, and national ministerial conferences, some continuing education should be offered in this field as well.

As steward of the church of God, a pastor must be thoroughly equipped in the area of church finances.



# Chapter 8

## Preaching and Teaching

by David F. Gray

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### I. To Preach or to Teach?

- A. Teach while you preach
- B. "Apt to teach"

### II. Study and Preparation

- A. Mining the gold of the Word
- B. Value of daily devotional study
- C. A plan for study
- D. Proceeding from the known to the unknown
- E. Using resource materials
- F. The minister's personal library
- G. Attending conferences and seminars
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### III. Delivering the Message

- A. An ambassador for Christ
- B. Avoiding annoying mannerisms
- C. Bringing the message to a climax
- D. Goals to aim for
- E. The Lord must confirm His Word

## I. To Preach or to Teach?

As we have seen, the Pentecostal minister is a God called individual. “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God” (Hebrews 5:4). This call, whether it is to be a pastor, an evangelist, or a missionary, of necessity involves preaching and teaching the Word of God. This should have a very large place in the work of the minister, and a correspondingly large proportion of his time should therefore be used in the preparation of sermons and lessons from God’s Word.

Preaching and teaching seem to be stressed about equally in the New Testament. Although in the ministry of Jesus the Bible records that He preached twenty-one times and taught forty-six times (more than twice as much), yet it often speaks of Jesus as both preaching and teaching. (See Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 11:1; Luke 20:1.) The apostles likewise both preached and taught (Acts 4:2; 5:42; 14:21; 15:35; 28:31).

The apostle Paul equated the two ministries in his life: “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity” (I Timothy 2:7). (See also II Timothy 1:11.)

The great commission instructed the followers of Jesus to teach in order to make disciples. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). Yet Paul declared that preaching was the means by which salvation would be affected. “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Corinthians 1:21).

It is evident, therefore, that both preaching and teaching are essential to an apostolic ministry, and the well-rounded minister will develop a ministry in both areas.

### A. *Teach while you preach*

Many successful ministers incorporate some teaching into every sermon. In fact, at least one kind of preaching is actually teaching; it is called expositional preaching.

Preaching that does not include teaching of the Word of God at least to some extent often degenerates into an exercise in histrionics or flowery oratory without real substance.

Excitement may be generated, but it has been termed “empty calorie preaching.” To give a well-rounded, spiritually healthy diet to the people requires a Bible-centered preaching and teaching ministry.

### *B. “Apt to teach”*

While preaching is vital and most ministers start out primarily in the preaching ministry, God’s Word holds up as a standard for the bishop (or pastor) that he must also be “apt to teach” (I Timothy 3:2). Ephesians 4:11 speaks of the pastor-teacher. (There is only one definite article in Greek to cover both words, which suggests that these two functions are to be fulfilled by the same individual.) The divine order of the ministry as given in I Corinthians 12:28 puts both the prophets (divinely anointed preachers) and the teachers of God’s Word ahead of the more spectacular operations in the church such as the working of miracles and gifts of healing. While these are to be desired, the first and highest calling of God to His ministers is that of preaching and teaching the Word of God.

## **II. Study and Preparation**

Some ministers may be singularly endowed with an ability to speak freely, volubly, and clearly. This may be a natural talent that has been crudely termed the gift of gab. Those who are thus blessed could be tempted to laxity in study and preparation because they find it easy to speak without so doing. But a truly scriptural teaching ministry is not merely the product of a glib tongue but of hours of intensive study. One cannot be the minister God wants without expending much time in study and preparation. Study habits must be developed and become a lifelong pattern of living. Material must be gathered, brought together, sorted out, organized, and assembled. Scripture references, thoughts, illustrations, quotations, comparison of various translations, and meaning of words must be dug out.

### *A. Mining the gold of the Word*

The minister must mine nuggets of truth out of the great “mother lode” of God’s Word. To do so takes much time in intensive research and study. Therefore, he must establish study habits, habits that will be lifelong, for study should never cease as long as he lives.

The mine of God’s Word is inexhaustible. But the riches do not yield themselves to the

lazy or impatient student. The joy of obtaining the treasure far outweighs the time and effort expended in the search.

### *B. Value of daily devotional study*

It is important for ministers to include in their daily devotion and personal walk with God the reading of several Bible chapters every day in addition to prayer, meditation, and communion with the Lord. This is not for the purpose of obtaining sermon material but for their own personal enrichment and close relationship in their walk with God. Nevertheless, as time goes by, the chapters they have read and meditated upon for devotional purposes become a vast storehouse of resource material stored away in the treasury of the heart, and as they open themselves up to the Spirit for a message for the people, the Holy Spirit brings to their memory the things they have learned and stored away. A daily time of devotion pays rich dividends.

### *C. A plan for study*

A plan some pastors have used to good advantage is to spend every morning after their devotion in intensive study and sermon preparation; every morning, that is, except Sunday and their day of rest and relaxation (some call it their family day). In this way they give themselves to study while their minds are fresh and sharp and uncluttered by the administrative and pastoral problems of the church. These things can be taken care of in the afternoons. To use every morning for study and sermon preparation is not too much if a pastor has a full schedule of two sermons and two Bible studies each week. I have found that it takes a minimum of three or four hours of intensive preparation for each message or Bible study in order to be adequately prepared.

This plan is also a good one for evangelists. While often it is possible to preach the same sermon in several different revivals, each time it should be so worked upon that the Holy Ghost can apply it to the particular need of the church where it is preached. No two churches or congregations are identical with identical needs. It is vital for the evangelist to understand that he cannot merely preach the same sermons everywhere he goes. In order to retain his anointing and freshness he, just as the pastor, must continually search and obtain new materials and preach new sermons. He should have set times of study and sermon preparation just as the pastor does.

#### *D. Proceeding from the known to the unknown*

Oratory, enthusiasm, sheer decibel volume, or pulpit antics can never take the place of solid Bible content or a properly organized presentation. One of the basic laws of teaching is that we must proceed from the known to the unknown. The hearer must have a known point of reference in his understanding on which to base the lesson he is to learn.

To illustrate, a mason in building a brick wall cannot lay the top tier of bricks first. He must start at the bottom, establish a firm foundation, and then lay the first row of bricks. He places tier upon tier, each upon the row laid before it, until finally he reaches the top tier. Then he can lay the capstone. So, a Bible lesson (or a sermon) must be built, leading the hearers a step at a time from the known in their lives into areas of truth with which they are not familiar.

Jesus used parables to do this. He used familiar things or occurrences to lead the hearers into spiritual truths with which they were unfamiliar.

#### *E. Using resource materials*

It is not always easy to make vital spiritual truths understandable. And so the minister must, as it were, take his hearers by the hand and lead them a step at a time into the wonders that he sees in God's Word. To do so he needs resource materials he has gleaned from many sources: from books, newspapers, magazines; from incidents in daily life; from personal experiences; from stories in the lives of others; from nature, industry, family living, news items. In fact, he can glean materials from any and all of the encounters and experiences of life.

#### *F. The minister's personal library*

The minister should surround himself with reference materials of all kinds. He should endeavor to build a library of books, not merely books enjoyable to read, but reference works, dictionaries, concordances, commentaries, encyclopedias, various translations, books of quotes and illustrations, Bible studies, and sermons. He can use these books innumerable times. They are books of inestimable value from which the minister can glean materials to help the listeners grasp the teaching of Word of God that the preacher endeavors to present.

### *G. Attending conferences and seminars*

It is good for the minister to attend conferences, conventions, retreats, and seminars. They will broaden his outlook, enlarge his boundaries, and help him to be more effective in his ministry as well as give him more materials for his sermons.

### *H. God's Word must be preeminent*

In preparing his sermons, the preacher must always be aware that he is God's messenger and that he must preach God's Word and not his own ideas and philosophical leanings, no matter how good they may be. Christ must be lifted up; He must receive the preeminence in all things. The minister should not start out with an idea and then search for a text for his idea, but he should start with a Scripture-based truth to present and then seek for ways and methods, illustrations, and resource material to present it.

We can identify two basic types of preaching: expositional or expository preaching, in which the preacher explains and expounds upon a scriptural verse or passage, and topical or textual preaching, in which the preacher speaks on a single theme or topic taken from a text or several texts.

Expositional preaching and teaching is to be preferred above topical preaching although topical preaching is more common. In either case, there are certain pitfalls to avoid. The message must present a truth taught by the Scriptures. The preacher must never make applications not warranted by Scripture. Nor should he take a text out of its context and make it mean something other than the context indicates. In that sense, all preaching should be expository.

The preacher must always keep in mind that he is a spokesman for God and must "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). To do so, he must "preach the word," not merely high sounding phrases or flights of oratory (II Timothy 4:2).

## **III. Delivering the Message**

The delivery of a message may be likened to a freight train composed of many cars loaded with materials. The words of the message are linked together as the cars of the train. Words are vehicles of thought, and as they are strung together into sentences, thoughts are conveyed to the hearers. The presentation must be made in such a way that the hearers will receive them. The attitude, the spirit, the very demeanor of the preacher,

his expressions, and even his appearance and posture all contribute to or detract from the effectiveness of his message.

#### *A. An ambassador for Christ*

It would be unseemly for a minister to conduct a funeral wearing sport clothes or a fishing outfit. So, it is inappropriate for a preacher in the pulpit who bears a message from God to act like a clown or a court jester. There is a certain decorum to be maintained, an awareness of the high and holy mission which he is called to fulfill. A minister in Scripture is termed an “ambassador for Christ” (II Corinthians 5:20), God’s agent representing Him in every way. This does not mean the minister is to be stiff and stodgy, unbending, and aloof. Far from it, he is to be loving, warm, tender, respectful, honorable, Christ-like, and eager to help, uplift, comfort, guide, assist, and minister. His demeanor, his bearing, and even his message should convey all these qualities to the hearers.

The method of presentation should likewise harmonize with this concept. He should display no arrogance, no pride, no threats, and no carnal attitudes. If he must mete out discipline, generally it is better to do so privately and not from the pulpit. If he feels that it must be given to the entire congregation from the pulpit, he should do so with care, with understanding, and most of all with love, and then only after a long period of earnest prayer.

#### *B. Avoiding annoying mannerisms*

Avoid annoying mannerisms such as continually buttoning and unbuttoning your coat, playing with your tie or the microphone, jingling coins in your pocket, or teetering back and forth. Try to keep from audibly gasping after each word or sentence. Do not nervously keep looking up or down or close your eyes while preaching. It is better to look directly at your congregation or slightly over their heads. Use a well-modulated tone of voice that can either be raised or lowered as the situation calls for it. Avoid a monotonous drone or an unnatural pitch of your voice. Use inflections and expression in your speaking, and above all, be natural. Let every member of the congregation feel that you are speaking directly to him or her.

#### *C. Bringing the message to a climax*

A young preacher is apt to think he must start out as loudly as he can and continue at the top of his voice to the end. It is better to start out slowly, bringing the people along

with him, increasing in intensity as the message progresses. He should always have additional volume in reserve for emphasis when needed. As he makes points, he should drive them home with fervor; then he should drop back when he starts on his next point, bringing it up to another and higher climax.

His final point should be the highest of his message. He should arrive there with a crescendo and stop at that high point. While his hearers are moved is the time to make the altar call. It is a mistake to drag the message out after the high point. A salesman sometimes talks his prospects into a sale but by continuing he talks them out of it. So, a preacher or teacher must know how to close his message without dragging it out and allowing the interest to dwindle away.

#### *D. Goals to aim for*

The minister must impart something of eternal value to his audience. He should have a definite goal in mind to accomplish through the sermon or lesson he is bringing the people. Is it to teach some spiritual truth? To inspire them to a higher and holier plane of living? To motivate them to a more active involvement in witnessing. To get them more spiritually minded in the midst of this material age? To instill in them eternal values? To give them a sense of partnership with God in faithfully executing their stewardship? To promote unity and love among the people? To increase their faith to believe God for a supernatural move of the Holy Spirit? To help them trust the Lord for their daily needs? To warn them of dangers and false teachings that would cause them to be shipwrecked? To establish them in the faith and give them a love for the fundamental doctrines?

Or the goal could be an evangelistic one, to lead the sinner to repentance. Or to reach the backslider with assurance that he can be restored. Or to help people see the necessity of repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Or to open to them the Scriptures relative to the oneness of God in Jesus Christ.

The preacher or teacher should have a definite goal rather than dish out a mishmash of random thoughts that has no goal or purpose other than to fill up the time. It is more effective to take a careful aim at an identifiable target than to scatter shots at random.

#### *E. The Lord must confirm His Word*

A message must be soaked in prayer before it is delivered. A consciousness of the living presence of the Lord is a vital necessity to an apostolic ministry. It must be said of



us today as in the days of the apostles: “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20).

This is the way God has designed His church to function and to grow. Only as we allow God to work with us in our preaching and our teaching can we call ourselves true ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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## Chapter 9

### Special Services

by Clark E. Lott, Sr.

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#### I. Weddings

- A. Qualifications and legalities
- B. General considerations
- C. Typical procedures

#### II. Funerals

- A. Helpful hints
- B. General instructions
- C. Typical examples

#### III. Baptisms

#### IV. Dedications and Other Special Services

- A. Baby dedication
- B. Dedication of a church edifice

#### V. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to brief the minister and pastor on duties and privileges in the area of weddings, funerals, baptisms, dedications, and other special occasions. There are many handbooks and other aids to help ministers in these incidental duties, but of course every man's ministry and each occasion merits personal input and attention.

Many professions relate to society's needs, but none so effectively relates to the individual's needs as does the ministry. The minister holds the serious and sober honor and privilege of sharing in the sorrow as well as the joy that people experience in life.

It is difficult to cover the subjects of this chapter comprehensively and at the same time make it small enough to be serviceable. While some subjects had to be omitted, it is hoped that the seeds of thought expressed will make the task of each minister a bit lighter and more pleasant, stirring and stimulating greater, more devoted service to God and His people.

## **I. Weddings**

One of the most important times in any two people's lives is when they enter into the legal and divine institution of marriage. Marriage is meant to be a lasting union of two people's lives and an imperishable faith experience.

### *A. Qualifications and legalities*

The minister would do his calling credit to interrogate both parties whom he intends to join in marriage, so as to feel certain he is proper both with God and civil authorities in such a serious matter. When people try to evade the law or a scriptural teaching, they are likely to distort the truth with the minister. Some states allow the clergyman to obtain a certified statement from the parties. If there are doubts, the minister should probably decline the request to join in marriage the two people.

Every minister should have personal convictions regarding the qualifications and questions essential to a marriage, and he should live up to those fundamental principles. People, as a whole, respect the man of God who stands by his convictions in such matters. He should never be intimidated for taking such stands of faith according to Scripture.

The civil laws vary in countries concerning who is qualified lawfully to solemnize a marriage. In some nations only an official marriage magistrate can do so. In the United States of America, judges of courts, justices of the peace, mayors of cities, governors of

states, and ordained clergymen of all religious denominations have the legal right to perform the acknowledgments in the contract of marriage and to sign the certificates of marriage. Each minister should ascertain the specific procedures and provisions in his or her own state.

Anyone who solemnizes a marriage stands liable to the law if he is not legally qualified for such matters. Lay preachers, Bible students, or men aspiring to the ministry should not perform the service of marriage.

The minister, of all people, should adhere to the law, as well as the Scriptures. He should never allow persuasion or fees to sway him to perform a marriage that is in question.

Much embarrassment and extreme sorrow may be eliminated by declining to perform a marriage for those who may be under doubtful and questionable circumstances. For example, an extremely young partner may be a runaway; someone of questionable character might be a bigamist.

A minister should keep good and adequate records for all purposes. If for any reason a future question were to develop regarding a marriage, he should have a secure record of his having signed the state's certificate and sent it to the appropriate office.

All marriages require witnesses. When a marriage is conducted in a home, witnesses should be in attendance.

### *B. General considerations*

Since many people desire a minister to perform the ceremony of a wedding, it is apparent that they recognize its strong relationship to God-ordained principles. The minister lends character to the solemn and yet joyous event. He should lead it with a balance of cheerful happiness and dignified serenity. It should not be so joyous as to promote frivolity or so solemn as to seem like a funeral.

Since marriage is a serious and solemn pledge, it should not be performed thoughtlessly and irreverently, but advisedly in the fear of God and for the purposes for which God ordained it. For this reason, a couple should have previous counseling and spiritual direction concerning the divine purpose and plan of marriage. The minister's first responsibility is the spiritual calling of preaching the Word; thus, he must not forget

its relationship to all relevant responsibilities.

At some time prior to the ceremony, the clergyman wisely corroborates and confirms the legality of the rights of marriage in all areas. Rules of morality and scriptural restrictions should determine the minister's decision in regard to performing a wedding. (See Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; I Corinthians 7:10-16, 39.) Let marriage always be esteemed as a holy and sacred institution, too important to be sacrificed in the loose, lustful, and sinful practices of trivial pretenses.

The Bible is definite and direct in its assertion that marriage is for life, and the preacher should make sure that those who are seeking to marry understand and commit themselves to this principle. "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). Many possibilities open up for the minister and his church as he is called on to share in this important event in two individual lives. If he does a superb job, he kindles tremendous influences that may well lead to a lifelong association with the family and friends involved in the wedding.

The minister should seek, as far as possible, to please the bride, since this is her special day. If the ceremony is to be in the home of the family, her wishes will generally prevail. If the ceremony is to be in the church, the minister should influence the ceremony so as to keep it in harmony with Christian principles. As long as the ceremony and preparation do not show disrespect for God or compromise the dignity of the minister and church, the requests of the bride should be followed for the sake of public relations.

Above all, the minister should be well prepared so as to minimize any mistakes or embarrassment and so that the couple can look back in sweet memory to the event as memorable and happy. If the minister is confident and relaxed, more than likely the wedding party will be also.

### *C. Typical procedures*

There are no set rules for a marriage ceremony. The only basic procedural rule is that the man stands at the woman's right hand. Each minister has the prerogative of exercising his own choice concerning the form of solemnizing the marriage. Some ministers begin with remarks on the importance of marriage followed by scriptural reading and prayer. Other ministers do the former at the end.

The following is a typical outline to aid the minister in planning weddings he may be called on to officiate. Of course, weddings vary according to the desires and preferences of the bride. There are no essential rules other than that all things be done in decency and in order. (See I Corinthians 14:40.)

1. *Prelude music* approximately fifteen minutes before wedding formally begins.

2. *Song or music* with groom's party entering to position. Sometimes the minister leads the groom's party.

3. *Bridal march* as minister requests congregation to stand in respect to the bride. The minister may ask, "Who giveth this woman to be wed to this man?" Her father should say, "Her mother and I." The bride may present a rose with a kiss to her mother. The congregation is seated. Then the minister may give an exhortation and explanation of marriage using scriptural references of his choice.

4. *Song* followed by joining of hands: "And now, if you and have at present appeared for the purpose of being joined in legal and holy wedlock, you will please signify this intention by uniting your right hands and stepping forward.

5. *Oppositional opportunity* given in these words: "Into this holy estate, these two persons present come now to be joined. If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak or else hereafter forever hold his peace. From the silence, I presume that there is none." This step is often omitted today, as any objections should have been raised already, and raising them at this point would only lead to chaos.

6. *Vows*: "I take you, whose hand I hold, as my true and lawful wife. God helping me, I will love, cherish, honor, and protect you, cleaving only and ever to you until God by death shall separate us."

7. "I, take who holds my hand, as my true and lawful husband. God helping me, I will love, cherish, honor, and esteem you, cleaving only and ever to you until God by death shall separate us."

8. *Rings*. Whether they should be used in the ceremony is a decision of the couple and the minister. If used, the minister may explain that the ring symbolizes the pledge and is given in token of their vows. The ring is often used to show how lasting and imperishable

is the faith mutually pledged.

9. *Song* followed by *duties* delivered concerning the serious responsibilities of each for the other.

10. *Prayer* while couple kneels if kneeling is convenient

11. *Seal*: "In pursuance of your solemn pledges thus given and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the authority of the laws of this state, I pronounce you, and you husband and wife. You may greet your bride." (A modest kiss is in order.)

12. *Unity candles* are often desired. If so, the couple may take smaller candles and light a larger one, thereby symbolizing the verses the minister recites: "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

13. *Presentation*: "And now, ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Mr. and Mrs."

14. *Recessional march*. If the bride has given her mother a flower and a kiss at point 3, it is appropriate at this time for the bride and groom to stop at the seat of the groom's parents and for the bride to present a flower and a kiss to her mother in law.

15. *Wedding reception* announcement to the congregation is customarily given by the minister on behalf of the family.

## II. Funerals

A minister is never called on for a more perplexing and privileged duty than officiating at a funeral. While funerals often happen at inconvenient times, and the minister may be taxed for time, this momentous occasion necessitates the best personal and professional attention from the man of God. This sacred opportunity renders a service of counsel and consolation. Perhaps next in line to preaching the Word is the responsibility of the funeral.

Whether anticipated or unanticipated, the death of a loved one causes a person to go through many grief processes. There is shock, panic, weeping, depression, anger, guilt, repression, physical distress, and finally, hope. These emotions require theological and philosophical adjustments. The philosophically minded person tends to depend on

humanistic solutions and rationalization. The theological individual makes adjustments by making his daily experiences relevant to his scriptural status in Jesus Christ. It is here that the true minister uses skill and service in aiding the bereaved heart.

### ***A. Helpful hints***

Here are some things *not* to say or otherwise express to the bereaved:

*"I know just how you feel."* This statement is in bad taste. It minimizes the death and serves no purpose.

*"You will get over it."* This remark tends to express that a casual and unimportant event has taken place.

*"Do not cry."* How foolish and unfeeling is this expression. There are no scriptural grounds for such a heartless statement. Paul did say, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (I Thessalonians 4:13). Paul did not mean for us not to cry, for elsewhere he stated, "Weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). Christians weep and have sorrow, but never without hope.

Here are some things to say or otherwise express to the bereaved:

*"I care."* This statement contains volumes of concern and thoughtfulness, and it safely expresses love and concern without being tedious.

*"You are not alone."* This implies that the all sufficient God of all comfort and you, a friend, are there to offer help.

*"You are needed."* This expresses a reason for personal determination to look up and trust God for the future.

### ***B. General instructions***

#### ***1. Prefuneral duties.***

Although generally the pastor will be in charge of the funeral, it is not good form to volunteer service until asked. The family or the funeral director should request his presence and notify him of the date, time, and place.



When death is imminent in a home of the minister's congregation, the pastor should be informed and keep close contact. How embarrassing it is to be informed of a parishioner's sickness and fail to call before death happens! Lingered sickness requires the minister to visit many times; when death becomes conspicuously close, visits to the home or hospital should be more frequent.

At the time of death, the pastor should immediately contact the family and be with them for consolation and consultation. This is very important to all concerned and must not be neglected if at all possible.

Between the death and the funeral, the minister should make two or three visits to the home where he can be of service to those in need. This unobtrusive helpfulness is the zenith of ministerial thoughtfulness.

## 2. *Funeral arrangements.*

The minister may or may not be asked to help in the incidentals of arranging the funeral. If his service or counsel is called on, with extreme caution he may guide in matters of taste and judgment. Professional ethics should prevent him from advising the selection of a certain undertaker or funeral home. However, in other matters he may be needed and be quite helpful.

In most instances, the family never considers that anyone, but their present pastor shall be in charge of the funeral, but a wise minister does not take this for granted. Occasionally relatives request for an old friend or former pastor to conduct the service and their present pastor to assist. If this be the case, the two ministers need to practice ministerial ethics with one another so that all may be helped in this strenuous time. The pastor should never become offended by such a request or feel neglected. The relatives are reaching for all the help they can get to alleviate their hurting hearts.

## 3. *General instructions.*

The minister should work wisely with the funeral director, consulting him and coordinating responsibilities. Preceding the service, he should determine the desires of the family concerning music, remarks, recognitions, obituary, and so on.

The ceremony should be brief (not to exceed approximately thirty minutes if possible). Here is a suggested order: (1) music, (2) reading and prayer, (3) song, (4) obituary, (5) sermon, and (6) song. In some cases, music is omitted by the request of the family, but not

often

The funeral director will signal the start of the service to the minister or perhaps to singers appointed to begin the service. The minister becomes in charge of the ceremony. At the close of the service the minister steps to the casket and stands at the head while the procession passes by for viewing. In some instances, due to the type of death, the casket may be closed, with only a picture of the deceased to view.

The minister leads the pallbearers a few paces in advance. Within a few feet of the hearse he should step aside, facing the casket as it is placed in the hearse. The cortege usually proceeds as follows: (1) societies or fraternities, when such are in the procession; (2) minister's car, the director sometimes riding with him; (3) car for flowers, when used; (4) honorary pallbearers; (5) active pallbearers; (6) funeral car; (7) relatives; and (8) friends and acquaintances. This may vary according to the director's wishes and customs.

At the grave site, the minister meets the hearse. He leads the pallbearers with the casket, walking slowly a few feet in advance. Approaching the head of the grave, he should pass on to the foot, where he will face about, giving room for pallbearers and director to place the casket in position for committal. Usually the head of the grave is to the west.

The content of the remarks at the burial service are a matter of choice but should always be comforting and helpful in this most distressful time. There are many scriptural selections that are appropriate and fitting.

The minister should always keep in mind that he is the master of ceremonies but not the funeral director. It is his duty to conduct the service of comfort, and when that is done, his duty for the service is discharged. In the remaining work he is not director but rather directed.

### *C. Typical examples*

1. *Brief service* outline
  - i Opening scriptural remarks
  - i Invocational prayer
  - i Scriptural text
  - i Pastoral prayer

- ï Funeral message
- ï Benediction

#### *2. Church funeral service*

- ï Music or song
- ï Scriptural reading
- ï Prayer
- ï Music or song
- ï Obituary reading
- ï Sermon
- ï Music or song
- ï Benediction

#### *4. Committal.*

In parts of the country where actual interment is still practiced at the burial service, the minister must time his words with the actions of the undertaker and his assistants. To coordinate the remarks with the lowering of the casket and to complete all final remarks at that time requires previous consultation and planning with the director.

In recent years many well founded objections have risen to discourage this process of interment. To witness the coffin disappearing into the ground can be very painful to family members and in some cases cause violent manifestations of grief. Often the actual interment is completed after the service, and the ceremony is finished in this typical fashion: (1) brief scriptural reading; (2) appropriate remarks giving hope to the bereaved; (3) committal can vary, but if the phrase "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" is used, it is more fitting to have the funeral director or assistant to drop crushed flower petals rather than actual earth; (4) comfort and hope given; and (5) benediction.

Many modern cemeteries and floral gardens have special committal rotundas where the interment ceremony can be completed more gracefully and gently, with the family returning after the grave has been closed. It is customary for the minister to pass by the family, shake their hands, and offer personal and final remarks of comfort before making his farewell. In any case he should call on the family again within a few hours if it is permissible and possible.

Personal input and appropriate material about the deceased are most important for

sermon thoughts and general remarks. Above all, for best results the minister needs to know his thoughts and deliver them in a relaxed attitude. He should aim for perfection in all details of the funeral service and give the utmost care and concern to its planning.

### **III. Baptisms**

Baptism is the immersion in water of a repentant believer in Christ in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

The Greek word *baptizo*, both in Scripture and in classical Greek, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse. Consequently, it is evident that immersion is the baptismal act, while the name of Jesus Christ certifies its validity and purpose for the remission of sins.

In addition, a number of scriptural references show that immersion is the proper mode: Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12. And many passages teach that the proper baptismal formula includes the name of Jesus: Acts 2:38; 8:12, 16; 10:43; 19:4-5; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:6-12. Moreover, water baptism is part of the experience of salvation in the New Testament church (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21).

Since Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:13-17), the purpose and symbolism of baptism require the believer to be immersed in water in the name of the Lord Jesus as part of Bible salvation.

Jesus Christ commissioned us to teach, or make disciples, and to baptize (Matthew 28:19). We are to convince them to believe and be baptized into Jesus Christ that they may be saved (Mark 16:16).

When God commanded Noah to make an ark of gopher wood, He did not explain why gopher wood should be used. The command, however, was positive, and it excluded the use of other wood. May each minister recognize that God's Word is to be accepted at face value and fulfilled accordingly, adding nothing to it or taking nothing from it. Here are some basic instructions for water baptism.

1. Each candidate for baptism should be instructed concerning the meaning of

baptism and the prerequisites to it (faith and repentance) before administering the ordinance. Unless he understands why he is being baptized, it may have little or no effect.

2. All arrangements should be made before the service lest an attitude of unimportance be expressed by a careless fashion.

3. Baptisms have been administered in many places, such as rivers, pools, tanks, and more commonly today, baptisteries.

4. If the baptism is to occur in a baptistery, it is effective to have the sanctuary somewhat darkened with light centered upon the pool.

5. The best method is a baptistery with a seat in it. The candidate sits, and the minister instructs him to hold his own nose, with one hand over the other hand. The minister can hold the wrist of the candidate with one hand and raise his other hand to pronounce the charge. Then he can place his hand between the candidate's shoulders and lower him gently backward until completely immersed; he then lifts him up out of the water.

6. Prior to the administration of the ordinance, the minister may quote some passage of Scripture, and a choir or special singers may sing appropriate songs.

It is of utmost importance to make the ceremony sacred.

Here is a suggested administrative form:

1. The minister may begin by saying, "Inasmuch as our Lord Jesus Christ gave authority and commandment to His disciples to teach all nations and to baptize them in His name and declared that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved, let us now with one accord invoke the blessings of God."

2. The minister then may offer a prayer applicable to the occasion.

3. Assisting the candidate into the water, the minister prepares for the administrative charge.

4. The charge may be given in several ways, but the name of Jesus is vital to Bible salvation. The following is an example: "(Name) as a minister of the Lord and in fulfillment of His commission and command, upon the profession of your faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ, your repentance from sin, and in obedience to God's command, I now baptize you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins [if the candidate has not received the Holy Ghost as yet, the minister may add] that you may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

If there are several candidates to be baptized, the minister may intersperse the baptisms with applicable verses of Scripture and selected choruses by the choir or special singers. The service should magnify the name of the Lord Jesus and bless the candidate.

#### **IV. Dedications and Other Special Services**

There are many types of dedications and special services that the minister is called on to participate in and to perform. These services include ground breakings and dedications of properties, buildings, organs, and other furnishings. There are also dedications of babies, choirs, officers, and so on. All of these special services serve to emphasize the importance of the people and things being dedicated. Due to the brevity of space, let us discuss only two examples.

##### *A. Baby dedication*

The dedication of a newborn baby should be a special occasion. While the Scripture puts no personal salvation value in its administration, the intent and purpose are admirable and scriptural.

The objective of dedicating a baby is to devote and consecrate that new life to his or her Maker. It expresses the couple's desire to raise the child in the truth and emphasizes their responsibility to do just that. The husband and wife take satisfaction in presenting to God a life that He has seen fit to share with them.

While the New Testament does not explicitly command dedications, there are some precedents for the practice. The strongest example comes from the parents of Jesus. "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord" (Luke 2:22). Hannah's promise to God concerning the dedication of Samuel is another beautiful example. (See I Samuel 1:11.) She fulfilled her promise with these words: "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord" (I Samuel 1:27-28).

The service should be a special occasion with appropriate prayers, songs, and sermon. It can be memorable for both the church and the family involved and should serve to influence the family for spiritual success. It can enhance church influence and growth.

A typical service may consist of the following:

1. Prelude music appropriate for the occasion
2. Call to worship
3. Invocation
4. Special song
5. Scriptural reading
6. Choir presentation
7. Sermon
8. Alternate reading by pastor and couple
9. Dedication prayer
10. Hymn
11. Benediction
12. Postlude

Alternatively, a short dedication ceremony can be inserted at various points during a regular service.

### *B. Dedication of a church edifice*

At the completion of a house of worship, it is proper to set it apart for its appointed purpose the preaching of the Word and the worship of God.

The setting apart of religious edifices is prominent in the Bible accounts of the Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple, Zerubbabel's Temple, and the rebuilt walls of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah. There is also a hint in Deuteronomy 20:5 that homes were dedicated in accordance with an early plan enjoined by Moses.

The dedication of the Tabernacle, though not presented in detail, is mentioned (Numbers 7:1-11). When we read the account of Solomon's Temple, however, we find a well-ordered program in keeping with the magnificence and importance of this holy and sacred edifice:

1. Transfer of the ark into the completed structure (I Kings 8:1-11; II Chronicles 5:1-14)
2. Solomon's message to the people (I Kings 8:12-21; II Chronicles 6:1-11)
3. The prayer of dedication (I Kings 8:22-53; II Chronicles 6:12-42)
4. Pronouncement of blessing or benediction (I Kings 8:54-61)
5. Sacrifice and feast (I Kings 8:62; II Chronicles 7:1-11)
6. God's response (I Kings 9:1-9; II Chronicles 7:12-22)

Ezra 6:16 mentions the dedication of the second or Zerubbabel's Temple: "And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy." The Bible indicates that at the dedicating of the work of Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem there was a very impressive order of exercises (Nehemiah 12:27-43).

Dedication day will naturally loom large in the life of a church family. From the planning stage to the enthusiastic climax, emotions will be high, and anticipation will surrender to the realization of dreams come true.

Some feel that a house of God should never be formally set apart until it is free of indebtedness. This conviction is that presenting to the almighty God a house encumbered with debts and on which creditors hold notes is in bad taste and inconsistent. Moreover, the practice of raising money at a dedicatory service to pay for the debts well-nigh obliterates the religious character of the occasion. While this view may be extreme, it is preferable to and safer than dedicating churches with debts so great as to smother the energy and discourage the hope of the people for whom it serves.

Here is a typical dedication service in brief:

1. Call to worship
2. Hymn appropriate to the occasion
3. Invocation
4. Solo or group song
5. Scriptural reading. Appropriate examples: Psalm 27:4-5; 48:9-14; 84:1-12; 100:1-5; 122:1-9; I Chronicles 29:10-13, 15-19; II Chronicles 6:1-2, 4, 14, 17-20, 39-41.
6. Hymn or special song
7. Special mentionings
8. Presentation of the keys of the building. On behalf of the builder or architect the



keys are presented to a representative of the church.

9. Dedication sermon
10. Act of dedication. Words of dedication may be read alternately by minister and congregation. The wording should be preplanned.
11. Prayer of dedication. Example: "And now establish Thou the work of our hands, establish Thou it. And to Thy blessed name, O God, whose we are and whom we serve, be honor and glory everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord."
12. Hymn or anthem of praise to God
13. Benediction

The programs and outlines that we have presented serve as examples only. Each minister should project the personality of the assembly he serves and give glory to the great Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for all He has done in providing through His people the facility being dedicated.

## **V. Conclusion**

Volumes could be written on any of the topics presented in this chapter. The purpose of this survey is to spark interest in these important phases of the ministry so that the minister will seek to make each and every occasion an important event. Everything that pertains to the ministry deserves our finest and most faithful attention.

The apostle Paul exhorted, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Colossians 4:17). May God find in each minister the diligent desire to fulfill faithfully the duties and responsibilities that the holy and sacred calling has bestowed upon him.

Magnify your office and perform its duties with dignity as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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## Chapter 10

### Pastoral Counseling

by Robert D. Trapani

*Robert Trapani completed years of study in psychology and communication at the universities of Indiana, Minnesota, Akron, and Kent State, with graduate hours at Case Western Reserve. He also attended the Apostolic Bible Institute and was president of Ohio Bible College for several years. He was the pastor of New Life Fellowship in Richfield, Ohio, and had a counseling office in Akron. He spoke frequently at ministerial conferences, camp meetings, and seminars on marriage and family life, as well as for singles and single parents.*

- I. Personal Guidance
- II. Premarital Counseling
  - A. Session one
  - B. Individual meeting
  - C. Session two
  - D. Final session
- III. Marriage Counseling
- IV. Ministering in Crisis Situations
- V. Guidelines and Observations
- VI. Nouthetic Counseling
- VII. Warning

## I. Personal Guidance

For most Christians, their pastor is one of the most trusted men in their lives. In most situations, he has brought them to an understanding of a new life, a new value system, and a new way of thinking. Since his word has affected their decisions concerning eternity, they think surely his guidance will be equally good concerning earthly matters. As one man said, "If I can trust him to lead me and my family to heaven, why can't I trust him to guide me here on earth?"

Consequently, in some church communities, people seek the pastor's opinion in all areas of life, from business decisions to matrimonial choices. But has Scripture given him such authority? Certainly, the preacher has the right and responsibility to speak out on contemporary issues in the light of Scripture. In doing so he determines to a great extent the lifestyle standards and cultural values that the church embraces. But what about each individual's right to make his own decisions?

Paul indicated that there were many teachers, but few who had the heart or mind of a father. (See I Corinthians 4:15; I Thessalonians 2:11.) Fatherhood carries with it a desire to raise healthy, successful children who in turn will raise their own families. A true father has no desire to rule or manipulate his grown children. In their infancy, he sets clear guidelines, but as they mature, he leaves the decision making process to their own judgment, hopefully based on principles that he taught. In the church, the greatest joy a pastor can feel is to watch his little ones grow up, and in spiritual health, parent other new life.

There is great power in the role of a pastor. He influences with the force of his own personality, and since he comes "in the name of the Lord" special honor and deference is given to his counsel. Unfortunately, problems stemming from this position can arise on both sides. There are dependent personality types that always seem to have difficulty making decisions. There are also pastor personalities that enjoy the sense of power and control through manipulations and intimidation. The Bible warns preachers against being "lords over God's heritage" (I Peter 5:3). We are instead to be overseers, watching out for the flock of God.

In law, medicine, and most other professions there are clearly defined codes of ethics and conduct; there are requirements of continuing education and performance verification in many specialized fields. In the ministry, however, there are not such clearly defined measures, especially in matters of interpersonal relationships. It is true that when

a preacher crosses the line of moral impurity, he violates bylaws, and church government has to deal with the problem. Yet little is done with a leader who takes advantage of people for financial or psychological gains. Not only have we not set a clear, objective, ethical standard by which all are measured, but we also allow great variance in styles of leadership and personality. In fact, we rather admire those larger-than-life personalities who seem to be able to draw people and occasionally drive people. We also seem to admire those “martyr types” who burn themselves out with labors far beyond what is expected.

Psychologists and political science students identify what they call a “Messiah complex.” An individual with such an attitude believes he alone has the mandate and the ability to save, guide, direct, and control others. His motivation may be very altruistic. He may even destroy himself in the process of trying to meet everyone's need and to guide everyone's life. Ultimately his efforts are often counterproductive.

The people of Israel came to Moses from sunup to sundown with their problems and petitions. How noble were his motives, but how wrong he was in believing that he alone could meet the needs of the people. Jethro realized that Moses eventually would destroy himself through this process, and he further realized that it would eventually destroy the Israelites. They needed to develop a system of oversight and judgment that would free Moses to do what he could do best: commune with the Lord.

Perhaps part of the problem was that Moses had led them out of Egypt. He had been obedient to the voice of the Lord. He had been used in great miracles and marvelous exploits. He knew he was God's man with God's message of deliverance for that people in that day, but he did not understand that he could destroy himself and the very people he loved by trying to involve himself in all of their daily problems.

Paul admonished Timothy to take his teaching and pass it on to other men who could teach even more men (II Timothy 2:2). He told Titus to have the older men and women teach the younger men and women the specific roles and responsibilities of their place (Titus 2:1-8). Certainly, Paul's teaching does not negate the authority of the ministry; rather, the pastor teaches the principles of Christian living while the saints of the assembly demonstrate the application of these principles.

The pastor needs to regularly examine his role in personal counseling so that he does not step outside his area of authority, responsibility, and competence. Perhaps some questions can help us determine when we have become primarily counselors rather than preachers of the Word.

1. How is my time being spent? Do I spend significant amounts of time in personal counseling that I could better spend in training other leaders?

2. Am I training the mature Christians in the church to take the responsibility for guiding the younger ones?

3. Do I find myself being a servant of the people only rather than a servant of the Lord? (If so, examine your use of time and your priorities.)

4. Am I forever giving opinions on matters beyond my level of knowledge just because the people love or honor me as their pastor?

5. Do I control or intimidate people with threats of problems or tragedy when they do not seek my counsel about personal decisions? (Of course, we should warn the sinner of judgment and a Godless eternity.)

6. Do I really believe that without me the church would not survive, or that I am not really appreciated for all that I do for the people?

God is the Chief Shepherd; we are undershepherd. It's His church, His bride, His people whom He purchased with His blood. We certainly do not love the people more than He does. He is the Baptizer; He is the Healer; He is the Counselor. God does not have any grandchildren! He is Father to everyone He adds to the family.

Each individual in the church was born from above, by the commendation of His love. In the final analysis, then, we as pastors do not have the authority to control people's lives or to demand total conformity to our personal opinions. Instead, we must lead them to God and under God, and we must proclaim His Word as guidance for their lives.

## **II. Premarital Counseling**

The media constantly herald romance, love, passion, and sex before people today. Newspapers and novels are replete with stories, instruction, and graphic detail. Yet when it comes to understanding the nature of a lifelong commitment, a vow, a holy covenant, a union designed by God Himself, there is so little understanding. Five thousand years ago, a man and woman knew what their roles and responsibilities would be to each other and to the marriage. Five hundred years ago and even fifty years ago, there was an understanding, but not today. Love and marriage are no longer synonymous.

In this confused scene, couples still come to the preacher for help in putting together a marriage. The legal requirements for a marriage license are less than for a hunting license or a driver's license. There is nothing to memorize, no tests, and no measure of ability to handle problems under stress or pressure. Further complicating the matter is the lack of role models. So seldom do we hear the words, "I want a marriage and a home life just like I was raised in."

Premarital counseling can be a real challenge. Many books are available to the minister as an aid in this counseling. Some pastors include a number of tests or quizzes as part of the program. The Taylor-Johnson Temperament Scale can indicate probable areas of incompatibility or the likelihood of some tension.

Many ministers do not feel comfortable with outside tests and scales but would prefer to sit down and discuss important matters that will be helpful. I generally plan on having three sessions with the couple and usually a short session with each of them alone. I have used a number of quizzes dealing with marital expectations and general understanding of marriage. These are beneficial in helping a couple to discuss their different responses with each other, and sometimes a serious lack of understanding becomes apparent.

#### *A. Session one*

We begin with prayer. Sometimes we discuss the wedding date if that has not been previously settled. I discuss the seriousness of this commitment, perhaps reading from Genesis about God's plan for Adam. We discuss the holiness and rightness of marriage. God does not intend for divorce. That is not an option.

We spend some time covering the following areas:

1. What was their previous dating experience?
2. Were they ever engaged before?
3. What was their home life like?
4. What was the relationship between their parents like?

Happy or turbulent? Was there separation or divorce?

1. Would they want a marriage like their parents had? Why or why not?
2. What are their expectations? Continuing education, family plans, work possibilities?

What are the major differences they can see between their upbringings? Major cultural or ethnic differences?

3. How long have they known each other?

4. What is their spiritual condition? Why do they feel that this is God's will for them?

5. How are they doing financially? How will the wedding and related expenses be paid for?

I try to keep the conversation comfortable. It is not an interrogation, but it helps them prepare together for a lifetime of communication.

Then I discuss the budget. Planning a budget will be part one of their homework. I ask them to work on a financial statement, namely, what they have, what they owe, and why. I want a realistic budget of how they plan to live and handle their money.

I insist that they be able to live on the husband's income alone, though in the majority of modern marriages the wife will be an active wage earner, at least until the children arrive. She may work indefinitely, but for the sake of establishing headship, it is important that she feels he is taking responsibility. Though their standard of living may be extremely low, he and she both must think in terms of living within that budget. I explain that babies do arrive, and plans do not always materialize as we would like them to.

Unfortunately, many men expect the wife to work and yet maintain the home situation "just like Mom." We discuss the division of labor, and I encourage them to continue their discussion after our meeting.

I give a strong warning about physical intimacy. First, I assure them that it is normal and natural to desire one another. But physical intimacy before marriage will not only hinder communication and growing together during the coming days but it will also considerably decrease the likelihood of their marriage surviving. Physical caressing or stimulation of the partner is wrong. I encourage them to avoid situations that would promote improper behavior.

For homework, I ask each of them to read Proverbs 31:10-31 (the description of the "virtuous woman"). They are to write out each verse and give an understanding of how

it would apply to their marriage. This is to be written individually and will be discussed at the next session when we meet together. I may also ask them to write out Ephesians 5:22-33 verse by verse, along with the meaning and how they feel it will apply to their relationship.

We conclude with prayer and set up a time for the next session. I also make arrangements to see each of them alone prior to our next counseling session.

### *B. Individual meeting*

The individual meeting serves several purposes. It is an opportunity for each of them to ask any questions that they felt uncomfortable asking in front of the other. It is also the time to deal with sensitive areas that can cause great problems later such as the following:

1. Previous sexual experiences
2. Childhood assaults or molestation
3. Secret fears
4. Family history or problems that they are not sure should be disclosed
5. Psychological or spiritual problems that need to be dealt with.

In the marriage vows, the partners promise to stay with each other “for better or for worse.” Nevertheless, some things in the past, unless properly dealt with, can destroy the very foundation of the marriage. When deceit is uncovered, trust may be so shattered that it cannot be restored. There is some information that if withheld is tantamount to fraud.

In this day, often couples coming to us from the world have had sexual experiences with more than one partner. It is not advisable or beneficial for couples to discuss with each other previous sexual experiences. After repentance, those matters are best left buried in the past.

There are, however, some matters about which the partner should be informed. In cases of incest, rape, or child molestation, the damage that is done will eventually surface and can cause considerable marital anguish. By making the partner aware of this kind of tragedy, there is a better chance of preparing to work through the ensuing complications. In sensitive matters like this, the person can tell his or her partner privately. In many cases, the person may ask to tell the partner in my presence or may want me to try to explain it while both are present.



Sometimes a woman in such a situation is fearful that she will be rejected as “soiled” or “damaged” merchandise. But if her partner is not capable of dealing with her tragedy, then I would not recommend the marriage.

Though states vary considerably in their requirements, I insist that the couple get a doctor’s examination. The rampant spread of sexually transmitted diseases, with twenty to thirty million diagnosed each year, must be considered. A gynecological examination will also prepare the couple for possible problems in childbearing. An H.I.V. (AIDS) test should be required as well for anyone who has ever had sexual activity or used drugs. For example, I dealt with a man who was sexually active years ago. He gave his life to the Lord, married, and fathered children. Then it was discovered that he had contracted AIDS years ago. The home and marriage are devastated.

National statistics indicate that many young boys have been involved in homosexual activities. Many of these experiences were mainly the result of youthful curiosity. It is essential to face up to this issue. Because a youth had a homosexual experience does not mean that he will become an active homosexual, and he needs to understand this fact. The “accuser of our brethren” (Revelation 12:10) will attack on this front, but repentance, confession to God, and the power of the Holy Spirit frees a person from this bondage.

In no case would I violate a confidence. Some things are placed under the blood and are not to be discussed again. “For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret” (Ephesians 5:12). (However, in certain cases, the minister may have a legal obligation to report adult abuse of children, and he may need to inform counselees of this fact before their full disclosure. See Chapter 11 under “Child Abuse.”)

National figures dealing with child abuse estimate currently that one in three girls and one in seven boys is molested. This is another reason for this session. The numbers that I have encountered in counseling seem to run higher than these figures.

### *C. Session two*

After prayer, we go over their financial statement and see how realistic their budget estimates are. We then read their homework verse by verse and compare their perspectives on the meaning or application of these verses.

We may find it necessary to discuss matters brought out during the closed session. I

also give an admonition that since God has chosen to forget our confessed sins (Hebrews 8:12) we should do the same. Bringing up shames of the past will serve no useful purpose.

I recommend that each of them obtain a copy of *The Act of Marriage* by Tim and Beverly LaHaye, which deals with the sexual relationship. I usually supply this book to them.

We discuss the major problems in marriages:

1. Communication (and lack of communication)
  2. Sexual problems
  3. Financial problems
  4. Children and responsibility and discipline
  5. In-laws and relatives
  6. Habits and behavior, including ethnic and cultural differences
  7. Religious differences, including standards of holiness
- We then discuss the wedding ceremony and make sure that each understands his or her responsibility. It is good for the pastor to designate someone in the church to coordinate all weddings. (In many churches it may be the pastor's wife.) Each church has its own traditions and prohibitions.

For homework I assign each of them to write out I Peter 3:1-7 and I Corinthians 7:1-5 verse by verse and then explain how each verse would apply to their relationship. I also ask each of them to make a list of five areas that appear to be potential problems in their marriage.

#### *D. Final session*

After prayer, we go over the written assignment, having each of them explain their understanding of the verses. We discuss the list of problem areas they will be facing in their marriage. Are they realistic? Are they solvable? Can they live with them if they cannot be solved?

We discuss how to "fight fair," using Ephesians 4, and I get them to agree to ground rules that both will follow in arguments.

I give them a marriage manual produced by our church.

I admonish them to maintain their purity and integrity.

During the coming days, there will be a great increase in tension from parents, unanticipated financial needs, worries, fears, and doubts. I assure them that God will be with them through the entire process. We then conclude with prayer. I tell them that I will plan to meet with them a few weeks after their marriage for a short time of discussion.

This framework seems to work with most pastors.

Though on occasion I do give tests and quizzes as part of the homework, the main purpose is to facilitate the communication between the couple on matters that might not otherwise be discussed.

Some churches have premarital classes or marriage preparation seminars available to all mature singles. These can be quite beneficial.

On occasion I have asked another older couple to sit in on one of the premarital sessions with the engaged couple. The senior couple verifies some of the comments made by the minister. I am amused by their response to the question, "What do you wish you had been told about marriage?" Their response validates the importance of these sessions. The senior couple then seems to show a special interest in the younger. Scripturally, the Bible teaches that the older ones are to teach the younger ones. This is especially true on matters of home and family. (See Titus 2.)

### **III. Marriage Counseling**

Since about 1978, the divorce rate among "born again Christians" has been equal to people not "born again," according to *Church World News*. Today it is difficult to find a family in the church who has not been touched by a broken marriage. H. Norman Wright in *Marital Counseling* states that eighty six percent of all Christian couples have serious marital problems some- time during their marriage.

The books on the bookstore shelf are often just "psychobabble" based on a humanistic philosophy of "if it feels good, do it." Not only is the information misleading in many of these books but they also often encourage immorality, selfpleasure, and perversion.

In the Christian bookstore, there are numerous books dealing with the Christian home and marriage. Many are harmless but offer no real insight or instruction. Some authors

have done an excellent job, however, in providing information of use to the ministry. I highly recommend all of the works by Drs. James Dobson, H. Norman Wright, John Wheat, and Richard Dobbins, a Pentecostal minister who directs a very successful counseling ministry. Dr. Gary Collins has put together an excellent Christian counselor's library and a fine tape program. I insist that every couple read Tim and Beverly LaHaye's book *The Act of Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

There are two major admonitions concerning marital counseling. *First, preachers need to learn their level of expertise.* We are neither doctor nor lawyer nor psychologist. We are ministers of the gospel. Some problems that couples face in a marriage need to be dealt with by a qualified professional. We can instruct them according to Scripture on attitude and mutual responsibilities. We can instruct them in ways of settling disputes as Christians, or "how to fight fair." Christian stewardship and the biblically declared principles of raising children are other legitimate areas of counsel. But we cross over the line if we try to deal with sexually related matters or with psychological problems for which we have no clear scriptural directive.

*Second, a great number of ministers who fell into adultery have declared that the problem began with marital counseling.* They indicated that they were counseling an unhappy wife about marital problems. This situation should be a flashing red light to ministers. The discussion of intimacies, secret fantasies, or frustrations can develop an improper bond between the woman and the counselor. He seems so understanding, while the husband, who of course is not there, just does not understand. She has found a responsive listener who does not cut her off but encourages her to open her heart. This is dangerous.

When marriage counseling is needed, *both parties should be there.* Digging into the past or into matters that should only be known to one's covenant partner can cause confusion. Brother James Stewart of Columbus, Ohio, a brilliant, well-educated, and articulate counselor, told me, "If I can get couples to pray together rather than talk to me, they are much better off." Talking together to the Counselor of Isaiah 9:6 is much more productive than hours spent talking to counselors!

When a couple comes to the pastor for counsel, they are asking him to tell them what to do to help heal their problem. In most cases, he would do well to ask them to spend some time in prayer before coming to the office. If a couple will not pray, then it is unlikely they will listen to his counsel on other matters. It would be quite acceptable to tell them, "I want to see you at the church together in prayer at 7:00, and I will talk to you at 8:00."

Using homework as part of any counseling program is an invaluable tool. By requiring

the couple to work on projects, we see evidence of their good faith and intention. Homework is an assignment that will take them a good period of time to complete. It must be completed and brought with them if they are going to spend more than one session with the minister. If they are not committed enough to invest the time, then why should he think they will do whatever else he asks them to do?

Homework projects that I use typically involve the writing out and the explaining of Bible passages. In addition, I occasionally have them memorize passages of Scripture. Making lists can also be a good project. For example: What do you like most about your partner? What were the happiest moments in your marriage? Sometimes I have them look up a particular subject in a concordance or a topical Bible and write out all of the verses on that subject.

Homework does work. Often when an individual must examine and turn in a list of positive things about his partner, he begins to think about her differently. If a couple will not do their homework and then show up for the session together, I will not spend time with them. Instead, they take the time that would have been spent in a counseling session and work on their homework. This assures them that this matter is serious and that I cannot invest my time if they refuse to invest theirs.

In ten years of travel over the country, I probably have received more positive comments about D.O.M. than any other activity. Individuals have told me that it saved their marriage. What is D.O.M.? The *Date Of the Month Club*! Though at first it may sound too simple to work, the truth is that it can work wonders. I make an agreement with the couple that for the next full year, they must be enrolled in the Date-of-the-Month Club. Once each month, they are to have a full-fledged date. It will be marked on the calendar, so that both can plan accordingly.

The Date-of-the-Month is not just a meal eaten out together. Many working couples eat out several times a week, but that is not a date. Rather, the husband takes his wife to the finest place he can afford. He makes the reservations. If there are children, they are sent to be with others until the next morning. The husband wears his finest clothes. The car is washed. He showers and shaves before he takes his wife out. The wife wears the prettiest clothes she has, just for him. He is not to be greeted by curlers.

There are certain subjects that the couple does not discuss all evening, certain matters that they know can trigger a negative response. For example, there is no discussion of diets, in-laws, budget, or house repair needs during the date.

No double dating: it is for the couple only. When they return home, they spend time talking, sharing, or playing games. Under no circumstances, if they decide to spend the rest of the night in a motel, do they watch television. In addition to its subtle and not-so-subtle evils, television is one of the greatest forces to destroy communication. If nothing else comes to mind, the couple can find some games to play (those in which they will not become serious adversaries) or look through magazines and plan for “someday maybe.” The children will not be home until tomorrow!

Some couples who cannot afford a night out have their date of the month at home. The children are gone; the house is attractive. A tablecloth is on the table and candles are lighted. (Everyone looks better by candlelight.) The atmosphere is set. When the husband comes home, bathes, puts on cologne, and comes to the table, he finds the finest dinner their resources allow. A good question to ask a husband or wife is, “If you were a widow or a widower, and you met this marvelous person (your partner), how would you treat him or her?”

This type of dating is not really an expense but an investment. When we think of the expense of lawyers, doctors, or psychologists, we realize that a date a month is not expensive at all by comparison!

Some churches have a celebration of marriage vows as an annual event. At one church a lady told me that she had been “married” seventeen times! Fortunately, it was always to the same husband.

District and church marriage retreats or encounters often provide an opportunity for couples to get away for a few days in fellowship with other couples. Hearing biblical concepts taught, added to the excitement of getting away, can be the high point of the year for many.

Healthy families build healthy churches.

#### **IV. Ministering in Crisis Situations**

According to Tom Dalameter, executive chaplain of the Hospital Chaplain Ministry Association, in a 1990 survey seventy to ninety percent of the respondents said they started going to church because they were experiencing some problems and hoped they could find an answer there. Crisis times become opportunity times for the ministry. In Jesus’ day the crowds came to Him for healing, for ministry, for judgments, and some for loaves and fishes. Today instead of the lame, the deaf, and the blind, we often find broken

hearts, broken homes, and broken minds. Life is full of crisis times. Births and deaths, winnings and losses, triumphs and tragedies all take their toll.

When death, financial loss, or other tragedy comes to the children of God, they turn to the pastor, their under-shepherd, for help. In moments of such trouble a bond develops to tie individuals to the local assembly and the shepherd.

Almost all of us must face major trauma at some point. Pain, suffering, and losses are not limited by geography, color, or creed. There are the vicissitudes of life. Mountains and valleys are part of our journey.

Dr. Karl Menninger of the famous Menninger Clinic says that all people perceive change as loss, that all change is initially understood to be loss. A move across the country or a move in the place of employment, whether up or down the “ladder of success,” is perceived as loss. A change in pastors or a church building program can trouble people. Things are never quite like they used to be. And as people become less adaptable to change, they vigorously hold to things of the past for security.

When saints go through trauma (dramatic happenings) in their lives, the ministry should be prepared to give time and guidance if needed. Sometimes just making yourself available and saying that you care can go a long way to helping them with the changes. There are life crises that cannot be dealt with simply by a sermon or a Bible study but need sensitivity and caring. Here is a partial list of crisis situations a pastor must deal with:

1. Unwanted pregnancy
2. Physical assault
3. Losses: of health, of a loved one, of finances, of friends or relatives
4. Major commitments: the call of God, marriage, adoption, mortgages, job promotion or new business
5. Normal life situations: births and deaths, serious sicknesses or accidents, aging, midlife or menopausal problems, empty nest syndrome, misunderstandings, and problems with relatives
6. End time generation problems: mental illnesses, homosexuality, drug, or alcohol addiction.

The list could go on, but as a shepherd must know his sheep, we need to be aware that circumstances like these can cause problems of significance. In Psalm 23, the Good

Shepherd not only provides green pastures but also knows that sheep can only drink from still waters. Even in the valley of the shadow of death there is protection. As undershepherd, we also need to be aware of the needs of the sheep. We need to recognize that where there are unique differences between individuals some circumstances are common to all.

Let us particularly discuss how to deal with *the seriously sick or dying*.

How can we help? "My help cometh from the Lord" (Psalm 121:2). We represent His presence to the ailing. When a seriously ill or dying person requests us to come, we should come in the name of the Lord. Here are some guidelines.

1. *Validate the person*. It is all right that he is afraid. He has not walked down this corridor of life before. He is neither backslidden nor of less value simply because he admits his fear.
2. *Let him talk*. Be a good listener. Sometimes we talk too much, but much of the healing process comes from the person's being able to unload. A good listener listens with his eyes. Look the person in the eye.
3. *Don't be impatient*. Sit down. Do not check your wristwatch. You are not in such a hurry that you have no time for the person to open up his heart or his mind.
4. *Don't watch the door* (especially when the individual is in a hospital bed and cannot see into the hallway while you are able to watch the passing parade).
5. *Touch is important*. A hand on a dying person's hand or brow can bring comforting strength.

We operate on such busy schedules that though the need may be great our time is limited. If you cannot give a person all the time you want to or they want, then give them quality time. Five minutes of undivided attention and caring are worth more than half an hour of inattention and obvious restlessness.

To understand your sheep, you must understand their fears as they come to journey's end.

1. *Fear of dying alone*. A person can often determine the time of his death. He may linger long enough to see a special person. In hospitals, a patient may last long enough to see a doctor or have a trusted nurse on duty.
2. *Fear of the unknown*. We talk much about heaven and the afterlife, but there are many unanswered questions. We have heard many stories and opinions about what the dying experience will be like. A fragile old lady asked, "I've never come this way



before; can't someone tell me for sure what to expect?"

3. *Fear of losing control.* Those who are hooked up to machines feel this fear acutely. Far away from the familiar, with strange voices and smells and the stares of strangers violating their privacy and the touches of people who do not seem to care about their dignity, patients wonder, "What can I do?"
4. *Fear of family suffering.* A sick or dying person can see the hurt or the tears in the eyes of visiting loved ones. They understand that they are the cause of grief and agony. This is especially true of those whose death seems premature.
5. An old preacher told me several years ago, "I pray my wife will die before I do." These words were not callous but tender and caring. He understood the pain and great loneliness that she would feel without her partner. He wanted her to escape that anguish.
6. *Fear of financial problems.* Very few of us live long enough and well enough to take care of all the obligations we feel we should. But in an untimely death there may be little or no financial preparation. Extraordinary hospital, doctor, and medicine bills can destroy the little reserves that someone might have accumulated. To know that loved ones will suffer not only emotional pain but perhaps severe financial hardship can weigh heavy on a dying person's mind.
7. *Fear of great pain.* Many have said, "I am not afraid of the dying part, but I don't know if I could stand great pain." A person may be at the mercy of care givers who may not comprehend the degree of their suffering. For some ailments, such as cancer, doctors try to balance the amount of painkiller against quality of life. They may limit the amount of narcotic until the situation has deteriorated and death is inevitable.
8. *Fear of being forgotten.* On the outward threshold of this existence, thoughts come of how little effect a person has had on life. For that reason, many great philanthropies were established so that someone's name would not be forgotten.
9. *Fear of the judgment.* Every individual with a sense of conscience realizes the imperfection of his life. Sins of the past and memories formerly deeply buried resurface. The "accuser of our brethren" attacks people's confidence. We need to help them to understand that repentance, confession, and restoration mean that God not only forgives us but also cleanses us (I John 1:9). We should speak to them

of the limitless grace and unending mercies of God.

In times of severe crisis, the man of God can minister strength, peace, and direction to all involved. He can assure them that the God of justice whom we serve is also the God who loves. His mercy endures forever. As we enter into the unknown, we have the certainty that He will go with us, for He has promised never to leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

The pastor's personal assurance that he will continue to minister to the family can ease some of the concern of the dying. Sometimes a gentle trip through memories shared together will remind them that they will not be forgotten.

10. Pray with them. Express positive expectation that God is always in control. Pray the words of Scripture, so that the affirmations you declare are not just your understanding but the assurances of God, who cannot lie. Pray also with the awareness that though prayer is directed toward God, the message of the prayer can be an instruction to the hearers as well. (See John 11:41-42.)

## **V. Guidelines and Observations**

After many years of pastoring, counseling, and teaching, I have found that there are some tools that can greatly aid your effectiveness in counseling situations. (See the bibliography.) Pentecostal ministers face similar problems to those faced by denominational ministers, but there is at least one significant difference: We believe in the operation of spiritual gifts. The supernatural gifts of the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits are part of the equipment that God has given to us. We then consistently need to make room for divine intervention in every aspect of our ministerial responsibility. God has given the Spirit of truth to lead us into all truth.

We are dealing with people, and there are rules of personality and human interaction that we can master. If we are to be good shepherds, we need to learn the ways of leading sheep. If we are going to be in a people business, then we must learn what we can from others more skilled than we are, so that we might improve our ability. We should read, study, and ask questions. There are great men of God in our movement who have the wisdom of experience. They may not speak the current jargon, but they know and love the flock and have learned how to understand and to heal those that hurt. Seminars, ministers' meetings, shepherds' camps, and one-to-one questioning and listening are certainly as important as literature from a bookstore.

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Here are guidelines for a counseling session.

1. *Prayer.* Begin each encounter with prayer. You may take a moment or two of preliminary greeting, but by the introduction of prayer, you have solemnized the meeting. It is not just a social visit; it is a minister of the gospel doing a special work. The wisdom we seek is the wisdom that comes from above (James 3:17).
2. It is not out of order to direct the prayer to instruct the person hearing as well as to invoke the presence of the Lord. At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus declared that the Father always heard Him, but that He was praying so that others would understand what was to happen (John 11:41-42). Ask the Lord for guidance and truth. Affirm that we trust His promise: If anyone lacks wisdom, God will give it freely (James 1:5). Pray for a spirit of truth and openness, and state that at the conclusion of the meeting you will praise the Lord for His guidance and truth.
3. *Scripture reading.* In most counseling encounters, immediately after prayer is a good time to introduce Scripture. For premarital and marriage counseling there are obviously appropriate passages. Plan Scripture for other situations, such as Ephesians 4:17-32 in dealing with anger or breakdown in communications. If no appropriate reading comes to mind, then read a portion of one of the Psalms or a positive passage from the Epistles to validate the spiritual significance of what you are doing.
4. *Location.* Most serious counseling takes place at the pastor's study or church office. Many pastors establish set office hours when they will be available for meeting or discussion. Unfortunately, the hours that work best for them generally do not coincide with the working schedule of most church members. To ease your counseling load, you may wish to do as much counseling as appropriate in the pew after the service. Of course, this can be very fatiguing, but you may find that this counseling will accomplish more with less time involvement.
5. Counseling after service in the pew usually reduces the problem of long-winded discussions, because there are two or three others waiting a few pews away for their time to talk with you. When you find the situation dragging on, referring to the others who are waiting will often hasten the individual to abbreviate his story. However, some folks do not take these cues to expedite matters. This can make the others who are waiting rather uncomfortable, especially if you promised to speak

with them at the end of the service. And of course, there are more complicated situations that cannot be dealt with in a five- minute sharing time at the end of the service.

6. Another benefit of the short meeting at the end of the service is in dealing with members of the opposite sex. By sitting a pew apart in view of the remaining church members, the problem of impropriety is certainly reduced.
7. *The pastor's study.* For the minister's own protection, he should not counsel in a place hidden from everyone's view. Some ministers refuse to counsel a woman without the minister's wife being present, but other ministers may feel that this arrangement would compound the problem. Some ministers' wives are gifted as counselors, but others do not wish to take part in such activity. In some cases the one to be counseled needs to speak alone with her pastor, her shepherd. In addition, bringing the wife may imply that the minister does not feel comfortable speaking with this woman alone.

This may be true, but it also may introduce feelings of "specialness" that set her apart from other women. If the minister works best by having his wife in each meeting with other women, then he should make no exceptions based on their attractiveness or age. Another solution is to have windows either on the door of the office or windows that allow clear visibility of all who are in the office. Moreover, in most circumstances the door to the office can be left open and there still be a degree of privacy so that the conversation will not be overheard.

8. *Seating.* If possible, the pastor's office should have three seating arrangements. The first is a living-room atmosphere, such as a couch and two or three comfortable chairs with a coffee table in between. This is a more comfortable arrangement for first-time visitors to the office. It is a place of sharing, and it provides a degree of informality that is conducive to good interaction and represents hospitality. The chairs should allow a lady to sit comfortably and modestly. I do not sit across from a lady but generally to the side in a separate chair. This position allows conversation to be less confrontational than sitting face to face.

Second, for more serious counseling and for working on problems together, I prefer to work around a table. A table brings the participants somewhat closer together and gives them working area to share notes and home- work. It seems to work well with marriage counseling since the partners are sitting closer together and can share the

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Scriptures together. The atmosphere is one of business and not just of social interaction. It says, we are here to get work done.

Third, other counseling can be done from behind the desk. Business people understand that the desk is a symbol of authority. I prefer this seating arrangement when the office of the pastor is used for admonition or correction. It is also a reminder to those who have developed too great a familiarity or perhaps would not otherwise recognize the seriousness of the meeting.

At first thought, the idea of different seating may not seem important, but when we think about how we arrange our own living rooms for comfort and boardrooms for greater efficiency and interaction, we realize that position and placement can make for a more effective session.

9. *Time.* Years ago a nationally known, successful businessman told me, "I can give any man fifteen minutes of my time if we can do one of three things: if you can help me, if I can help you, or if it will make us some money." Unfortunately, many ministers do not regard their use of time with the pragmatism of the "children of the world." Counseling time is often very difficult to regulate. There may be emotional intensity and great needs that seem to require great amounts of time. But time is limited, and proper time management is a key ingredient for success in any area of life.

When you enter into the office of a professional man, such as a doctor or lawyer, you are made keenly aware that time is very important. Often you are billed by the amount of time he must spend with you. Our time is worth much more to the kingdom of God. Perhaps if we recognized the value of our time and realized that one day we must give an accounting for it, we would act in such a way as to get others to respect our time more.

In advance of a counseling session, indicate how much time is going to be available for the discussion. This may aid counselees in eliminating extraneous matters from the agenda. By showing them that you place great value on time, you increase their appreciation of your time investment in them.

It is not out of order to have a secretary or someone else remind you of the time; this can be done by prearrangement. You may say, "We have thirty minutes available to us," or better yet, "We have till 11:45." By establishing this understanding at the beginning of the meeting, you may avoid hurt feelings. It will also reduce the amount of small talk and rambling.

On occasion I set a kitchen timer before bringing someone into the office. The timer chimes a single tone at the present time. This alerts us both to the time. Usually, I comment that we have another five minutes. Then there is the second sounding of the timer, which now rings a double tone. Because it becomes easy for me to become distracted even as we are finishing, the alarm will ring a third time a few minutes later, reminding me that we are over our schedule.

In the office of a doctor or an attorney or a business- man, we are made aware that the meeting is over when the person in charge rises to his feet. Unfortunately, some people do not respond to this signal. Others willfully dis- regard it. A more comfortable approach may be to rise to your feet, and then indicate that now would be a good time to pray. When the prayer is concluded, walk to the door, and open it. Then you could shake hands.

I do not recommend touching individuals in private counseling situations. Sometimes the emotion of the subject matter may draw us to reach out physically to comfort or assure the hurting one. This is not a good activity, especially if there is a degree of privacy. Some gestures of caring and affection that might be acceptable in an open gathering could be misinterpreted in an office setting. In the doorway, a handshake may be in order, but a prolonged holding of the hand is not.

## **VI. Nouthetic Counseling**

Dr. Jay Adams has written a number of excellent books on counseling both the ministry and the laity. He derives the term *nouthetic* from a Greek word used in the writings of Paul (Romans 15:14; Colossians 1:28; 3:16).

It means to confront, warn, or admonish. Nouthetic counseling, then, is the practice of direct confrontation. In counseling, we deal with the problems of today. There is no way to undo the past, but by repenting and rebuilding on Christian principles we can build a healthy tomorrow. Every problem will have a scriptural solution. If we apply scriptural procedures to our behavior, we will be healed and delivered. There is no need nor desire for long-term counseling, which Dr. Adams regards as not only counterproductive but possibly dangerous. The best introduction to this form of biblical counseling is his classic book: *Competent to Counsel*.

Dr. Adams recommends asking three questions to save both you and the person you wish to help a great amount of time and to deal with the matter at hand efficiently.

1. *What is the problem?* This is a direct question. Many times, I have totally missed the mark by assuming that I knew what would be troubling a person. How often we discover that what we thought was a terrible situation was not so regarded by the counselees.

Get them to state the problem in as simple and straightforward a statement as possible. Assure them that you realize everything seems to be interconnected, but that at this time, focus on the one main issue. This is a difficult procedure but well worth the effort. If you can get them to state the problem in a single sentence, all the better.

2. *What have you done about it?* Who owns the problem? I want to know whether the situation is their problem or if they are trying to pass responsibility on to someone else. I have also found that sometimes the devices people use to deal with the problem can cause worse conditions than the original problem itself.

I want to know with whom they have discussed this matter. From whom have they received counsel? When and what did they do with that counsel? I want to be assured that I am not just another voice to be heard as they go from person to person gathering concern, care, and precious time from many people. Some people will go to doctor after doctor till they find someone who will agree with their own medical self-diagnosis. Eventually they seem to find someone. I have also found that after an individual has sought counsel from a large number of people, the value of my opinion is considerably diluted.

Another problem that we in the ministry face is having our counsel compared with that of others. Some individuals try to pit one minister against the other. Often after a rally, camp meeting, or conference, individuals will seek out a minister for his opinion or help on a situation. Very often, the first question I ask when in such a situation is, "What does your pastor say about this?" When I receive phone calls, I usually ask the people to have their pastor call me first. So often a minister is either misquoted or is given limited information so that his conclusions are not the same as if he understood the whole of the matter.

3. *What do you want me to do about it?* The answer is not always obvious. Do they expect me to do something far beyond my capability or expertise? Are they wanting me to get involved in something that should be handled by a trained professional? I am neither a medical doctor, attorney at law, financial consultant, or psychiatrist. There may be ethical, moral, or spiritual considerations that preclude my even listening to them. Nor do I want to be a voice used on their behalf to strike out at someone else. There are possibly legal ramifications that affect our communication. For instance, in most states if

a minister receives information of an alleged child molestation, he has a legal responsibility to report the allegation to the proper authorities.

Are their expectations realistic? It is unlikely that a few words of counsel will unscramble the tragedies of prolonged disobedience to God, such as disease, divorce, immorality, and disaster. By asking this question, I can determine whether this situation is within my sphere of responsibility or whether it should be dealt with by others. *Setting a definite time period for counseling plus asking these three questions has saved me many hundreds of nonproductive hours.*

## VII. Warning

During the last few years, I have had to deal with many ministers of the gospel who fell into immorality. Though they represented different ages, cultural backgrounds, and sizes of ministry, I did find a common pattern that befell the majority of them. The steps were so similar that I have noted them below. Since in counseling a degree of closeness, caring, and sharing sometimes interferes with good judgment, cautions like this one may be helpful.

There are times when the ministry seems to be more vulnerable to falling into immoral behavior. During times of great stress, overwork, marital tension, or spiritual depression, our defenses are diminished. The biggest problem is *the lack of personal spiritual disciplines!*

When we do not maintain regular times of prayer, study, meditation, and fasting we become more open to attack. Dr. Richard Dobbins, Pentecostal pastor, assistant district superintendent for the Assemblies of God in Ohio, and director of Emerge Counseling Ministries, wrote in *Charisma* magazine that in all his years of counseling and leadership he had never found a man who fell into immorality who had a consistent, disciplined prayer life!

In the Book of Proverbs Solomon described the foolish man who falls into the snare of adultery. I have found that there are some steps downward marked by the feet of men of God who once walked in purity and integrity:

1. *The spark.* It may begin when eyes meet, and a feeling of electricity and excitement makes the minister regard this person as attractive. There can be little touches and glances that hint of more than what appears on the surface.



2. *Secret excitement.* There is a thrill that perhaps the minister has not felt for many years. The excitement of schoolboy crushes is happening again. There are considerable "accidental" meetings. Conversation may have double meanings, and flirtatious talk can begin. At this stage only the most perceptive wife can sense that something is wrong.

3. *Little planned meetings.* Initially he counsels her about a problem that requires a great deal of private time together. He takes renewed interest in his appearance. The aroma of cologne follows him. He may establish unaccounted-for time so that he will not be asked questions.

4. *Confusion.* A sense of fear is mixed with excitement. Efforts may be made to stop this momentum, but he feels compelled to contact her again. They decide that "we need to talk about this." They may promise that this will go no farther, but a sense of the inevitable grips them.

5. *Self-deceit.* "I can control this," he promises himself. He may rationalize his right to some understanding or even some displays of affection. He may feel that no harm has been done. Depression may come when he and she cannot meet. "I have special needs that were not being met," he explains to his conscience. Sometimes, he may become so disoriented that he may blame God. "Lord, if You want this to stop, then You have the power to stop it." Fantasy life can dominate his thoughts. Little gifts may be exchanged, secret sharing of tokens of mutual caring.

6. *Gaining momentum.* "It was like a train going down a grade." "I need her." "She needs me." There may be tears at little separations. Sometimes they may talk about their partners and their desire "not to hurt anyone." There may even be a feeling of pride at having tasted the sweetness of illicit activity and being able to cover all traces.

7. *Consummation.* Realizing that marriage, ministry, and reputation may be lost, he acts like a moth drawn to the flame. Lying becomes easier and deceptions continue. He may show hostility toward his partner, or may instead become more affectionate so that she will not be suspicious. Some ministers have told me that they felt they preached better. That may appear to be true, since Satan may allow greater response so that when the fall comes even more people will be crushed. Anthony Mangun once preached, "When the mighty cedar falls it is the little pines that are crushed."

8. *The aftermath.* Guilt, shame, confusion, deceit, and more lies. Some have said they hoped that all of this was a dream. Perhaps it is more like a nightmare that they hoped would be over when they woke up. But there is no happy ending to this nightmare. He

finds himself in a treacherous web of deceit, cunningly woven to entrap and destroy. His ministry, home, family, and reputation are just a few of the losses that may be irrecoverable. When Nathan approached David with the crime he had done, the damage the prophet identified was not just the tragedy of lust, adultery, deception, and death but the occasion for God's enemies to blaspheme Him.

As ministers, we must not allow such a situation to develop in our lives.

# Chapter 11

## The Minister and the Law

by David K. Bernard

**NOTE: This chapter will need to be modified in accordance with the laws of your particular nation. You can use this as a guide, but the Bible School Administration will need to provide the corresponding information concerning the national laws that govern the church organization in your country.**

- I. Church and State
  - A. Establishment of religion
  - B. Free exercise of religion
- II. Privileges
- III. Liabilities
  - A. Negligence and premises liability
  - B. Defamation and invasion of privacy
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## VI. Churches and Tax Law

- A. Federal taxes
- B. State taxes

## VII. Property Law

## VIII. Insurance

- A. Property insurance
- B. Liability and accident insurance
- C. Health insurance and worker's compensation

This chapter discusses important areas of the law relative to individual ministers and local churches, particularly in the United States of America. Since laws and regulations frequently change, the purpose of this chapter is not to provide legal advice but simply to alert ministers to significant legal matters of which they should be aware. For counsel in specific situations, a minister or church should refer to an attorney. In selecting a lawyer, one should consider his reputation, experience, and knowledge of the law as it affects churches. Referrals from other churches or businesses are often helpful. It is particularly advisable to obtain the services of a lawyer in the following matters: corporate documents, contracts, financial programs, major insurance claims, acquisition or disposition of property, lawsuits, and planning of donations through wills or other deferred gifts.

## I. Church and State

The fundamental relationship between church and state is defined by the following two clauses in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The meaning and application of these two clauses are determined by the courts, ultimately by the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment applies the provisions of the First Amendment to the state governments as well as the federal government.

### A. *Establishment of religion*

The "establishment" clause prohibits the government from promoting or sponsoring religion in general, non-religion, or a religion in particular. In 1971, based on its earlier decisions, the Supreme Court enunciated a three pronged test to determine whether a governmental action is constitutional under the "establishment" clause:

The action must have a clearly secular purpose. (2) Its primary effect must be neither to advance nor inhibit religion. (3) It must not result in excessive government entanglement with religion. Subsequently the Court has stated that these points are guidelines, not precise tests, and it has not always followed them strictly.

Here are some practices that the Supreme Court has ruled unconstitutional under this clause: religious instruction in public schools, recited prayers or a designated prayer time in public schools, posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools, reading the Bible over the public address system in public schools, tuition reimbursement grants and tax credits for parents with children in private schools, and direct government grants to church-affiliated colleges.

On the other hand, the Court has held the following practices to be constitutional: a federal law requiring public schools to allow religious clubs to meet on campus after hours when they allow other extracurricular clubs to do so; a state law providing tax deductions for tuition, books, and fees for parents of students in both public and private schools; and hiring of chaplains for a state legislature. Tax exemptions for nonprofit religious organizations are also deemed constitutional.

#### *B. Free exercise of religion*

The “free exercise” clause protects the absolute freedom of belief, but there can be governmental restraints on actions that arise from religious belief. For example, polygamy, the use of certain drugs, and human sacrifice are all illegal, even though these actions may stem from genuine religious beliefs. In 1972, based on a 1963 decision, the Supreme Court enunciated a three-pronged test for determining the constitutionality of government action under the “free exercise” clause: (1) The constitutional question arises only when the activity interfered with is the result of a legitimate and sincerely held religious belief. (2) The constitutional question arises only when the government places an undue burden on the religious activity. (3) If these first two conditions exist, the government action is unconstitutional unless the state has a compelling interest in limiting the religious activity and cannot accomplish its purpose by less restrictive means. In a 1990 case, however, the Court departed from the “compelling interest” requirement.

The ultimate direction the Court will take on this point is unclear, but the Court indicated that a less restrictive test would apply when a law is not primarily directed against a religious activity but nevertheless has the incidental effect of restricting such an activity.

Under the “free exercise” clause, the Supreme Court has recognized a right to witness from door to door and to conduct religious activities in public places. For example, it has struck down various ordinances banning the distribution of religious literature or requiring a license to do so, and it has ruled that a state university cannot forbid students to meet in empty classrooms for religious exercises when it allows other extracurricular groups to meet. On the other hand, the Court said the Internal Revenue Service could revoke the tax-exempt status of a religious university on grounds of racial discrimination because the university had a rule against interracial dating and marriage.

A city can regulate the time, place, and manner of religious activities (such as witnessing, distributing literature, and conducting meetings) on public property, but it cannot place all public areas off limits to such activities, and it must give equal treatment to all groups (religious or secular). It can require a permit or license only if its procedure meets the following conditions: (1) There are specific guidelines for granting the permit or license that remove discretion from city officials. (2) The guidelines only relate to public order, peace, health, safety, or convenience. (3) No less restrictive means are available to fulfill these valid purposes. (4) The procedure provides for a ruling within a specified brief period of time, places the burden of proof upon the government in case of denial, and provides for a prompt judicial resolution in case of dispute.

Courts have generally recognized an adult’s right to refuse medical treatment on religious grounds. They have held, however, that life-saving medical treatment can be administered to a minor child despite parental objections and parents may be found guilty of neglect, abuse, or manslaughter if they withhold necessary treatment from their child.

## **I. Privileges**

Federal law exempts ministers from military training and service. (In addition, conscientious objectors are exempt from combatant training and service.) If a minister spends a substantial amount of time in secular employment, however, he may not qualify for the exemption.

State laws grant ministers the right to perform marriage ceremonies. Many states provide an exemption from jury duty.

A pastor has no inherent right to be the president of an incorporated church, although the corporate charter usually designates him as such. A pastor can lawfully act for the church in business and property affairs only when the church has delegated this authority

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to him.

Most states recognize that certain statements made to ministers are *privileged communications*, which means that a minister cannot be forced to testify in a judicial proceeding about the contents of these communications. Typically, this privilege applies only to communications confidentially made to a minister who is acting in his professional capacity as a spiritual advisor in the course of discipline (training or character development). Evidence of child abuse is usually not a privileged communication.

## **II. Liabilities**

Every church should take two major steps to protect itself and its ministers from liability: purchase liability insurance (discussed under part VIII) and incorporate (discussed under part IV). Ministers and churches are subject to the same laws of liability as anyone else. Here are some areas in which a minister or a church can be particularly vulnerable.

### **A. *Negligence and premises liability***

Negligence is conduct that creates an unreasonable risk of foreseeable harm to someone's person or property and that results in injury or damage. In other words, the law imposes upon everyone a duty of reasonable care to avoid harm to people or property. Probably the most common example of negligence is careless driving.

*Negligence of employees.* A church is liable for the negligence of an employee acting in the scope of his employment, and unpaid volunteers are usually considered employees in this context. Thus, a church can be held liable for an accident caused by someone while he is working for the church. Employee negligence is one of the major areas of church liability, and it is essential to purchase liability insurance for protection in this area.

*Negligent hiring.* A church can be liable for failure to exercise reasonable care in selecting employees or volunteer workers, particularly child-care workers. Here are steps a church can take to employ qualified workers and to protect itself from liability: (1) fill positions with people who have been church members for at least six months; (2) employ people who have prior work experience; (3) use screening forms when appropriate; (4) make reference checks; (5) ask for photograph identification if needed; (6) not use someone who has been abusive in the past, even if the problem occurred before conversion; and (7) follow the recommendations under "Child abuse."

*Negligent supervision.* A church can be liable for failure to supervise its activities properly, particularly when children and youth are involved. It especially needs to supervise nurseries, restrooms, and outings. For outings, the church should (1) provide adequate supervisory personnel, (2) obtain parental consent, (3) obtain medical references and consent, and (4) follow the Red Cross guidelines for risky activities.

*Premises liability.* A church can be liable for injuries that occur on its premises. A property owner owes reasonable care to someone invited onto the land. For example, a church should eliminate dangers such as icy sidewalks, wet floors, open holes, obstacles, or uneven surfaces that could trip someone, unguarded drop offs, and unstable structures. Some dangers can be handled by restricting access to certain areas, posting warning signs, or adopting safety rules. In the case of someone who was not invited but who enters or remains on the land with the owner's consent, the owner is responsible to warn of known hidden dangers, to refrain from recklessly exposing him to danger, and to refrain from will-fully or wantonly injuring him.

Along with the negligence of employees, premises liability is one of the major areas of church liability, and again, it is essential to purchase liability insurance for protection in this area.

#### ***B. Defamation and invasion of privacy***

In addition to negligence, a person is liable for intentional acts that cause injury or damage. The harm may be physical or emotional. Of particular relevance to the minister are wrongs that result from words.

*Defamation* refers to words that tend to injure the reputation of someone. A person can be liable for such words whether they are spoken (slander) or written (libel). Truth is a defense; that is, if the words are proved to be true then there is no defamation. There still may be an invasion of privacy, however. Charges made in the course of church disciplinary proceedings are not defamatory unless they were spoken with malice, which means the speaker either knew they were false or spoke them with a reckless disregard for their truth or falsity.

*Invasion of privacy.* A person can be liable for invasion of privacy in one of four ways:

1. Public disclosure of private facts, which means publicizing private facts of a highly



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objectionable nature. An example could be revealing that someone has committed child abuse, adultery, or homosexual acts, or that someone has AIDS, when this information is not a matter of public knowledge or record. Truth is not a defense; that is, the speaker or writer may be liable even if the statements are true. Statements relating to a matter of common interest, however – such as statements between church members relative to the qualifications of officers and other members – are generally not an invasion of privacy.

2. Unauthorized use of someone's name or likeness. An example is using someone's name or picture in public promotions without his consent.

3. Putting someone in a false light in the public eye. An example is falsely attributing certain statements or beliefs to someone.

4. Intruding on someone's seclusion. Examples are eavesdropping and entering a home or hospital room without consent. Churches must take care not to invade privacy in the exercise of discipline. A church has the right to discipline its ministers and members according to its teachings and rules. Once a person has effectively withdrawn from fellowship or membership, however, a church can be liable for further actions against him. If a church leader makes public statements about a person's wrong conduct, the church may be liable for invasion of privacy even if the statements are true.

A recent case has indicated that a minister may be liable for disclosing confidential information without the express consent of the counselee (except when child abuse reporting laws apply).

### *C. Child abuse*

Every state has a reporting law for actual or suspected child abuse, and only four states provide an exemption for ministers. Failure to report child abuse can result in both civil and criminal liability. In other words, someone who fails to report child abuse may be subject to criminal penalties and also subject to a civil suit for harm to the abused person. To ensure that its staff members who work with children or youth comply with the law, a church should (1) advise them of the provisions of the state law; (2) train them in symptoms of child abuse; (3) establish a policy of reporting suspected cases to the pastor; and (4) as a matter of counseling policy, reserve the right to report child abuse.

To help prevent child abuse by one of its workers, as well as child abuse on its premises or during one of its sponsored activities, a church should follow the

recommendations under “Negligent hiring” and “Negligent supervision.” These steps will also help the church to avoid liability if child abuse occurs anyway. If child abuse does occur, the church should provide immediate, compassionate assistance, including expert counseling, to the abused child and his or her family, but it should make clear that it does not admit liability for the abuse. When the church ministers to the family members and establishes a rapport with them, they often receive the help they need without feeling that they must resort to a lawsuit.

If a minister receives information that leads him to believe a child may be the victim of abuse, he should consult a local attorney to discuss his obligations and options. He may also wish to discuss the evidence anonymously with the appropriate state agency to determine if a report should be made.

#### *D. Contracts*

Ministers and churches are responsible to fulfill contractual obligations just like everyone else. A church is bound to a contract only when it has authorized the contract by appropriate church action, or when it subsequently ratifies (expressly or by implication from its course of action) a previously unauthorized contract. If a minister executes a contract on behalf of the church but without proper authorization, he may become personally liable. Moreover, a minister who signs a contract on behalf of an unincorporated church can be personally liable in some states. Even when a church is incorporated, if he wishes to avoid personal liability a minister should sign a contract for his church in a representative capacity only. The church’s name should be placed above the signature line, and the minister should identify himself as a representative. For example:

First Pentecostal Church, Inc.

John Doe, President or:

First Pentecostal Church, Inc. by John Doe

#### *E. Other areas of liability*

*Undue influence.* A court will cancel a gift or a bequest in a will if it finds that the recipient exerted undue influence on the donor. This term does not refer simply to persuasion but to total dominion and control over the mind of the donor. *Malpractice* is a failure to exercise an accepted degree of skill in the performance of professional duties that results in an injury to someone.

To this point courts have not recognized clergy malpractice as a valid basis for a lawsuit, except in cases of sexual misconduct. If ministers or churches advertise counseling services or otherwise present the appearance of professional counseling, then they can be held to professional standards of responsibility in a suit for malpractice. A minister who is not a licensed counselor, who counsels simply as part of his pastoral ministry, and who does not claim special expertise in counseling is not at appreciable risk for malpractice with regard to the content of his counseling.

If a minister establishes a counseling practice independent of the church, he will probably need a license or an exemption from the state. Moreover, state laws restrict the use of the label of “psychology” or its derivatives in advertising, allowing it only for those who meet specific qualifications.

Ministers have been held liable for sexual misconduct, usually child molestation or sexual involvement with a counselee. A church can become liable if it knowingly employs a previous offender, fails to respond to an initial complaint, or tries to cover up misconduct. If a charge of sexual misconduct is made, a church should take immediate action to investigate and resolve the matter, seeking the help of district officials.

*Diversion of church funds.* Contributions to a church are deemed to be held in trust for religious and charitable use. A minister is liable for personal use of these funds, such as using church money to pay personal or business expenses without proper authorization. A minister must take care not to divert any church funds to his own personal benefit in excess of his agreed upon compensation, and he should not mix personal funds with church funds.

Other liabilities can result from failure to abide by government regulations as discussed under part V and tax laws as discussed under part VI.

### **III. Church Organization**

#### ***A. Form of government***

The law recognizes two contrasting forms of church government: congregational, in which the local church controls its own affairs, and hierarchical, in which a denominational structure controls the affairs of the local church. The law also recognizes that some churches have a combination of both forms. Based on its history, practice, and scriptural interpretation, the United Pentecostal Church International is congregational in polity with a few exceptions.

Article XIX of the General Constitution of the UPCI states, "Each local assembly so affiliated has the right of self-government under Jesus Christ," and it specifically mentions the rights to determine the standard of membership, to select a pastor, to transact business, to discipline members, and to acquire and hold property. The UPCI was created by individual ministers and churches who limited its authority. The organization does not have the duty or right to supervise, monitor, or control the activities of ministers or local churches, and thus the district or general organization is not responsible or liable for those actions. Moreover, a local church or minister is not an agent for the UPCI.

Under the congregational form of government each local congregation governs itself according to its bylaws, or in the absence of bylaws, according to its established practice. Unless otherwise specified, congregational decisions such as the selection and termination of the pastor are determined by a majority vote of the membership. The pastor's compensation is determined by a contract, or in the absence of a contract he is entitled to reasonable compensation.

The General Constitution of the UPCI does provide certain regulations for churches that are in fellowship (churches that have a UPCI pastor). Article XIX contains the following rules:

- a. The standard for local church membership cannot conflict with the Articles of Faith.
- b. The local church government cannot conflict with the General Constitution.
- c. The local church government of an affiliated church must be approved by the district board, and it must be "in harmony with the Local Church Government as set forth in the Manual."
- d. An affiliated church must have a UPCI pastor.
- e. An affiliated church must follow certain specified procedures when voting to disaffiliate. Similar procedures apply when a district seeks to disaffiliate a church.
- f. Each affiliated church and each church pastored by a UPCI minister "shall identify by sign or otherwise on the outside of its church building that it is associated with the United Pentecostal Church."

Moreover, a church that follows the Local Church Government provided in the Manual must follow the proper procedures in case of the resignation, dismissal, or election of a pastor, and these procedures involve district officials.

Finally, while the denomination does not have the power to control the actions of ministers, it can discipline or drop ministers if they violate church ethics, morals, or ministerial rules and obligations, and it has a judicial procedure for such cases.

In situations that involve these rules, then, the UPCI may be deemed hierarchical. In such a context, the Supreme Court has ruled that secular courts cannot overturn the decisions of church tribunals relative to church disputes and ministerial discipline.

### *B. Affiliation*

Article XIX of the General Constitution recommends that every church affiliate “for the sake of identification, fellowship, cooperation and protection.” A district board may require affiliation as the condition for granting permission to start a new church or to apply for a loan or grant from the organization.

Whether officially affiliated or not, a church will enjoy many benefits of fellowship to the extent that local members may not even realize what the official status of their church is. Nevertheless, a pastor and congregation who adhere to the Articles of Faith have strong reasons to affiliate, and they have no valid reason not to affiliate.

The major benefit of affiliation is to provide procedural safeguards in times of transition or dispute. These procedures are designed to ensure adequate notice of business meetings, a fair and orderly deliberation process with proper oversight, an opportunity to hear opposing views, and respect for proponents of opposing views. The church is protected against a leader who falls into serious sin or false doctrine. The pastor is protected against a disgruntled member who seeks to undermine him, and the pastor’s work is protected against a successor who falls into serious sin or false doctrine. Many churches in such situations have preserved their property and their existence only because they were affiliated.

Affiliation does not infringe upon the rights of the church and pastor in any way, for the church can vote to disaffiliate at any time and become completely independent. Neither the district nor the general organization can prevent this step. The ultimate power of decision always rests in the majority vote of the local church membership.

Affiliation does not make a local congregation liable for the actions, responsibilities, or debts of the district or the general organization. The affiliated church is still a distinct legal identity that is responsible only for its own actions. Assets held in the name of the

local church cannot be seized to pay judgments against the district or general organization.

### *C. Incorporation*

There are many important reasons why every local church should incorporate. There is no valid reason not to incorporate. Incorporation is a means of providing greater legal benefits to the church. It does not subject a church to greater governmental scrutiny, control, or obligations. If a church ever felt that such was the case, it could always terminate its corporate status.

The major benefit of incorporation is to limit the liability of the directors and the membership. If a church is not incorporated, every church member can be individually liable for any legal judgment against a church, such as for unpaid debts or personal injury.

Other benefits of incorporation include protection of the church name against other groups who might seek to use it, the right to hold title to property in the church name (rather than in the name of trustees), the perpetuation of the corporate body, the ability to sue, the ability to enter contracts, and the ability to put loans in the name of the corporation.

Incorporation is a simple procedure that an attorney can easily handle. Some districts make available a standard form that has been prepared by an attorney.

Incorporation laws vary from state to state. In general, churches are incorporated under a nonprofit corporation statute. Some states allow churches to incorporate under special statutes, under a state court, or under a religious corporation statute. These methods are usually simpler and involve less procedure.

Many states require an annual filing, report, or other formality to maintain corporate status. If there is any doubt as to whether this requirement has been met, the church should check with the secretary of state to make sure that its corporate status has not lapsed. Many churches have lost their corporate status by failing to keep up with these simple requirements.

The corporate charter, also known as the articles of incorporation, should be brief and general. It typically includes the corporation's name, address, period of duration, purpose, basic doctrinal tenets, and the names and addresses of the incorporators and directors.

Matters of internal government are best placed in the bylaws so that they can be amended by the local body without the need to notify the state.

For maximum flexibility, the duration should be designated as perpetual and the purpose as “charitable, religious, and educational.” IRS Publication 557 suggests several paragraphs for inclusion in the charter in order for the corporation to meet the requirements for tax exemption.

#### *D. Constitution and bylaws*

Whether or not the church is incorporated, it needs to adopt rules of internal government. One document, usually called the bylaws, is sufficient for this purpose. In order to make some things more difficult to amend, many churches use two documents for this purpose: a constitution (which is more difficult to amend and which has precedence over the bylaws) and bylaws. When a separate constitution is used, it should be general and short and cover such things as the name, purpose, tenets of faith, qualifications for members, officers, elections, meetings, and amendments.

In addition to these matters, the bylaws should cover the selection, discipline, and dismissal of members; time and place of annual business meetings; calling of special business meetings; notice of meetings; quorums; voting rights; selection, tenure, and removal of officers and directors; filling of vacancies; responsibilities of officers and directors; method of amending bylaws; purchase and conveyance of property; and adoption of a parliamentary procedure.

Either the corporate charter or the bylaws should contain a provision that upon dissolution of the church the assets will pass to another tax-exempt organization. This statement is needed to meet income tax regulations.

An unincorporated church can use the Local Church Government in the Manual for its complete constitution and bylaws. An incorporated church can adapt the Local Church Government for use as its bylaws. The Local Church Government is binding only upon those churches that adopt it. If a church does not have any bylaws, a court may rule that the Local Church Government applies by virtue of established practice or implied consent.

Church resolutions are subject to the bylaws. The legal hierarchy of control is as follows: charter, constitution, bylaws, resolutions. State law often contains provisions to fill

in any gaps in the corporate documents (charter, constitution, bylaws), but the corporate documents supersede these provisions. Moreover, state law cannot infringe upon a church's First Amendment right to self-government.

A person who voluntarily joins a church consents to its bylaws and procedures, and a secular court will not interfere with the church's religious jurisdiction over a member as long as his property, contract, or civil rights are not affected. In no case can a court interpret religious doctrines; it must accept the church's decision regarding such matters. In some states, courts have said that they can review the expulsion of a member from a church to determine whether the church followed its own procedure properly and whether it violated any of the member's rights, but a 1976 Supreme Court decision indicates that the judicial procedure and membership decisions of a church are part of its doctrinal position and therefore cannot be reviewed.

#### *E. Records*

The church should keep the following records: (1) books and records of account; (2) minutes of business meetings, board meetings, and official committee meetings; (3) resolutions of the board of directors; and (4) a current list of voting members. The list of voting members should be updated periodically by official action, at least annually. Otherwise, disputes or elections could be decided by inactive "members," former members, or even people who have never been members.

Some state laws provide, and some courts have held, that church members have the right to inspect church records. The IRS has broad authority to inspect the records for its purposes. The church also has the responsibility to meet the reporting requirements under corporate and tax laws.

#### *F. Authority of officers*

Some powers of an officer may be defined by state statute, but generally they are derived from the charter, bylaws, and resolutions. In addition, an officer has implied power to do all acts necessary in exercising an express power.

An officer can be personally liable for unauthorized actions, but the church is not bound unless it ratifies the action by consenting to it afterwards. The general authority of the church and the power to act rest in the board members, who are often called directors



or trustees. (The term *director* is typically used for a corporation, while the term *trustee* is typically used for an unincorporated association. Trustees hold title to an association's property in trust for it and transact business for it.) In general, their acts are binding upon the church only when done as a board at a legal meeting, or when one of them has been authorized to act as an agent for the church.

#### **IV. Governmental Regulation of Churches**

This section focuses on governmental regulations that can have a significant impact on churches. In addition to the areas discussed in detail, let us mention several in passing. The Federal Communications Commission has authority to regulate religious broadcasting. Many states regulate charitable solicitations, but churches are usually exempt from these provisions. Some states have limitations on charitable giving. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has authority to inspect church records to enforce federal tax laws, which are discussed in part VI.

##### **A. Labor Laws**

A variety of labor laws can have application to churches, including the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Civil Rights Act of 1964, National Labor Relations Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, and Occupational Safety and Health Act. These federal labor laws only govern entities engaged in activities that affect commerce, so most local churches are exempt from them.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which prohibits discrimination based on age against people from forty to seventy years old, applies to employers of twenty or more people.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, applies to employers of fifteen or more people. The Civil Rights Act allows religious corporations to discriminate on the basis of religion in hiring employees, particularly employees who are involved in religious activities. This act does not apply to a church minister relationship since that is purely a religious matter. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has authority to investigate.

##### **A. Securities laws**

A security is a stock, bond, evidence of indebtedness, or other instrument that grants a right to money or property. Both the federal government and each state have laws governing securities, and they are complex. They typically cover many instruments used in church fund raising.

Thus, if a church issues bonds or promissory notes to raise funds, it should obtain professional assistance to fulfill securities laws. These laws have two major provisions: (1) registration of securities and agents and (2) prohibition of certain practices deemed fraudulent. Examples of fraudulent practices are inducing an investment that an investor cannot reasonably afford, making unfounded guarantees, making false or misleading statements, failing to disclose significant risks, manipulating the church's financial records, making false predictions, and failing to establish a fund to retire the debt.

About forty states have some sort of exemption for churches, but often a church has to apply for the exemption. Moreover, the fraud provisions always apply. Severe civil and criminal penalties can result from failure to abide by securities laws.

### *B. Copyright Laws*

Copyright law prohibits the copying, sale, or performance of copyrighted works without permission, and it covers audio, visual, and printed materials. A person cannot evade this law by making a paraphrase or an arrangement. There are several exceptions to the general prohibition:

1. "Fair use," which means using a relatively small portion of a copyrighted work for a purpose such as criticism, comment, report, teaching, or research, and in a way that does not significantly affect the potential market or value of the work.

Thus, if someone wishes to reprint or distribute a substantial portion of a work under copyright—such as a poem, song, article, or book—he must obtain permission from the copyright holder. Anything over a few lines of a poem or song and a few paragraphs of an article or book would probably be considered substantial.

2. Noncommercial reproduction by libraries and archives open to the public.

3. Performance or display in the course of teaching activities in a nonprofit educational institution.

4. "Performance of a nondramatic literary or musical work or of a dramatico musical work of a religious nature, or display of a work, in the course of services at a place of worship or other religious assembly." This exception allows the performance of such things as readings, hymns, choral arrangements, and cantatas in a religious service.

5. Transmission of a nondramatic literary or musical work for reception in classrooms or by disabled persons in the course of teaching activities of a nonprofit educational institution.

6. Performance of a nondramatic literary or musical work without an admissions charge or with a charge used for education, religion, or charitable purposes.

### *C. Zoning, building codes, and nuisances*

States have authority to enact zoning laws for public health, safety, morals, or general welfare, and they typically delegate this authority to municipalities. In general, a municipality cannot totally exclude churches from residential districts, for that would deny the free exercise of religion. Some restrictive zoning laws and decisions have been successfully challenged in court on the ground that they placed an excessive burden on religious freedom.

Similarly, municipalities have the authority to enact building codes for public health, safety, morals, or general welfare. Churches are not exempt from these requirements.

A *nuisance* is an activity or use of property that results in significant annoyance, inconvenience, discomfort or harm to someone, and courts have authority to prohibit such use. Examples are excessive noise, vibration, debris, drainage, or obstruction.

### *D. Regulation of private schools*

If a private school is an integral part of a church, then it will share the church's incorporation and tax exemption. (The church charter should include educational activities in its purpose.) If the school is incorporated separately, then it will have to establish a tax exemption on its own.

Parents have the right to send their children to a religious school instead of the public

school system, but the state has a right to require that the school be approved under state law. Although the state must not impose a burden upon a religious school that would violate the “free exercise” clause of the First Amendment, a number of state supreme courts have used the traditional three-pronged constitutional test to uphold various state regulatory requirements on the ground that the state has a “compelling interest” in the education of its children.

Church schools are subject to zoning, safety, health, and fire regulations.

They are also subject to tax laws, including FICA (Social Security) and IRS withholding and reporting requirements.

The IRS requires private schools to provide proof of nondiscrimination in admissions, in administration of financial aid, and in administration of its programs. The required proof includes officially adopting, publishing, and publicizing a racially nondiscriminatory policy and providing an annual certification to the IRS.

## **V. Churches and Tax Law**

(See chapter 3 for a discussion of the minister’s personal taxes.)

### **A. Federal taxes**

Income tax exemption. Churches are exempt from federal income taxes, and they do not have to file for this exemption. This exemption is granted subject to the following conditions: (1) The church is organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes. (2) There is no inurement of its earnings to private individuals. (They can only receive reasonable compensation for services rendered.) (3) The church does not conduct any substantial efforts to influence legislation. (4) It does not intervene or participate in political campaigns. Moreover, upon the church’s dissolution, its assets must pass to another tax-exempt organization.

PTL lost its tax-exempt status because it provided “unreasonable compensation” to Jim Bakker and others. To determine what is reasonable, the bankruptcy court in the 1988 PTL case said it is not proper to make a comparison with for-profit businesses, but only with other nonprofit corporations. The court noted that the highest paid clergy, including the top officers of major nonprofit corporations, received \$70,000 to \$120,000 annually. Based on this reasoning, total compensation of \$100,000 or more per year for a local church pastor would be a red flag for unreasonable compensation.

Churches are subject to tax on *unrelated business income*. This term refers to a trade or business that is regularly carried on and that is not substantially related to tax-exempt activities. It does not include activities substantially performed by unpaid volunteers, activities primarily for the convenience of members, the sale of donated items, or a fund-raising activity conducted on a temporary or infrequent basis.

*Charitable contributions* to churches are tax deductible up to the allowable limit. They must be made before the close of the tax year, they must be unconditional and without personal benefit, and the donor must be able to substantiate them. No deductions are allowed for services, labor, or school tuition. A deduction is allowed for the fair market value of donated property and for unreimbursed expenses incurred on behalf of the church.

*Payroll taxes.* A church is responsible to withhold payroll taxes from the wages and salaries of all non-ministerial employees and to deposit them with the government quarterly. Church leaders can be held personally liable for a failure to do so. A church does not have to withhold payroll taxes from ministerial employees.

The payroll taxes to be withheld are the federal income tax and the FICA tax (Social Security). Churches are exempt from the federal unemployment tax.

*Reporting ministerial income.* If a pastor or other staff minister reports his income as an employee, the church should report his income on Form W-2. If the minister reports as a self-employed person, the church should report his income on Form 1099.

*Reporting nonemployee income.* If the church pays any nonemployee, such as an evangelist, more than \$600 per year for services, it should report his income on Form 1099 MISC. It does not have to report payments to a corporation, payments not in the church's trade or business, reimbursements of substantiated expenses, purchases of merchandise, or payments designated as housing allowances. The penalty for each failure to report is \$50.

*Reporting interest payments.* Interest payments more than \$600 per year to an individual should be reported on Form 1099 INT.

## ***B. State taxes***

*Income taxes.* State income tax laws have provisions similar to federal law.

*Payroll taxes.* States also have payroll taxes, and even some municipalities do too. State laws exempt churches from state unemployment tax. Most states have a worker's compensation plan for job related injuries, but some states exempt churches from the plan or make it optional.

*Sales and use taxes.* These taxes are imposed by states upon the sale or purchase of goods and services. Some states do not have them, and many states provide an exemption for sales by churches, sales to churches, or both. The Supreme Court ruled in 1990 in the Jimmy Swaggart case that a state can impose such a tax upon churches if it wishes. Each church should ascertain the laws in its state.

*Property taxes.* All fifty states grant churches some sort of exemption from property taxes. These taxes are based on actual use, not merely projected use. A church may be taxed for property that it does not actively use primarily for tax-exempt activities. If a church acquires property for future expansion or for a buffer zone, it may have to pay property taxes on that land unless it can prove that it is using the land on a regular basis for church activities.

## **VI. Property Law**

A corporation can hold title to property in its own name. Individual trustees hold the title in trust for an unincorporated association.

A church should put all property and all loans in its name and keep a list of all its assets. A pastor should not dispose of any property or assets without proper authorization, such as by the board of directors. The pastor should also avoid mixing personal and church money.

When buying real estate, selling real estate, or signing a major construction contract, a church should secure the services of an attorney to protect its interests. All the terms of a purchase or sale need to be placed in a written agreement; an oral agreement or provision is not binding for real estate transactions.

When purchasing real estate, a church needs to obtain a survey and proof of good marketable title, which may be done by a title abstract, title insurance, or both. Normally the purchaser needs to obtain a general warranty deed from the seller, and the deed must be recorded in the county courthouse. In some states, if the church is borrowing money for the purchase price it will instead receive a deed of trust, which is like a mortgage. If

a seller offers only a quitclaim deed, the buyer should beware, because the seller does not warrant that he actually has valid title to the property but only promises that he will convey whatever interest he has in the property.

For protection against a future attempt to change the fundamental doctrinal position of the church, a reverter clause can be placed in the deed. Such a clause can provide for the property to revert to the district in case of sale of the property or disaffiliation of the local church. It would protect the organization's investment if district or general funds were expended in establishing the church. If the church wants to sell the property in order to relocate, the district can grant a quitclaim deed to the local church subject to it putting a similar reverter clause in the deed for its new property.

## **VII. Insurance**

### ***A. Property insurance***

The Insurance Department of the UPCI can provide information on insurance policies that it makes available *Property insurance*

Every church that owns a church building needs to have fire insurance with comprehensive coverage. The basic policy should cover damage from fire, lightning, storm and wind, hail, water, explosion, smoke, vehicles and airplanes, riot and civil commotion, and vandalism. Depending on the local church's needs, it may also want to consider covering damage from weight of snow, ice, and sleet; freezing; falling objects; collapse of building; floods; earthquakes; and theft. The following items may not be covered in the basic policy, but the church may want to add them: glass, personal property, signs, equipment, and machinery. It is important to study the insurance policy carefully to determine exactly what is covered and what is excluded from coverage.

It is important to know the insurable value of the property, and for this purpose an appraisal by a qualified appraiser is needed. The cost of land is not to be insured. In purchasing insurance, the church should consider whether it wants cash value or replacement cost, what deductibles it wants, and how much its coinsurance amount will be.

### ***B. Liability and accident insurance***

Every church needs liability insurance to cover injuries and damages that occur on

church property, that arise from organized church activities on or off the premises.

Such insurance protects the church from potentially disastrous suits for negligence or premises liability. It should cover medical costs for injuries that arise in the course of such activities as volunteer work on the church premises, church athletic events, and church camping trips.

Liability insurance should be purchased to cover all property owned by the church and all vehicles used by the church, including privately owned automobiles used in connection with church activities. A church's insurance needs increase if it conducts activities that carry increased risk, such as child care, bus ministry, a youth program, a scouting program, a private school, and sales of products.

### *C. Health insurance and worker's compensation*

A church may want to consider providing health and accident insurance for employees. Some states require churches to participate in a worker's compensation program, while others make it available as an option. If a worker's compensation program is optional, the church should participate in it, for it limits liability in cases of job-related injury and it provides equitable benefits to injured persons.



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