

Faith Principles

By David Cartledge

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DETERMINING AND EVALUATING YOUR CALL

Chapter One

There is a need to satisfy ourselves absolutely regarding our calling in God to the ministry. Hebrews 5:4 declares that this calling is at God's initiative only. Matthew 9:37-39. There are false shepherds and there are those who are hirelings and not true shepherds - John 10:12-13. In examining ourselves, there are a number of factors to use as a measuring standard.

1. FUNCTION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DEFINITION

Some men will not operate unless they are given recognition, a title, or prominence. They want to start at the top. The true man of God will be prepared to operate in obscurity if need be and will do menial tasks without feeling that they are below his dignity. Instead of waiting for someone to create an opportunity for him he will get out and get it going by himself. He will be prepared to be the servant of all - Matthew 20:27-28. He will minister to his leader - 2 Kings 3:11.

When people learn to function in their ministry, God will arrange for it to be recognised or given definition.

2. RECOGNITION OF YOUR GIFT AND CALLING WILL RELEASE A NEW LEVEL OF MINISTRY

While it is not necessary to have recognition by others initially, it is important to accept and recognise the call of God personally. Many a person has struggled with mediocrity, trying to conform to what others consider a normal level of ministry while a drive has been in them for greater things. The recognition of one's calling will allow the development of the full potential of that gift. This amounts to an expression of faith in the anointing God has given you for the task He has called you to.

3. THE CALL IS INDICATED BY ITS SPHERE OF INTEREST.

Many people have difficulty knowing what they are called to be because there has been no direct revelation of which ministry gift they have received. Jesus said that the tree is known by its fruit -Matthew 7:20. A Pastor will not be capable of an apostolic function; a teacher will not operate as an evangelist; the evangelist will have a unique capacity to reach souls, but may have little insight into the revelations of God for the Church as the prophet has it.

While the function of a particular calling will manifest itself in an almost natural way, there is a need to recognise it and develop it or wait upon it - Romans 12:7, to completely fulfill it. Colossians 4:17. Sometimes the full understanding of our specific calling will come to us gradually. Not all have a call parallel to Paul's where he was given clear direction from the beginning that he was to go to the Gentiles as a chosen vessel. However, even with Paul there was apparently a gradual unfolding of the extent of his calling. He knew he was called to preach and the recognition of his apostolic function came later I Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 1:11

4. THE ABILITY TO DREAM AND ACCOMPLISH THE DREAM INDICATES THE LEVEL OF MINISTRY

Joseph is a classic example of this point. Many are visionaries who never produce what they talk of. However Joseph was able to bring his dreams to fruition. His practical balance enabled him also to take the dream of Pharaoh and prepare Egypt for the years of famine, thus creating the circumstances in which his own dream of his brethren bowing before him was fulfilled. Jesus said that He had chosen his disciples and ordained them that they should go and bring forth fruit and that it should remain. John 15:16. Jesus also said that the Father was glorified in us bringing forth "much" fruit. John 15:8.

Psalms 126:6 declares the certainty of fruit being produced if seed is sown. It is important to evaluate if we are theoreticians or practitioners of the gospel. Some can theorise, but cannot produce. The calling of God is its own enabling and if a man or woman is genuinely called, there is an innate ability to produce fruit in the specific sphere they are called to.

5. ESTABLISH THE ABSOLUTE AND LIFE CHANGING NATURE OF THE CALL

Jeremiah said that he could not escape his call. He tried to turn away from it, but God's word in his heart was like a fire in his bones - Jeremiah 20:7-10.

In each biblical situation the call to the ministry was life-changing. Those called could not settle in any other sphere of activity.

- A. After Elijah had laid his mantle on Elisha, the plow was burnt and the oxen slain. There was no going back.
- B. Jesus' disciples - "we have left all and followed thee" - Matthew 19:27.
- C. Moses - the burning bush became an irrevocable turning point in his life. It motivated him to face his greatest fears - Egypt, and to endure Israel's weaknesses and grumbings for 40 years.
- D. Jonah - on the receiving end of God's determination to fulfill his purpose in his life. There are many situations to be faced in a life of ministry in which only the absolute assurance of a specific call will enable you to endure the test. Some have suppressed their call and tried to find satisfaction in business or leisure. Jesus said we might hide our light under a bushel (business or commerce) or under a bed (our own leisure, too lazy to accomplish the call of God in our lives.) - Matthew 5:15-16.

6. EVERY MINISTER SHOULD HAVE A BURNING BUSH EXPERIENCE

Not all those called would have a call as dramatic as Moses' but all must have an absolute and specific direction from God that the ministry is his life's work. If he is not sure of that, he should not enter into the ministry as he will be operating as either a hireling or a professional instead of a God ordained and chosen vessel

7. STAY SMALL

The anointing of God is a rising tide in our lives. The experience and release of faith accomplished over years of ministry can and does expand the minister's life and opportunities. It is absolutely important to keep humble. Matthew 5:6 says "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven". A clearer translation is, "Blessed are those who rate themselves insignificant for of them is the rule of the heavenlies".

Saul lost his kingdom because he started small but got too big in his own eyes. 1 Samuel 15:17.

Written in the margin of his mother's Bible opened to 2 Chronicles 7:14, which President Ronald Reagan used at his Inauguration were these words, "You can get too big for God to use you, but never too small!"

The Cry of a Man of God

A.W. Tozer was ordained to the ministry in 1922. This is what he said to his Lord on the day of his ordination. After the elders and ministers had prayed and laid their hands on him, he withdrew to meet his Saviour in the secret place and in the silence, farther in than his well-meaning brethren could take him.

O Lord, I have heard thy voice and was afraid. Thou hast called me to an awesome task in a grave and perilous hour. Thou art about to shake all nations and the earth and also heaven, that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

0 Lord, our Lord, thou hast stooped to honour me by calling me to be thy servant. No man taketh this honour upon himself save he that is called of God as was Aaron. Thou hast ordained me thy messenger to them that are stubborn of heart and hard of hearing. They have rejected thee, the Master, and it is not to be expected that they will receive me, the servant.

My God, I shall not waste time deploring my weakness or my unfittedness for the work. The responsibility is not mine, but shine. Thou hast said, "I knew thee—I ordained thee—I sanctified thee," and thou hast also said, "Thou shalt go to all to whom I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." Who am I to argue with thee or to call into question thy sovereign choice? The decision is not mine, but shine. So be it, Lord. Thy will, not mine, be done.

Well do I know, thou God of the prophets and the apostles, that as long as I honour thee thou wilt honour me. Help me therefore to take this solemn vow to honour thee in all my future life and labours, whether by gain or by loss, by life or by death, and then to keep that vow unbroken while I live.

It is time, O God, for thee to work, for the enemy has entered into thy pastures and the sheep are torn and scattered. And false shepherds abound who deny the danger and laugh at the perils which surround thy flock. The sheep are deceived by these hirelings and follow them with touching loyalty while the wolf closes in to kill and destroy.

I beseech thee, give me sharp eyes to detect the presence of the enemy; give me understanding to distinguish the false friend from the true. Give me vision to see and courage faithfully to report what I see. Make my voice so like shine own that even the sick sheep will recognise it and follow thee.

Lord Jesus, I come to thee for spiritual preparation. Lay thy hand upon me. Anoint me with the oil of the New Testament prophet. Forbid that I should become a religious scribe and thus lose my prophetic calling. Save me from the curse that lies dark across the face of the modern clergy, the curse of compromise, of imitation, of professionalism.

Save me from the error of judging a church by its size,, its popularity or the amount of its yearly offerings. Help me to remember that I am a prophet -not a promoter, not a religious manager, but a prophet. Let me never become a slave to crowds . Heal my soul of carnal ambitions and deliver me from the itch for publicity.

Save me from bondage to things. Let me not waste my days puttering around the house. Lay thy terror upon me, O God, and drive me to the place of prayer where I may wrestle with principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world. Deliver me from overeating and late sleeping. Teach me self-discipline that I may be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

I accept hard work and small rewards in this life. I ask for no easy place. I shall try to be blind to the little ways that could make my life easier. If others seek the smoother path, I shall try to take the hard way without judging them too harshly. I shall expect opposition and try to take it quietly when it comes.

If, as sometimes it falleth out to thy servants, I should have grateful gifts pressed upon me by thy kindly people, stand by me then and save me from the blight that often follows. Teach me to use whatever I receive in such manner that it will not injure my soul nor diminish my spiritual power.

And if in thy permissive providence honour should come to me from thy church, let me not forget in that hour that I am unworthy of the least of thy mercies, and that if men knew me as intimately as I know myself they would withhold their honours or bestow them upon others more worthy to receive them.

And now, O Lord of heaven and earth, I consecrate my remaining days to thee; let them be many or few, as thou wilt. Let me stand before the great or minster to the poor and lowly; that choice is not mine, and I would not influence it if I could.

I am thy servant to do thy will. That will is sweeter to me than position or riches or fame, and I choose it above all things on earth or in heaven.

Though I am chosen of thee and honoured by a high and holy calling, let me never forget that I am but a man of dust and ashes, a man with all the natural faults and passions that plague the race of men. I pray thee, therefore, my Lord and Redeemer, save me from myself and from all the injuries I may do myself while trying to be a blessing to others.

Fill me with thy power by the Holy Spirit, and I will go in thy strength and tell of thy righteousness, even shine only. I will spread abroad the message of redeeming love while my normal powers endure.

Then, dear Lord, when I am old and weary and too tired to go on, have a place ready for me above, and make me to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting. Amen. - Challenge

THE WORD MADE FLESH

Chapter Two

1. THE INCARNATION REPEATED

While it is true that all believers have Christ in their lives, there is a special sense in which the Minister is so totally identified with the Word of God which he preaches that Jesus Christ is revealed in him afresh. He becomes a manifestation of Jesus. His life, more than his words, show the very nature of God and without this he is merely a hireling. Paul declared two powerful facts regarding himself as a minister:

A. It pleased God to “reveal His Son in me that I might preach” - Galatians 1:15-16. This shows that the ministry is not a man motivated activity but one that is totally dependent on God. We are not preaching for God or about God, but our lives must reveal God. The Word must become alive in us.

B. 1 Corinthians 4:16 - “Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ”. The life and ministry of Jesus was so active in Paul that he could say “to follow me is the same as following Jesus.”

2. AUTHENTICITY

Without Christ revealed in the minister and the Divine Word made flesh again we are not able to be true or authentic. The Word of God is not merely doctrine or detail and cannot be taught as a theory or imparted as a philosophy. It must be experienced. One of the major reasons for the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is to impart life to the Word in us. It is possible for it to become a ministration of death if imparted without the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:6.

3. MINISTERING OUT OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Moses said to God, “If your presence doesn’t go with me, I do not want to go” (Exodus 33). The Old Testament priest had first to minister to the Lord in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle before he went out to minister to the people. When he did the fragrance of the Incense of worship saturated his clothes and the people knew he had been with God.

The Minister belongs to God. He does not belong to the people. He must not be manipulated by the ideas or pressure of the congregation, but in all things must maintain his relationship with the Lord. This will develop a greater revelation of Christ in his ministry. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Matthew 12:34. The aspects of prayer, intercession, worship, praise, waiting on God and absorbing the Word are not options. Without this developed relationship the Minister is running without a message.

4. MINISTERING OUT OF EXPERIENCE

There is a sense in which the Minister must share out of his experience and especially his personal relationship with God. However, it can be counterproductive for him to be influenced by the things which happen to him and become reactionary. On the other hand, his ministry can only be effective and non-theoretical when he himself experiences the things he preaches. It is pointless, and in fact damaging if he preaches faith and never lives by faith himself.

5. THE MAN BECOMES THE MESSAGE

Since the ministry is more the revelation of Christ in us - the Word made flesh, our lives are more important than the facts we attempt to teach. Character is far more important than charisma. For this reason the Minister must continually deal with himself so that there is a clear channel for the revelation of Christ in him. Consequently neither the man nor the message is made overnight. Biblical examples abound of men who were developed in obscurity for their life's call and only when the man had become the message did he fulfill his ministry, e.g. Joseph, David, Elisha, Paul, etc.

6. THE TEST OF TRUTH

When God develops a truth in our lives to make it part of us and not a theory we've learned mentally, He will invariably test us on that truth. Psalm 105: 19 says "that until Joseph's time came the word of the Lord tried him". The revelation he had received in his dreams as a boy tested him in every way to make him capable of fulfilling it.

Every new step we make will be brought into a state of tension to establish whether we will express it actually and be authentic or simply subscribe to it theoretically. As with Israel in the wilderness between Egypt and the Promised Land, there is most often a time of testing between the declaration of truth and its culmination.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR GIFT

Chapter Three

There are at least 12 endowments of God to man for the purpose of ministry, either to the Body of Christ, or within it. Five of these are the Ascension Gift Ministries of Apostle, Prophet, Pastor, Evangelist & Teacher (Eph. 4:11). Seven are the Motivational Gifts of Insight, Serving, Teaching, Exhorting, Contributing, Facilitating and Mercy (Rom. 12:6-8). There are probably other gifts as well.

In most cases the Ascension Gift Ministries would also possess a dominant Motivational Gift. However, all those not called to one of the five special ministries have a Motivational Gift which orients them toward their designated function in the Body of Christ and also enables them to carry it out.

1. OUR GIFT IS AT GOD'S INITIATIVE

We do not choose our gift. It is imparted at the sovereign discretion of the Lord. We cannot change it. Our only response can be to either accept it or reject it. A teacher does not choose to become an Apostle, nor a prophet an evangelist. Note John 15:16, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you." Isaiah 45:9, "Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, 'what makest thou?'. Woe to him that striveth with his Maker". Matthew 6:27, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature". Just as God has made some short and some tall, so He has made some Pastors and some Evangelists. Some are called to the Ministry, and others are given Motivational Gifts.

2. THE DANGER OF ASSUMING ANOTHER MINISTRIES' ROLE

A. It was over this precise thing that Saul forfeited his Kingdom. 1 Sam. 13:8-14. Saul offered the sacrifice which was Samuel's responsibility. It was an act of **DISOBEDIENCE**". He transgressed his own call to be King, not priest.

B. Uzziah lost his Kingship and authority over the same issue - 2 Chron. 26:3-21. He attempted to offer incense in the place of Azariah the priest. He was smitten with leprosy and was separated from his people till the day he died.

C. Leprosy is flesh trouble. It is the main cause of a person attempting to fill another man's role. It is a manifestation of pride and an excess of self-confidence in one's importance, indispensability and ability.

D. An example of a ministry doing a job not given to it was William Branham. As a miracle worker, his gift was without question, but when he attempted to become a teacher, he led countless thousands into grievous error.

3. THE BIBLE PATTERN IS PLURALITY OF MINISTRIES

Jesus sent his disciples out to minister two by two (Luke 10:1, Mark 6:7). When the ministries were sent out from Antioch it was in multiples, i.e. Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2-3). The Apostles sent Judas and Silas who were prophets out together (Acts 15:27-33). Paul and Silas went out together (Acts 15:40), and Barnabas and Mark travelled in ministry (Acts 15:39).

When the Samaritan revival broke out (Acts 8), the apostles sent Peter and John to assist Philip. By this means Jesus, the Head of the Church, has arranged for there to be balance and full expression of the ministry in this plurality. As we have previously noted, the ideal local Church situation is where all five Ascension Gift Ministries are resident. What is lacking in one ministry is supplied by another. Ministries are not to be competitive, but complementary.

4. THE BONDAGE OF IMITATION

Most successful ministries will have their disciples. They will also generally have their imitators. There is a difference between a disciple and an imitation. The first seeks to learn, and receive an impartation from the ministry he is attached to. The imitation merely picks up a technique or an idea without learning the heart beat of the ministry in question. We are all called to be unique and individual and express our particular ministry out of our own personal deposit of God.

The ministry demands authenticity. If we are merely copies and have not received a ministry from the Lord Himself, then our work will be valueless. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and only that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit (John 3:6). The main problem with copying others is that you are prevented from developing a ministry that is unique to you and which may be more creative and effective in time than the ministry you are tempted to copy.

5. THE RELEASE OF SELF-ACCEPTANCE

It is necessary to have a good self-image to have an effective ministry. Without this you will constantly consider your gift inferior to others and will not have a true acceptance of it. It is absolutely essential to express faith in your gift and the basic way to do this is to totally accept your calling in life and pour your whole heart into it. This applies to any function the minister may be involved in at present. He should accept that as though it will be a life vocation. If he does not, he will always be looking for “greener pastures” and will not do his best where he is. Robert Schuller says that “a minister should never accept a pastorate unless he is prepared to spend the rest of his life there”. If he doesn’t have this motivation, it may be because he has never fully accepted his gift from God and does not have faith in its power and scope.

6. DEVELOPING THE GIFT

No Ministry Gift, however powerful, is ever imparted fully formed. It is given in potential, but must be developed to its full strength with the passage of time and experience. Maturity in the Minister will mean a greater release of the Gift. Romans 12:7 says that whatever gift we have received must be “waited upon”. In other words, that Gift must get stronger and achieve more or the Minister himself is not growing. Note 2 Peter 3:18.

Like every other spiritual facility imparted to us by God (faith, love, etc.) any gift we receive, whether ministry, motivational or spiritual, should get stronger with use. There is a price for God’s power in our lives, whether that is expressed in preaching, teaching, or miracles, and the man or woman of God must learn to wait on God in prayer, in fasting, and in the Word to see his gift fully developed.

TRAVEILING IN YOUR GIFT

Chapter Four

At this time we are exposed to considerable distortions of true spiritual life and ministry brought about by men injecting their own philosophies into the Word of God. Col. 2:8. This is nothing new. The Early Church, especially the Galatian Christians, were subject to this and were trapped into abandoning their faith for a salvation based on human merit and religious observances. One of the major fallacies abroad today is that of presuming on God. This is especially so in the Ministry. The Bible declares that we are called with an holy calling, and the work of the Ministry is not to be taken lightly.

While we understand that many who call themselves ministers are not men called of God, we also need to recognise that it is possible for a person to receive a genuine call from God and to have a genuine gift of ministry imparted to them, and yet destroy that gift by their presumption.

Nadab and Abihu were genuine priests, but treated their consecration as priests so lightly that in sheer disobedience to the direct command of the Lord they brought man-made fire into God's presence and were slain. Numbers 3:4.

It is possible to "travel in the power of the Gift", i.e. to use it without facing up to the demands and responsibilities of the Gift. In every gift there is a certain level of motive power, but its full potential depends on the development of both character, consecration and maturity in the Minister. In the average mini computer there is a certain level of "power" in the terminal itself, but its full potential will never be realised unless it is hooked to a disk drive unit. Then its capacity becomes literally unlimited.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF THE GIFT.

The Bible declares that the Gifts and callings of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29). Once given and received that Gift becomes more than a blessing. It becomes a solemn responsibility - a driving force that cannot be rejected. Jeremiah found this to be so. Jer. 20:9. God does not take the gift back again. If we do not measure up to it, the gift itself will make us the most miserable of men because we are not fulfilling the drive for spiritual life it is intended for, and because our inadequate consecration to God does not allow for a full development of that Gift's potential. Others may accept mediocrity, but we will always know ourselves, and that we were capable of much more in God. That call of God will be a blessing or curse, dependent on what we do with it.

2. THE POSSIBILITY OF SELF-DECEPTION

James 1:21-25 declares that if we do not fulfill God's demands on us and hear them only, we are prone to self-deception. From this point on, all we do ostensibly for God is based on a wrong foundation. There are ministries in the world now whose lives are in complete contradiction with the revealed Word of God. Deliberate and unadjusted abrogation of Divine principle means that the ministry of that person is flowing out of a distorted channel and cannot produce life. We bring forth after our own kind.

3. OPERATING BY A SPURIOUS MOTIVATION

The end result of such deception is that instead of the genuinely imparted gift being motivated by the Holy Spirit, another force is flowing in that Gift. This will take one of two forms, but the end result will be that the people ministered to are taken out of the way.

A. Demonic Motivation

Deliberate disobedience will produce a progressive level of deception until a situation of complete bondage is achieved in those who follow that ministry. Examples abound of this demonic perversion of God-given ministries. Saul, King of Israel is one such example. He was called of God and anointed, yet through his disobedience to the Word of God, he harboured an evil spirit and attempted to commit murder, fought against the new anointing (David), indulged in occult practice and died a suicide's death.

Jim Jones and the Guyana massacre is another example.

B. Humanistic Motivation

It is possible for the God-given ministry to abandon the anointing of the Holy Spirit and employ humanistic ideals or psychological techniques to achieve seeming results. Gimmicks and falsity in ministry will produce the same in the people.

The Song of Solomon shows us that when we operate as the horse in Pharaoh's chariots we are advancing Satan's cause and not God's. God's work done by any other method but God's ways will not glorify God or be owned by God.

One of the key demands on the minister is to seek:

God's ways - Exodus 33:13

God's wisdom - Proverbs 4:7, James 1:5

4. PRESUMING ON GOD

As Nadab and Abihu presumed on God, thinking that because they were called of God, He would accept anything they chose to do, so modern ministers are in a precarious place when they travel in their gift.

Samson is the classic case in the scriptures of a man who presumed on his calling and gift. He played fast and loose with his anointing until the day came when he went too far and the Spirit of the Lord departed from him. Judges 16:20. He was so desensitized to God that he wasn't aware of his loss of anointing. He was in total deception. His deliberate disobedience to the Word of God when he insisted on marrying a Philistine instead of an Israelite blinded him to his progressively deteriorating condition. The gift remained with him all his life, and even though a wasted ministry, that motivation still drove him.

THINGS WHICH ARE PRESUMPTIONS ON OUR MINISTRY

- a) Disobedience to God's Word
- b) Disobedience to God's revealed will for us and our ministry
- c) Attempting to take another's ministry - thus expressing pride in our self importance and indispensability
- d) Uncleaness. They that bear the vessels of the Lord must be clean. Isaiah 52:11.
- e) Refusal to accept discipline - Hebrews 12:8
- f) An unprepared heart - no waiting on God in prayer and His words
- g) Laziness - hiding the light under the bed. (Matthew 5:15)
- h) Divergence from our calling - i.e. involvement in distracting things, business, etc., will choke the Word and make it unfruitful - Luke 8:14
- i) Touching the gold
- j) Touching the glory

It is possible to "travel in your gift" and to produce seeming results, but the long term effect will be deception and destruction of the lives you minister to.

DISQUALIFIED FOR PRIESTHOOD

Chapter Five

There are numerous things which will weaken the expression of ministry. As noted in the study "Travelling in your Gift" we must at all costs avoid presuming on the Gift we have received from God. It is a delicate faculty and may be impaired by sin, strife or sloth among other things.

We are a Kingdom of Priests unto God (1 Peter 2:5) and those with a Ministry Gift have a greater degree of responsibility as a priest. Jesus said that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribe and Pharisees. Matthew 5:20. On this basis it is clear that the standard required for New Testaments priests must be higher than for Old Testament priests. The pattern of priorities in ministry is established by the procedure of the Old Testament priests. They ministered first to the Lord, then to the House of God (fellow priests), then to the world (congregation).

Leviticus 21:16-24 establishes twelve disqualifications for Old Testament priests. Each of these characteristics has a spiritual significance which applies to all New Testament priests in general and to the Ascension Gift Ministries in particular. Any blemish whatsoever eliminated him from effective ministry.

1. BLINDNESS

This refers to a minister who has no VISION. He cannot see afar off. 2 Peter 1:9. The blind minister lives for today only. He is constantly reacting to or being manipulated by situations instead of being in control. He has lost his way and is groping in the dark for direction. Proverbs 29:18 declares "where there is no progressive vision, the people run amuck". Vision is the prime criteria for an effective and God-blessed ministry. It is understanding God's ways. Exodus 33:13.

The classic Bible case of this blemish is Eli (1 Samuel 3:1-2). He was physically blind, but also spiritually dull. He misinterpreted Hannah's -intercession, his own sons ran amuck, was by-passed by God for the child Samuel, and presided over Israel's Ichabod period - "the glory is departed".

2. LAMENESS

a) This blemish prevents the minister from making progress. He can't walk in the purposes of God. Victory over the land of Canaan was promised to Joshua only as the sole of his feet stood upon each place (Joshua 1:3). The Word urges to "go on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1); to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

The lame minister is not moving on. He has parked when he is comfortable. He makes no progress in his own spiritual life and cannot lead his church to be effective or grow.

b) This can also refer to the minister being unbalanced. His lameness will cause him to put all his weight on one leg instead of it being evenly distributed. The end result of an unbalanced ministry is to go round in circles

3. FLAT NOSE

This is not a deformity and has nothing to do with the shape of the nose. It means that he has no olfactory sense. He can't smell. The minister with this blemish has no sense of perception, and as a result he is prone to DECEPTION. He cannot smell the difference between what is wholesome and what is corrupt. He will not be able to determine what is acceptable to God (Phil. 4:18), nor will he be aware of uncleanness in the Church. 1 Corinthians 5:2. The Corinthian Church had no perception of the falseness that was among them.

4. ANYTHING SUPERFLUOUS

The priest with this problem may have had six toes or fingers, or some other congenital deformity. It refers to an excess of flesh. Any minister that lives out of fleshly motivations is headed for trouble in his ministry. An uncrucified life will demand satisfaction for itself and disqualify from ministry.

- a) Isaac was beguiled into depriving Esau of his rightful blessing by his flesh trouble. His passionate love of venison (flesh) was his undoing. Genesis 27. (He was also blind.)
- b) Uzziah attempted to take another man's ministry and the hidden flesh trouble (pride) manifested in the form of leprosy. 2 Chronicles 26:14-21.
- c) Samson forfeited his ministry and call to be the deliverer of God's people by:
 - i) Being the friend of the world - the enemies of God's people. James 4:4.
 - ii) He squandered his anointing and God-given gifts through sexual immorality - the most damaging of all sins of the flesh. The minister who does not keep himself sexually pure in his relationships with the people destroys his credibility with the people and generally will never rise to the full expression of his potential again.
- d) Esau sold his birthright for one morsel of meat (flesh) and could not regain that blessing again though he sought it carefully with tears. Heb. 12:16.
- e) Paul said that he beat his body (flesh) and subdued it lest when he preach to others he might be a castaway. 1 Corinthians 9:27.

5. BROKEN FEET

- a) This man is unable to take a stand. He is afflicted with the dread disease of compromise. He is blown about by every wind of doctrine. Ephesians 4:14. He is influenced by people's attitudes and expectations and does not stand for God and truth.

The Bible says that God will make our feet like hind's feet. 2 Samuel 22:34. In other words we are enabled to stand safely in the most precarious places in our ministry without falling. We must be surefooted.

The word declares that we must have the devil under our feet We have to stand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Eph 6:12-18, Rom. 16:20. This is not possible with broken feet.

- b) Some can't stand the pressure of life. The cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches (Mark 4:19) are too much for the broken-footed minister.
- c) Indecisiveness or Division will destroy our ability to take a stand - Matthew 12:25. Note also 1Cor. 16:13, Gal. 5:1, Phil. 1:27, 4:1, 1 Thess. 3:8, 2 Thess. 2:15.
- d) Our standing must be rooted in total dependency on God and not in selfconfidence. 1 Cor. 10:12.

6. BROKEN HANDS

- a) This is the problem of the priest who is unable to get a grip on things. He is afflicted with NEGLECT. The Bible declares that we must "hold fast the things we have learned" - Titus 1:9, Heb. 2:1.

We must also hold fast sound words (2 Timothy 1:13), our confidence and rejoicing (Heb. 3:6), the confession of our faith (Heb. 10:23), that which is proved and good (1 Thess. 5:21)

and that which we already have (Rev. 3:11) And neglect not the Gift of God in us (1 Timothy 4:14).

b) He also lets opportunity slip through his fingers. He cannot capitalise on God's blessings to him and is always waiting for someone to do it for him, or for a miracle to descend from heaven with no involvement by himself.

7. CROOKBACKED

a) The priest with this blemish was either weak in his back, or had a hump back. In either case he could not carry a load. The New Testament Priest is not only required to bear his own burden, but to bear those of others as well (Gal. 6:2& 5, Romans 15:1).

In addition to this, the true ministry is required to take up the cross daily- Matthew 16:24, and Luke 14:27.

b) He will be able to bear temptation -1 Cor. 10:13. e.g. Joseph

c) He can also bear persecution - Gal. 6:17, 2 Cor. 11:24-28

d) One of the common problems of today in ministry is men who cannot cope with life. The man of God had dealt with all areas of weakness and is not emotionally, psychologically, temperamentally or spiritually unable to cope with the challenges of the work of God. He has disciplined himself to develop strength in all these areas. Jesus said "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The minister who is having trouble with his back should cast all his cares on Jesus. 1 Peter 5:7.

Ps. 55:22 says "cast your burden on the Lord and He shall sustain thee". The marginal reference for "burden" is "gift". If the gift we have received of the Lord or our calling becomes onerous, draw only on his strength and you will find His burden is light.

8. DWARF

a) This priest is underdeveloped or immature. He hasn't grown up or his development has been stunted by some interference with the growth process. To be effective in ministry we must be constantly growing in the Lord. 2 Peter 3:18. We must also not stop growing until we reach full stature- Eph. 4:13.

b) Paul said he couldn't write to the Corinthians as mature people, but as to babies -1 Cor. 3:1-3. Their immaturity was caused by carnality.

c) Paul also says that when he became a man, he put away childish things, 1 Cor. 13:11, and likens understanding to maturity. 1 Cor. 14:20. The deficiency of wisdom, knowledge and understanding will stunt the growth of the priest of God. Seek wisdom. It is the principle thing. Prov. 4:7.

d) Immaturity is overcome by giving out to others what we have been taught. In other words it is the discipling process. We cannot be effectively disciplined without discipling someone else. Heb. 5:12-13.

e) Full maturity also means that the minister, by reason of use (or experience) is able to discern what is good and evil. Heb. 5:14.

9. BLEMISH IN THE EYE

This man is colour blind. He is confused. He finds it difficult to get guidance because all things look the same to him. He may be in this condition because he needs to remove a beam from his eye (Matt. 7:1-5). His problem of confusion, i.e. not seeing clearly (v 5) is probably related to hypocrisy - a double standard.

10. SCURVY

This condition is caused by a deficiency of diet - actually a lack of ascorbic acid (vitamin C). It is common among those who get no fresh food. This minister lives on a diet of cut and dried spiritual food. His diet is preserved stuff from a previous generation. He has no fresh revelation. He does not comprehend "present truth" - 2 Pet. 1:12. Like the Laodiceans, he feels he has "arrived". There is nothing more to be gained from God. Rev. 3:17.

11. SCABBED

This minister is one who has been hurt and is imperfectly healed. He still has a sensitive spot. He can be immobilised by having it hurt again. He is constantly needing to protect himself and cannot be open with people or take any risks lest his sore spot be touched. This will most often be in the emotional area. He needs to lay hold of the ministry of Jesus who "came to heal the brokenhearted" - those bruised through the calamities of life. Luke 4:18.

12. BROKEN STONES

The priest who is sterile and cannot reproduce himself is disqualified from ministry. This work of God is not to be led by professional theorists, but by those who can practice what they preach and impart it to others also. Matt. 23:2-3, 2 Timothy 2:2. The minister must be challenging and inspiring. His life must be an example for others to follow. He must cause an impact on the life of those that hear him.

This priest who was disqualified to minister for God could receive, but he could not give out. Lev. 21:22-23.

Unlike the Old Testament priest who was unable to change his condition, the New Testament priest can find a solution to his disqualification. He can be healed or restored. However, he must make restoration the top priority of his if he expects to be effective for God.

WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO IMPRESS

Chapter Six

1. THE NEED TO EVALUATE THE GOALS OF YOUR MINISTRY

It is possible to fall into a pattern of ministry that is unproductive because its objectives are unclear. The goal has never been clearly focused on. The Minister may have a subconscious desire to gain the approval of his "Shaping Influences" and may not have any clear objective to "impress" his community with the gospel.

It is imperative that every minister should establish who he intends to minister to and that must involve the presently unsaved. Without this objective he will be forever pushed and pulled by past or present shaping influences.

2. DEALING WITH YOUR SHAPING INFLUENCES

We are most often the product of our "past" environment. Many Ministers find themselves subconsciously seeking the approval of their parents or former pastor or denomination.

To be completely successful the Minister must break this pressure from the past to conform to a previous age. He must be open to new ideas and adaptable to the current move of God. It is too possible to try to impress people through our past environment. Moses fell into this trap when he was moved with Israel's plight as servants in Egypt. Operating by an environmental motivation, he slew the Egyptian taskmaster to impress the Israelites. Instead of achieving this, the Egyptian shaping influence on his life produced the opposite effect. God took 40 years in the desert of Midian to get Egypt out of Moses.

While the influences from our past may be good and lay solid foundations in our lives every person must develop his own personal expression of ministry.

Two things can help to achieve this:

- a) A recognition of the ways in which our "shaping influences" are affecting your Ministry.
- b) Clearly defined objectives of your Ministry. In other words, who are you try to impress.

3. COMING TO TERMS WITH PRESSURE GROUPS

While our shaping influences tend to be in our past, you may be confronted with pressure from individuals or groups who want to mould your ministry to their ideal. This is a "present" problem.

- a) Peter was subject to this kind of pressure and didn't know who he was trying to impress - Gal. 2:12. As a result of present pressures he ended up offending everyone and was guilty of partiality.
- b) The Lord said to Joshua when he was appointed to lead Israel - "Be strong and very courageous" (Jos. 1:6-9). Without being offensive or belligerent, the leader in Ministry must be prepared to stand up for his convictions, otherwise every pressure group will succeed in bending him to their desires and nothing worthwhile will be achieved. Jeremiah was told by the Lord "not to be afraid of the faces of the people".
- c) Another area of pressure is comparison. Many a Minister has settled far below his potential God because he adopted the "norm" as his highest level of achievement. 2 Cor. 10:12.

Make up your mind where you want to go in God, and go there in spite of your pressure groups.

4. STYLE YOUR MINISTRY TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

Throughout your Ministry there will need to be periods of re-assessment and adjustment. We are all affected by the “gravity pull” of the people and situations we are involved with. They may pull us slightly off course, and if this is not corrected, the end result will be to miss our goal by miles.

Anything which is unfruitful or inconvenient to the achieving of your goal to impress your community for the Lord should be immediately and irrevocably discarded. Past methods or concepts which will not be effective for God today should be laid aside regardless how influential or successful the person who used them was in his own day.

5. THREE THINGS NECESSARY TO IMPRESS YOUR COMMUNITY.

a) VIABILITY.

Your Ministry must work. It must produce results and bring forth fruit in the long term. John 15:16. Without an effective result all you have is a theory. Your community will not be attracted by ideals but by proof.

b) RELEVANCY.

Your Ministry must be directed to the needs of our times. Each community must be addressed in a relevant way. It is possible to be so side-tracked or irrelevant in the style of your ministry that your message is completely ignored.

c) AUTHENTICITY.

Your Ministry must be real. There are too many insincere, unscrupulous confidence tricksters masquerading as Ministers of the Gospel. The man of God must have a conscience void of offence toward God and man (Acts 24:16). There is no substitute for reality and the man of God must live what he preaches or his insincerity will become obvious to all.

6. NOTHING IS HARDER TO REGAIN THAN LOST CREDIBILITY.

Proverbs 22:1 declares that a good name is better than riches. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and favour with God and man. If you want to impress your community in the long term, protect your good name by good behaviour as though your life depended on it.

7. PUT YOUR ROOTS DOWN.

One of the main keys to Church Growth is continuity. Pastors who put their roots down and make their chosen community home for the rest of their life if need be, will have a better opportunity to impress their community than those who treat their stay there as temporary.

LIFE IN THE GOLDFISH BOWL

Chapter Seven

1. THE MINISTER IS IN THE PUBLIC EYE

If he intends to be totally successful, the Minister will be a public person. It is not possible to hide away from people and the community at large and carry on an effective ministry. We are in the “people” business.

This, however, brings its own special kind of pressures. Every idea and action of the Minister and his family will come under scrutiny and is often the subject for cruel and unfair assessment. It cannot be avoided and must be accepted as one of the hazards of the Ministry. Jesus faced it constantly.

It is not uncommon for children to grow up hating the Church. If the Minister cares for his children there are things that can be done to alleviate the problem and make it manageable.

2. BE AN EXAMPLE TO THE FLOCK

a). We are not lords over God’s heritage - 1 Peter 5:3. There should be no double standard. What is required of the congregation should be basic level for the Minister. His life, his home, his relationships and actions need to be of the highest order possible.

This is not to suggest that he or his family will not have problems because they will, but how he handles those problems is important.

b). His personal integrity must be of the highest order. His attitudes to money, the opposite sex, his business dealings, and the use of his time should be conducted in such a way that he has a conscience void of offense toward God and man. Acts 24:16.

c). He needs to very clearly grasp the truth that he is not superhuman. God does not expect it, even if some people do. He should do his best and leave the rest. Living under a sense of unbalanced obligation to the people will kill his ministry if it doesn’t kill him.

3. PROTECTING HIS FAMILY’S PRIVACY

This is one of the most important areas of the Minister’s responsibility. So much is said of the necessity of ministering to his own family and being a priest to his wife and children in a “spiritual” sense, but often foolishness in screening them from the attitudes of people and unnecessary exposure to the people will undo all the good he may do for them spiritually. In this area it is essential that the manse (whether it belongs to the Church or not) must be the inviolate preserve of his family alone. Church people must not be allowed to make it their home away from home Care should be taken in designing or setting up a Minister’s home so that the children can function as normally as any other family and do not have to be exposed to constant Church intrusions on their privacy.

4. HIDING FROM YOUR OWN FLESH.

Isaiah 58:7 takes issue with the man who is so busy in “spiritual” activities related to his ministry that he has no time for his own family. His wife and children are his primary congregational members and need to be adequately ministered to in normal ways. The Minister father who is too “spiritual” or too busy to play ball with his children, etc., or to have regular periods of both quality and quantity time with them is heading for trouble.

A good guide to time control is to divide each day in 3 periods - morning, afternoon, evening - a total of 21 for the week. Mark down the activities for each period. If at least all or a good part of 3 of these periods is not spent with the family exclusively, some adjustments should be made.

Often the Minister's time is manipulated by the people in a selfish way. Urgent calls for counselling or intervention in their problems are made at inopportune times. It needs to be remembered that for the most part, these problems have been in the making for many years, and another few hours isn't going to make any material difference to the situation. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but the Minister who doesn't hide himself from his own flesh because of the cry of the congregation will be able to answer a genuine distress call without inflicting damage on his own family.

5. AVOIDING RESENTMENT

a) It is not uncommon for children to grow up hating the church. If the minister cares for his contact, with his children and wife correctly, the next most important area is to avoid bringing the Church problems home. Make it a rule never to discuss the congregation or their attitudes and problems in front of the children. Too often a child will take up his parent's grievance but has not received his parent's grace to bear it and consequently develops a wounded spirit.

b) Don't leave your wife out of your ministry or she will come to hate it for taking you away from her. The ministry, more than any other vocation, has the propensity to divide husbands and wives. His job is so holy and hers appears so mundane. A wife can be reduced to feeling unimportant and unfulfilled very quickly. It is the husband's responsibility to develop his wife's potential and release her into his ministry as much as she is capable of.

c) Take your burdens to the Lord in prayer. Bare your bleeding heart to him alone. Sharing your grievances with others will only make your hurt permanent. One of the major hazards of a public life is to wear your heart on your sleeve (particularly in matters of salary, etc.), and let everybody know how hard your life is. Note Matt 6:16. Love those who hurt you & pray for those who spitefully use you. (Matt. 5:44). If you don't win through in this area, how will any of your congregation learn to love sincerely.

6. AVOID EXCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Every public role attracts people who want to attract themselves to the prominent. Don't allow anyone to gain an exclusive hold on you. Treat all your congregation the same and if you have people come to your home socially, it is better to have a group come on occasions than the same one or two people constantly. After a while such people will think they own you and will try to dominate your life. It is a true saying that "familiarity breeds contempt".

THROW AWAY YOUR HAIR SHIRT

Chapter Eight

1. THE MINISTRY IS THE CALLING WITH THE GREATEST PRESSURE KNOWN TO MAN

Many Ministers have been unable to handle the strain and have either left the Ministry or their health has suffered due to the weight of:

- a) Standing between God and the people - Ex. 4:16, 7:1 & 1 Pet. 4:11
- b) Having to produce results - John 15:14, Acts 2:22, & Matt. 12:38
- c) Limitations on Privacy.
- d) Time and urgent demands
- e) Finance for Church and home

2. PUNISHING ONE SELF

and feeling unworthy and uncomfortable unless constantly denying oneself means a lack of self acceptance.

Penance means guilt. During the Middle Ages some monks who felt unworthy in their calling would wear a shirt made of hair to suppress all natural desires and inflict pain and discomfort.

3. BRINGING FORTH AFTER YOUR OWN KIND

Genesis 1:12 declares that God's principle of reproduction is for everything to bring forth a duplicate of itself. The Minister is no exception - he will inevitably recreate his attitudes and orientations to life in his congregation.

If he is twisted, tense or has an unreal approach to life, his people will become like him.

4. LEGALISM

This is the modern equivalent of a hair shirt. Many unrealistic rules which is a form of self inflicted sadism.

When you meet someone who is disagreeable you may be sure he is uncomfortable with himself. The amount of pain we inflict on others is directly proportional to the pain we feel inside ourselves. 1 John 3: 20-21 declares that if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart. Paul said, "Happy is the man who condemneth not himself in that which he allows" (Romans 14:22).

The condemned minister will inevitably condemn others as well as leading an uncomfortable life himself.

5. LIVING A RELAXED LIFE

In every life a certain amount of tension is necessary. However in this context it is also necessary to be able to enjoy life fully and be a relaxed person, rather than a tense person. The Minister must do "normal" everyday things with some sort of regularity for his own spiritual and mental health. Play tennis or golf, etc., exercise, picnic with his family, work in the garden, go fishing, have a hobby, read something unrelated to his ministry, enjoy some "wholesome" television, or whatever he will find totally enjoyable.

Appendix to Church Life Principles 8

Would it surprise you to hear that right now nearly one in five parish pastors is physically and/or emotionally “burned out”? He or she hasn’t stopped functioning altogether yet- but pastors who are burned out have lost the zest for ministry; they “go through the motions” day after day, but with little joy, and with greatly reduced capability for effective service.

The sad part of this is that pastors who burn out are among our most dedicated and committed clergy. The hopeful part is that pastoral burnout can be avoided, and, if caught in time, can usually be remedied. Both minister and congregation can take specific steps to prevent pastoral burnout. This pamphlet will tell you how.

THE ANATOMY OF STRESS

Burnout, the “disease of the over-committed”, comes as the result of chronic stress. However, not all stress is bad. Everything we do causes some stress. Just getting up in the morning requires some stress (more some mornings than others!). One authority, Hans Selye, defines stress in terms of the response your body makes to any demand on it. He separates stress into “eustress” (good stress, such as you feel with joy, fulfillment, or satisfaction), and “distress” (excessive levels of damaging stress). A certain amount of stress or tension is necessary for renewal and growth. But too much- and too constant- stress can ruin your health and shorten your life. Thus the question is not how to take all the stress out of ministry, but how to make stress manageable.

Stress and threat of burnout “comes with the calling” in ministry. Studies show that ministers most vulnerable to burnout are: idealistic and over-committed; have rigid standards for their role; are social activists; are inclined to avoid conflict by trying to satisfy everybody; are constant direct contact with the poor, dying, sick and hurting; suffer from role confusion; can’t seem to protect their personal boundaries for rest, relationships and relaxation. Chances are, most ministers will recognise in this list more than a few of their own characteristics.

There is a high incidence of stress and burnout among all helping professions, but a pastor has the extra burden of trying to serve and satisfy every individual in his or her congregation. All the more reason why both pastors and their congregations must take extra care to avoid counterproductive pastoral self-sacrifice.

After all, being constantly over-stressed is not only destructive to the minister as a person; it is also contrary to the very spirit of pastoral commitment. The minister’s role is that of “one who serves”. Constant over-stress diminishes capacity to serve effectively. The pastor must stay well, not only for self and family, but also for the congregation’s sake. As pastoral counselor Charles Rassier puts it, in his book, “Stress Management for Ministers” (Westminster Press, 1982) : “Pastors who consciously and without apology take good care of themselves have by far the best chance to be servants of Christ for all the years of their calling.”

THREE MAJOR STRESS FACTORS

Stress comes in all sizes and shapes, but generally it starts from one of three major factors: life changes, work-related, or environmental factors.

1. LIFE CHANGE STRESS FACTORS :

Adjusting to any change physically and emotionally is stressful. The degree of stress involved varies widely, from death of a spouse (the most stressful change of all), divorce, marital separation, death of a close family member, personal injury or illness, new marriage, all the way down to such relatively modest changes as getting ready for Easter or Christmas, or being handed a traffic ticket.

2. WORK - RELATED STRESS FACTORS :

For parish ministers this can include:

- a)** Role Ambiguity : uncertainty about what your job includes.
- b)** Role Conflict: clash between ministerial functions and personal or family life.
- c)** Role Overload : being overwhelmed by the expectations of parishioners
- d)** Time Demands : constantly being thrown off schedule by unexpected issues.
- e)** Lack of Pastoral Care : not having a solid counselor to turn to with your own problems.
- f)** Lack of Chances to 'De-role' : to take care of yourself for a change.
- g)** Relocation : to a new area or job.
- h)** Career Uncertainty : knowing your whole future can depend upon how you get along in one parish.
- i)** Loneliness : the fact that few outside the ministry understand the demands on you can make you feel isolated even in the midst of commitment.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS FACTORS :

One person's irritation is another's bleeding ulcer. We don't all respond to stress in the same way. Each has a different stress threshold- that is, point where stress becomes harmful. The secret is to find your own stress threshold, and when you sense that you are close to it- back off and change pace. How can you tell when you've gotten "in over your threshold"? Here are some common signs:

- a)** Your Body Begins to Reject New Information : you don't even hear a lot of what is said to you, and you don't remember much of what you hear. Your overloaded.
- b)** Loss of Options : your mental horizon closes in; you have trouble seeing alternative courses of action.
- c)** Regression : stress overload can make us act childish- breaking things, or "hiding our heads" as we may have done when we were frustrated or frightened children. In adult life, these childhood responses can be self-destructive.
- d)** Inability to Change Harmful Patterns : when you're under stress from too many changes, it can seem too complicated to say "no" to additional demands. You find it easier to heap on more commitments. There's truth to that old line, if you want something done give it to the busiest person.
- e)** Fatigue : when you're under excessive stress, your body craves more rest and sleep than usual. Give in and rest!
- f)** Depression : this is usually related to change, or loss of someone or something close without taking time to grieve over your loss. Stress can precipitate depression.
- g)** Physical Illness : stress upsets your whole glandular system, raises blood pressure, keeps body systems in a fight / flight state of tension. This constant state of ferment makes you vulnerable to everything from colds and muscular aches to ulcers, heart disease and strokes.

NEXT STOP: BURNOUT

All the above signs are signals of gathering stress, which, if allowed to become chronic, will almost inevitably bring on a much more debilitating general state: burnout.

Psychologist Christine Maslach has described burnout as “a state of physical emotional and mental exhaustion marked by physical depletion and chronic fatigue, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and by development of a negative self-concept and negative attitudes towards work, life and other people.”

Burnout signs:

1. Decreased energy : “keeping up to speed” becomes increasingly difficult;
2. Feelings of failure in vocation;
3. Reduced sense of reward in return for pouring so much of self into the job or project;
4. Sense of helplessness and inability to see a way out of problems;
5. Cynicism and negativism about self, others, work and the world generally.

Studies have shown that clergy members go through a classic cycle on the way to burnout. They begin with enthusiasm and perhaps unrealistic expectations for achievement, combined with over-identification in their role. This stage is followed by stagnation as the mundane realities of personal, financial, and career-development requirements begin to press. Then comes frustration, a sense of being inadequate to accomplish what needs to be done, and doubts about whether or not it's all worth the effort.

Actually this stage of frustration can be a turning point for a minister: either upward again to enthusiasm and new effectiveness through a constructive re-channeling of his or her energy or down into a fourth stage of apathy and chronic indifference that marks complete burnout.

IT TAKES TWO TO UN-TANGLE

It has often been said that most of the stress associated with ministry comes from two sources: the pastor, who expects too much of himself or herself, and the congregation, which expects too much from the pastor. True- burnout also begins with the same two sources. Both must work together to prevent the pastor's becoming tangled in a snarl of continuous stress.

THE PASTOR CAN BE REVITALIZED BY:

1) FINDING FRESH SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES :

Insightful new ways of praying, for example; new approaches to scripture reading; the kind of serene continuity in observing a daily office, such as Matins, Compline or Psalms; daily meditation; personal retreats and days of silent contemplation; spiritual mentors or friends.

2) TAKING TIME OFF :

Daily breaks. Weekly breaks. (No pastor should put in more than 50-55 hours of work a week.) Quarterly long weekends off. Yearly breaks of at least a month. (This may seem long to some parishioners, but then, aren't ministers on 24 hour call, 7 days a week in their jobs?). Sabbaticals every six to eight years, to renew, re-educate and recharge mental and spiritual resources.

3) ESTABLISHING SUPPORT NETWORKS :

Parish clergy need a special kind of support, because they work under continuous observation from hundreds of potential critics. They need the support of being told they're doing well, and are loved and cared for individuals. This sort of affirmation should come not just from people inside, but also from outside the congregation. Where from? Clergy peers (who knows better than anyone else the pressures of ministry). Weekly prayers by the congregation for their pastor. Political support within the parish and judicatory , from individuals who share the ministers perspectives and aims, and will support him or her when needed. Personal support to help the pastor change his or her ways of functioning in order to relieve stress and become more effective. Spiritual support, because "a pastor needs a pastor too," to provide strength and nurturing.

4) ENRICHING LIFE AT HOME:

The family is our primary support system. Family problems place enormous added stress on the minister. Marriage enrichment seminars can help make even the best marriage better. Family therapy can help any family to greater health. The minister's family should take full advantage of ways to enrich their own life together, and the wise congregation will encourage them.

5) GETTING REGULAR EXERCISE :

The ministry is normally a sedentary profession; without added exercise, the pastor's vulnerability to heart disease is greatly increased. Tennis or golf twice a month is NOT an exercise program; it's just kidding yourself. A pastor needs frequent, regular, interesting exercise, planned to fit his or her temperament, schedule and available resources. Some pastors run. Some even take a brisk walk in the cemetery! Whatever- 30-60 minutes, at least three times a week, should be a regular ritual for any pastor- for the sake of the congregation!

6) FACING FEARS:

Every human being finds something in life threatening. Fears don't go away; they simply weigh on us. Drinking and overeating are often ways to try and avoid threatening fears. When we're ready and willing to confront fears, we're on the way to casting off the burden. But admitting fear is hard for a pastor, simply because pastors are supposed to be "above all that". For a pastor who needs help in facing fears, therapy or members of a support network can help greatly.

7) PRACTICING SELF-ASSESSMENT:

Many pastors flounder along day after day, never taking time to figure out what's happening to them, nor how to improve things. Taking time to assess your own needs, your points of greatest stress, and how well your coping with these needs and stresses can make an enormous difference.

8) GETTING THERAPY:

The healthier we become, the more we have to offer others. Therapy is not inexpensive. Yet if it means the difference between ineffective ministry and vital, healthful ministry, can a pastor or congregation afford to miss out on it?

9) LAUGHING:

Did you know that your body will not let you laugh and develop an ulcer at the same time? It's true. Laughter has tremendous healing power. Take time out for laughter.

THE CONGREGATION CAN HELP AVOID PASTORAL BURNOUT

1. TAKING THE FIRST STEP:

Ideally, if lay people took more active responsibility in discussing and solving problems in the church, stress wouldn't reach the crisis stage so often. If everyone is truly open when goals and priorities are being established, the difficulties can be singled out before factions develop.

2. ENCOURAGING YOUR PASTOR'S CONTINUING EDUCATION:

Urge your pastor to develop his or her skills in resolving stress and role conflicts through classes, seminars on human relations, conflict management, and group organisational techniques- at the church's expense.

3. HELPING A FRESH, EAGER YOUNG PASTOR :

Since the first four to five years are the hardest, encourage your young pastor or assistant pastor to attend young pastor's seminars, seminary follow-up courses or other training.

4. RECOGNISING THAT THE PASTOR IS HUMAN :

He or she can make mistakes, and can't do everything for everybody.

5. RECOGNISING UNREALISTIC CONGREGATIONAL EXPECTATIONS :

and adjusting them with the pastor.

6. UNDERSTANDING:

A minister needs support, time out, feedback, and compensation- both emotional and monetary. No one can constantly put out without ever taking in.

7. SEEING THAT YOUR PASTOR HAS AN ADEQUATE STAFF:

Whether the help is full-time, part-time or volunteer, your pastor deserves an adequate staff to make sure demands on his or her time are not excessive.

8. PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF YOUR PASTOR'S FAMILY:

Do your best to remind fellow parishioners that your pastor's family is not the property of the church. They're not to be assumed to be "unpaid staff" either.

FOR MORE HELP IN COPING WITH STRESS AND BURNOUT.

Write to Ministers Life Resources, Ministers Life Building, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416 today. We can make available to you two uniquely helpful "survival kits" for church professionals- one on Clergy Stress and the other on Clergy Burnout. These two workbooks, combined with 4 cassette tapes, will provide you with hundreds of pages of the most current information and counsel, written by and for the clergy. These kits were developed by Roy M. Oswald of The Alban Institute for Ministers Life Resources.

Each survival kit also comes with one-half hour of free counseling time with a stress management specialist. The kits also contain visual aids and charts for a pastor to use in evaluating his or her needs, as well as providing many additional references. (Two of those references were used in this brochure: *Stress, Power & The Ministry*, by John C. Harris of the Alban Institute; and *Stress Management for Ministers*, by Charles Rassieur, Westminster Press, 1982

GROWING WITH YOUR CALLING

Chapter Nine

1. THE CHURCH WILL BE A REPLICA OR MANEFESTATION OF ITS MINISTRY - Hosea 4:9

- a)** A Pastor who is in a rut in his own personal or spiritual development will produce a static and sterile Church.
- b)** Non developing Ministers become a bottleneck in their Church which creates an area of tension immediately beneath them in the leadership. These people will become frustrated to the point where they will either:
 - i. lose their motivation and become like their Minister. These people then forever afterwards become a source of trouble to future Ministers and are extremely difficult to get moving again.
 - ii. leave the Church to go to another Church or go to Bible College
 - iii. split the Church.

2. NEW OR YOUNG MINISTERS NEED TO BE IN A SITUATION WHERE THEY CAN GROW WITH THEIR CHURCH OR CALLING.

The story of Milo and the calf illustrates the idea of development in Ministry. Milo accepted a wager that he would be able to carry a fully grown cow. He started out training for this event by carrying a calf on his shoulders every day. As the calf grew so did his strength and ability to cope with it until he was able to fulfill the challenge.

Many young Ministers would not be able to cope with a sudden appointment to Pastor a large Church, but God will help them gain experience little by little as they start with what they are capable of.

3. RULERSHIP DEMANDS TRAINING.

- a)** David was anointed to be King, but for an extensive period served as a servant in the court of Saul where he gained experience in statecraft and rulership. He was being groomed for the throne by God.
- b)** Experience can't be bought or imparted. It must be gained by training.
- c)** 1 Timothy 3:6 and 5:22 make it clear that a novice must not be exalted to leadership or he will fall into pride and condemnation of the devil.
- d)** There is much advantage in a Minister serving some time in an Assistant's role or as a Ministry Team member. This is not an emphatic rule but if possible it should be sought.

Paul, the mighty apostle began his actual ministry as an assistant to Barnabas in Antioch and this was after a number of years of getting his foundations in order. Acts 11:25-26

4. PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO TIMOTHY.

Timothy had been under Paul's teaching and oversight and had travelled with Paul for a considerable period. He had gained experience and had then been installed as the Pastor of the Church at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3). The two epistles to Timothy are Paul's counsel to him on how to handle this enormous responsibility. Some say that the Church there grew to 70,000 strong. Timothy was given to crying, nervousness and stomach pains. (2 Timothy 1:4, 7 and 1 Timothy 5:23).

Paul counselled Timothy in numerous practical areas and every new Minister should give himself to diligent study of these two epistles and also Titus in preparation for his growth into his calling.

The following are some of the points brought to Timothy's attention:

- a) Don't be gullible -1 Timothy 1:4
- b) Develop a strong prayer ministry -1 Timothy 2:1-8
- c) Uphold good standards of behaviour -1 Timothy 3
- d) Beware of deception -1 Timothy 4:1-7
- e) Take care to teach and observe proper interpersonal relationships = 1 Timothy 5:1 to 6:2
- f) Avoid being side-tracked or snared by foolish or things irrelevant to your ministry -1 Timothy 6:3-14
- g) Stir up the gift imparted to you - 2 Timothy 1:6-7 and 1 Timothy 4:14
- h) Deal with fear and develop a positive faith filled life - 2 Tim. 1:7
- i) Take heed to the prophetic word concerning you - 2 Timothy 1:18
- j) Study to show yourself approved and able to rightly divide the Word of Truth - 2 Timothy 2:15 and 2 Timothy 3:14-17
- k) Be consistent - 2 Timothy 4:2 .
- l) Be an example of the believers in every area, 1 Timothy 4:12 -
 - i) Knowledge of the Word
 - ii) Behaviour
 - iii) Love
 - iv) Anointing of the Holy Spirit
 - v) Faith
 - vi) Holiness

5. THE MINISTER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS PERSONAL AND MINISTERIAL GROWTH NEVER CEASES.

Late in his life and Ministry while a prisoner in Roman awaiting execution Paul wrote, "I don't count myself to have attained yet but I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". Philippians 3:12-14.

MINISTER TO THE MAINSTREAM

Chapter Ten

1. THE PUCE OF PARA-CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

Many valid ministries have emerged in recent years which tend to specialise in a certain area of ministry or emphasis.

i.e., Full Gospel Business Men, Teen Challenge, Women's Aglow, Leprosy Mission, World Vision, etc.

2. THE TASK OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

An effective local Church will not express its ministry in one area only, but must develop an all round ministry.

a) The local Church must minister to the entire community.

To do this it must avoid being side-tracked into an exclusive ministry to polarising minorities, e.g. ethnic groups or special interest groups.

i. A strong family Church must be developed with Ministries to every level of family life and needs, i.e. ministry to children, youth, young couples and the elderly.

ii. There should be many Outreach thrusts into the community to reach these various levels of family life and facilities and programmes to cater for these ministries, whether they are spiritual or social.

iii. A properly balanced local Church will generally reflect the composition of its community in its congregation.

b) The Church must constantly re-assess its reason for being.

It is very easy to become dominated by a good emphasis or programme which eventually squeezes out all other expressions and ministries until the Church exists primarily to support or express that one particular facet of ministry, i.e. a rehabilitation programme, a ministry to ethnic minorities, an educational programme, a printing operation, a Child Care Centre, or a Retirement Village, etc.

c) Style can also be a polarising influence.

In the final analysis many people attach themselves to a local Church not because they have been convinced doctrinally or have committed themselves to the Church's emphasis, but because they simply like the style in which the Church conducts itself. It is a fact that many people will drive past a Church of their own denomination to attend another one whose style appeals to them more.

It is a fact that some people prefer a conservative style and others prefer one more flamboyant. Some like formality and others informality Churches which adopt one or the other style will generally attract people who are comfortable with it.

However this will cause a significant section of the community to be beyond the Church's reach. In order to avoid this polarisation the Church should attempt to combine a harmonious blending of various styles to achieve a balanced approach. Any extreme in teaching, worship, dress, music, emphasis or government will polarise the Church. E.g. the Church which uses rock music will no doubt attract a group of youth who appreciate that style but will certainly lose many people who cannot accept it.

d) Ministering to a revolving generation

On the average Australian families move once every two years. Most of these moves are within the same community which may not mean a transfer to another Church because it is closer. However the average Church will lose a significant proportion of its people each year due to transfers. With new people transferring in or being won to the Lord there is the constant need to re-teach people the emphasis of the Church. The more middle of the road its style is the easier it will be to communicate to the greatest number of people.

e) Accepting Responsibility for the Whole Community

i. Most Churches have written off many people as unreachable. Generally professional, or wealthy or society people are abandoned. The mistaken idea that the “down and out” is an easier prospect has caused Churches to unconsciously polarise their ministry by reaching for only one strata of society.

For a Church to be truly effective as a “community” Church it must accept the responsibility of reaching all the people. The gospel is not for an exclusive minority. We are commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15

ii. Paul declared that he had to adjust his ministry so he could effectively communicate with different types of people. He became “all things to all men that by all means he might save some”-1 Cor. 9: 19-23

iii. The Early Church at Jerusalem had an initial breakthrough in which mostly ordinary people were won. Shortly afterwards, probably through the ministry of Stephen, a great company of priests were won to the Lord. Acts 6:7. This would have brought a balance to the composition of the Jerusalem Church and provided much of its leadership

iv. It is possible for the Pastor or the Church to “avoid” certain sections of the community such as professionals, university graduates or the wealthy through feeling inadequate or embarrassed.

The Church and Minister then needs to develop a proper self image and to restructure itself and its emphasis if necessary so it can become all things to all men.

No local Church will be able to satisfy everyone but as a general rule it should be able bridge the gap between each strata of society and accommodate many special interest groupings or ethnic minorities

Its overall vision will be the governing factor in the success or failure of this.

THE ART OF LEADING A MEETING

Chapter Eleven

1. THERE ARE TWO MAIN FAULTS THAT OCCUR IN LEADING MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH:

- a) A routine programme - rigid and unimaginative, lifeless. It is unrelated to God.
- b) A super-spiritual emphasis. This type of emphasis is unrelated to the people .

Not everybody is able to appreciate, comprehend, or function in the "spiritual" high developed by those who place an unbalanced emphasis on extremes of spiritual ecstasy.

2. WORSHIP IS AN ARTFORM DEVELOPED BY THE CONGREGATION FOR THE PLEASURE OF GOD.

It is made up of, and made a success or otherwise by, the total contribution of the congregation.

Each part of the service will positively or negatively affect the creation of this presentation to God. (Note - even the offering is an act of worship. 2 Chron. 16:29.)

3. THERE ARE THREE THINGS WHICH THE LEADER OF THE MEETING MUST LEARN TO CULTIVATE:

- a) A sensitivity to God's presence and desires. The special manifestations of the presence of the Lord need to be treated carefully so as not to offend the Holy Spirit, and to fully experience all that God is bringing to the congregation at that point in the meeting.

The leader needs to be constantly asking the Lord "What do you want us to do now? What song should we sing? Is there a gift of the Spirit to be brought forth? Is this the right time?, etc."

- b) Sensitivity to where the people are as far as their experience of and openness to God is concerned. It is difficult to immediately take the congregation into a new realm of worship. They need to learn the way to go. The leader who tries to put too much on the people will end up bringing frustration and dislocation into the service.

- c) Sensitivity to spiritual influences, both angelic and demonic. Not everything that happens in a service is necessarily of God. The leader needs to be aware of spurious powers and how to deal with them. Often the strong manifestations of God's presence are accompanied by angelic visitation - visible or invisible. Because such things are "different", "Out of the ordinary", it is easy for an inexperienced leader to usurp such a time with his own rigid programme and spoil what God would have done in the service.

4. THE PRIMARY GOAL OF EVERY CHRISTIAN MEETING MUST BE TO ACHIEVE GOD'S AIM FOR THAT PARTICULAR SERVICE

There are different people and differing conditions for each occasion and the leader is foolish to attempt to totally duplicate a previous programme. In this respect a plan for the service is vitally important. The leader (and the main participants) need to be "tuned" to the Holy Spirit and their sensitivity opened up to His plans for the meeting. The leader should know which way to take the service and which songs will "fit" in before the service starts. Of course he must also be flexible to any change of direction the Holy Spirit indicates as the service progresses.

5. BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE

Generally the leader will “lead” the congregation from their unmotivated or unprepared attitude on arrival at the Church to a atmosphere in which God can work. He will build this openness to God step by step until the moment of break-through, revelation, or satisfaction of God occurs. The Song of Solomon 2:14 gives a clue to our approach to God’s presence. His countenance is seen in the secret places of the stairs ... a continual rising to further heights in God. This atmosphere can and should also be built from week to week.

The Tabernacle of the Old Testament also shows us how to approach the presence of the Lord, i.e. through the Way, the Truth and the Life - the three doorways speak of these three stages and they, like the stairs, are a progression to better things.

6. LEAD. DON’T DRIVE

Many meeting leaders make the mistake of whipping or berating the congregation. The people in reaction recoil and the atmosphere becomes hard.

The leader must lead the people and not drive them, and he can only take them where he is himself. In other words, he needs to demonstrate the presence of God in his own life before he can expect the people to follow him to those heights of spiritual experience. John 10:4 says of the shepherd that “he goeth before them”.

7. TIMING

Many leaders never learn to be sensitive to the right time to do things in the service. There is often a moment when God is stirring the waters of the meeting (Note the example in John 5) and that moment needs to be capitalised upon. In this the leader needs to be not only sensitive but obedient. The usual order of service may be completely discarded but if the change is born of the Holy Spirit it will release God’s presence and power.

8. COUNTER PRODUCTIVE HABITS

- a)** Forcing actions of worship. To be effective all worship must be voluntary and in the spirit. John 4:24. You may get people to do certain things and still not release God’s presence upon them.
- b)** Excessive standing. Let the people sit after a few choruses at the most. If they wish to stand as a voluntary act of worship that is fine, but do not require it.
- c)** Avoid unchannelled things. Everything should have a purpose. Don’t do anything for the sake of doing it. The parts of the service should all fit together like a jigsaw to produce one total and beautiful expression of love to God which will have the by-product of bringing His blessing to the people.
- d)** Many testimonies are counterproductive in that the people get carried away, get off the point, begin to preach, or are unable to effectively communicate and so “lose” the congregation.

Sometimes people will share things of their previous life which are more glorifying to Satan than they are to God.

- e)** Wasting Time. Find ways to trim areas that can unnecessarily absorb time such as the distribution of the communion elements and the collection of the communion cups or the offering.

9. THE IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM FOR A SERVICE

The main elements which ought to be included in the service of the Assembly are:

- a)** Worship
- b)** Fellowship and
- c)** Preaching.

HOW TO KEEP A CHURCH ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Chapter Twelve

There is more to operating a Church than to get a group of people meeting in religious activity. Unless the leadership overcomes the seeds of disaster always present in Church life, that group may be on the decline and its leaders may be simply presiding over its death. More than 2000 Churches in the United States of America cease to exist each year.

1. LAY PROPER FOUNDATIONS

a) HAVE A CLEAR GOAL OF THE CHURCH'S DESTINY

The Pastor must get before God until he knows what God intends to do with that Assembly. He should have a prophetic view of its ultimate state, otherwise he will never know which track to take and will be constantly influenced by non-productive factors, and will grasp at straws to produce some immediate effect which will often have a detrimental by-product.

b) HAVE A CLEAR ASSESSMENT OF THE CHURCH'S REASON FOR BEING AND ITS MINISTRIES

The Pastor must establish what his local Church exists for. What is God's calling to that Group? What emphasis should be maintained? If these questions are not resolved, it will be a Church going around in circles & producing nothing effective. Its functions need to be as clear cut as its goals.

c) CONSTANTLY RE-ASSESS BOTH THE DESTINY AND MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

This should be done at least annually if not more frequently. In this way the Church's leadership can line up where the Church is with where they want to be, and any necessary mid-course corrections or amputations of nonproductive functions, or additions of necessary ministries can be performed.

2. PROBLEMS TO AVOID

a) AVOID BEING MANIPULATED BY THE PEOPLE

i. The Shepherd must decide the direction and not the flock. A leader who is led by his people will never follow a cohesive plan to achieve the Church's destiny.

Moses is the classic example of a Pastor who refused to be manipulated by the bleating of the sheep.

The view of most of the flock is limited and they do not see what God intends to do. They live for the now only. Moses was enabled to see God's ways, while Israel only saw His acts. Moses' view was prophetic while Israel's was historic.

ii. Avoid the trap of visitation - although this is necessary by the Pastor where the Church is small. It is the one single factor which will dominate him and destroy his effectiveness if he is manipulated by the expectation of his congregation to visit them constantly. Arrange for other leaders to do this.

b) BE PRACTICAL INSTEAD OF SUPER SPIRITUAL

It is possible to move into a so-called spiritual realm that is :

i. Unreal. The way some Churches and leaders express themselves is almost hypocritical.

They have all the religious jargon but they are unrelated to life. One preacher calls this V.R.G. ((Verbalised Religious Garbage). True religion is intensely practical, (Note James 1:27), and does not get people into an artificial type of life.

ii. Unbalanced. There is often a temptation to concentrate on valid facets of Church life to the exclusion of other expressions, i.e. a Church may be so strongly evangelistic that it degenerates into either a recruitment agency or a massive spiritual nursery with no emphasis on maturity or worship, or vice versa. All of the Church's ministries need to be balanced with each other. An effective Church in the long term has an all-round ministry.

iii. Unnatural. It is possible that a Church's concept may produce attitudes and standards which are actually opposed to the gospel, e.g.:

- a)** Legalism
- b)** Exclusivity
- c)** Break up of Families
- d)** Rejection of recreation
- e)** Isolation
- f)** etc., etc.

The Church should be the most balanced, well adjusted group of people in the community, not the most off-centered or weird. There are many things about the Church that the world will never understand or accept, but this is no excuse for the adoption of bizarre practices.

c) AVOID INTROVERSION AND INTROSPECTION

There are actually two problems here, but the first (introversion) is often caused by the other (introspection).

i. introversion: It is very easy for a Church to retreat from society and lose its outreach to the community and its vision for lost souls. A number of factors can produce this type of Church. Failure of a Faith Step or Project. Not everything attempted will be successful at the first attempt. Some goal or faith step may not be achieved. Instead of becoming reactionary, and abandoning the ideal, the leadership should assess if:

a) They were presumptuous. If so, a true repentance to God should be made and a confession to the people. Then an intense time of seeking God for correct direction will produce a healthy recovery of the Church's momentum. "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper"- Prov. 28:13.

b) They have given up too soon for the lack of observable results. A recommittment to the vision and constant re-motivation of the people is the answer in this case. Never give up on a God-ordained idea.

c) They have been discouraged by Satan or interfered with by demonic power. If so, the leadership and maybe the Church should come into prayer and fasting until there is a break-through.

d) They have re-acted to the challenges and demands to become an effective Church, e.g., it is easy to opt for the development of the fruit of the Spirit in opposition to the Gifts of the Spirit because of the pressure.

ii. **Introspection:** If the Church turns its eyes inward only, instead of keeping an outward perspective also, the only thing it will be able to see is itself. This will cause it to become dissatisfied with itself and develop a poor self image as a Church. The most common result of introspection is the development of an unreal expectation of itself and a search for perfectionism among its people. It is all too easy to blame someone or some group of people in the Church for being “unspiritual” or “rebellious” etc., and stopping progress. The leadership which is caught in introspection will be constantly “purging” the Church and creating an insecurity in the congregation. The common cry is “We are aiming for quality instead of quantity”. This type of crisis management will never allow a solid foundation or long-term vision to be established. It is also the reason why some Churches develop a bizarre or extreme emphasis. Their insecurity as a Church causes them to do such things to prove to themselves and others that they are more “spiritual” or more “perfect”, etc.

d) PROTECT THE FLOCK FROM WOLVES

Paul urged the Ephesian elders to take heed to themselves and to all the flock of God. He said that grievous wolves would come in and attempt to destroy the flock. Acts 20:28-30. The effective Church will carefully guard its people from the destructive attacks of false teachers and the divisive or self-promoters.

i. Develop a strong preaching ministry that is based on Bible teaching, rather than interesting topics. Preach the whole Bible!

ii. Develop a thorough ministry to new converts. Immediately on their conversion introduce them to the basic Bible teachings. This will create within them a desire for the Word of God and build a hedge against the attacks of false cults.

iii. Carefully integrate all of the flock into:

- a) Relationships with other members in the Church
- b) Specific contact with members of the Church’s leadership
- c) Expressing their own ministry
- d) Evangelism.

iv) If necessary, deal either privately or publicly with any heresy or false teacher or divisive person. Act immediately to rescue any of the sheep attacked by wolves.

a) However, it is wise not to attack such people. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. God always has a perfect plan to solve such problems. Note David slaying the lion and the bear-I Sam. 17 : 34-37.

b) Paul’s advice is the best course to follow. An ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure.

e) DON’T COPY OTHER CHURCHES’ UNIQUE MINISTRIES

God has a plan for each Church. It is the responsibility of the leader to find that plan and impart to his people and then turn neither to the right hand or the left (Is. 30:21). There are many principles of Church Life and Growth which are common to all Churches and these should be adopted without hesitation. However every Church is unique and will have an expression directed by the Lord - the Head of that local Church, which is related to its community and its peoples’ needs. This will most often be somewhat different to other Churches. Identify the principles in operation in successful Churches, and use them, but avoid adopting their methods unless you have clear direction from the Lord to do so.

The Church will develop a distinctive personality and will most often reflect the character of its leadership and any unique community traits.

GOING BY THE BOOK

Chapter Thirteen

Organisation is absolutely necessary in Church Life. Without it all of the Ministries will tend to become ineffective and chaos will result. Dr. David Yonggi Cho has proved that it is possible to have a highly organised Church and at the same time have a mighty and continuous move of the Holy Spirit. However, it is possible for a Church to depend on organisation without the life of the Spirit and sterility and death is the result.

Some Churches try to create a set of procedures and policies for every conceivable situation and rigidly adhere to these, even if they are ineffective.

It is necessary to have some guidelines such as rosters of people involved in various tasks or job descriptions for the staff. Do not try to regiment every facet of Church life though, for these routines will become more of a bondage to the Church than an assistance.

Procedures can become laws which, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, cannot be changed (Daniel 6:8). The Jewish Talmud is basically a collection of the various procedures established for their religious activities. In it there are in excess of 600 laws which must be observed to have an acceptance with God. Jesus Himself could not fit into these procedures at all times, such as washing of hands before eating, etc.

The traditions of Religion largely develop from such procedures, and eventually exercise tremendous power in the Church. Juan Carlos Ortiz maintains that there is an evil Spirit behind Church traditions. He says there is no other way you can explain the power of religious tradition.

This “prayer book philosophy” is largely the vehicle of weak and fearful Church leaders. Instead of being able to cope with change or exercise spiritual authority, they establish a set of regulations covering every facet of Church life and hide behind them. We need to understand that most often “beaten paths are made by beaten men”. This type of Church life which constantly attempts to “go by the book” is largely based on history rather than prophecy. It constantly looks back to the way things have always been done and so it stifles creativity and initiative. Confucism which ruled over China’s political and cultural life for centuries is based on the preservation of the status quo by an elaborate set of procedures and rigid rules.

The Church which adopts this type of thinking will be unable to relate to anything fresh from God. A new move of the Holy Spirit will be unable to be contained in the old wineskins and consequently the new wine will be lost.

In order to avoid the mentality which “Goes by the book”, the Church leadership needs to orient itself to:

1. FLEXIBILITY

All initiation and Holy Ghost genius will demand a flexible attitude. God is always fresh and will often inspire a brand new idea for the expression of Church Life. The Church leaders need to constantly re-assess if they are doing things simply because they always have been done or for the sake of doing them rather than because God wants them to. New ideas will almost always challenge the status quo. A new breath of the Holy Spirit in the Church will often scatter tradition and demand a new approach.

2. PRINCIPLES. NOT METHODS

If a mechanic is taught to work on a particular model of car without being taught the principles of the Internal Combustion Engine, he will be unable to operate in other situations. Some Church leaders are so trained in methods of Church life, but they are totally without understanding of the nature of the Church itself.

One of the main areas of such methodology is in Church Government. However, while some types of government may be more flexible than others, the worldwide facts are that there is no one method which God exclusively blesses. He looks on people's hearts, not their external methods.

3. PEOPLE. NOT PROGRAMMES

People are the centre of the Church's ministry yet many Churches set up their Ministry with the idea that the people need to fit the programme rather than the programme fit the people. - Often such organisers are "paper experts" who develop theories which will not work out in practice and do not benefit the people.

4. CONSTANT CHANGE

Effective leaders will not only be ready for change but will be constantly changing some things in order to keep people from settling into a rut. However this needs to be done for a purpose and not just for the sake of it. Seek God for ways to improve the Ministry of the Church and be bold to introduce new ideas when the situation warrants it.

KEEPING YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND

Chapter Fourteen

The Ministry is a high and holy calling and it is this very thing which can lead to the problem of unreality - of being too heavenly minded to be any earthly use.

The key word in Church Life is "balance". The successful minister will learn to find the right balance for the Church's Ministry and expression. E.g., the areas of Music, organisation, evangelism, worship, etc., will need to be finely balanced with other parts of the Church life in order for it to be a truly effective Church.

The Balanced Church will have a proper expression of 3 things:

- a) **WORSHIP** - This comes first. The Old Testament priest ministered first to the Lord.
- b) **WORD** - The revelation and feeding on the Word of God related to the priest's ministry to the House of God as his second facet of ministry.
- c) **WORLD** - Evangelism. Once the priest had ministered to the Lord and to the household of God, he ministered to those outside the Tabernacle.

The Church that concentrates on any one of these expressions without relating it to the other parts will be unbalanced and eventually ineffective.

1. BE INTENSELY PRACTICAL.

- a) **In Preaching** - Relate your preaching to life and to where your people are. Do not preach above them. Don't preach the ideas or thoughts of Luther or Spurgeon, etc., but relate the Bible to your congregation in terms they can identify with.
- b) **In Counselling** -
 - i. It is absolutely necessary in counselling to be realistic rather than idealistic. It is very easy for the Minister to tell the person what God's perfect standard for marriage is, for example, but if the Counsellee has a broken home or is already divorced, that standard which you may enjoy is cold comfort to them. Always relate to where they are spiritually and emotionally.
 - ii. Be moderate in the time and intensity of your counselling. Do not make the people dependent on you and become their spiritual or emotional crutch.
- c) **In the Home** - The Bible says "whatsoever you do in word or deed do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). Be an ordinary person. Avoid superspirituality. Do ordinary things and live an ordinary life. Wash your car, do your garden work, have adequate recreation, cultivate friendships and build strong relationships with your children.

2. DON'T GET AN EXALTED VIEW OF YOUR OWN IMPORTANCE.

The first step to pride is the feeling of indispensability. (The cemetery is full of indispensable men). This is not only the step to disqualification with God through pride, but will eventually lead to "burn-out crisis". One of the prime components of spiritual leaders' "burn-out" is the Omnipotence syndrome - the feeling that you can do everything and that you are the only one who can do it right.

This promotes a false sense of responsibility and destroys the leader's ability to delegate.

3. BE A WARM MARRIAGE PARTNER.

Ministers are ordinary people with ordinary needs. Some get trapped with the false idea that the intimacy of a marriage relationship is unspiritual and that all such desires should be suppressed.

1 Corinthians 7 teaches that all married people have a responsibility to totally satisfy each other and that their spiritual service, i.e. prayer and fasting does not take Precedence over this.

Your spouse is your first responsibility after God, and must be catered for spiritually, physically and emotionally with the same fervency and -sacrificial love with which Jesus has loved and met the needs of His Church. Eph. 5:25.

HOME FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Chapter Fifteen

THE CAL VARY TEMPLE TOWNSVILLE MODEL

1. THE ORIGIN OF CALVARY TEMPLE'S HOME FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

a) It evolved. Most structure in the Church is evolutionary, i.e. systems develop as they are needed, i.e. Elders (Acts 6).

- Structure must always follow life and never the reverse

b) Desire to effectively:

- i. Grow in numbers
- ii. Care for the flock The cafeteria type Church is not really a local Church. There is:
 - a) No effective Pastoral Ministry
 - b) No body expression;
 - c) No discipline,
 - d) No responsibilities

c) It has been progressively refined and adjusted as it has developed.

d) The major strengths of our Home Fellowship Groups emerged with:

- i. The development of Districts
- ii. The appointment of Pastoral Ministries to oversee the Districts.

2. HOME FELLOWSHIPS PROVIDE THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE NECESSITY FOR URGE AND SMALL GROUPINGS IN THE CHURCH.

a) Everyone needs to feel part of something that is effective and growing in order to demand growth personally.

b) The Personal Contact Limit is about 250 or less. The Pastor cannot effectively minister to more than this in solo ministry.

c) Moses pattern for:

- i. Church leadership-EXODUS 18:1-10
- ii. Ministry to the Body

3. THE LOCAL CHURCH'S FORMULA: CELEBRATION + CONGREGATION + CELL = CHURCH

a) **CELEBRATION**

i. The mass expression of worship which generates a level of celebration that is different to the small group simply because of its size.

ii. The three annual festivals of Jewish worship were designed to meet this need of identifying everyone as part of the one nation - an essential by-product of celebration is unity.

iii. These festivals of worship ought to be both fun and stimulating.

b) CONGREGATION

- i. The major characteristic of the congregation is that everyone knows everyone. You can be anonymous in the celebration, but not the congregation.
- ii. The successful large church will have a number of congregations - i.e. departments such as Youth, or District Home Fellowship functions or common interest groups (Singles, or Seniors), etc. The optimum size of these will vary from 50 to 250, but usually will not be larger than that.

c) CELL

- i. This is the smaller and more intimate group where everyone has an opportunity for expression, and ministry to each other.
- ii. An average cell or Home Fellowship group would comprise between 4-6 families, or 15-20 people at the most.
The minimum effective size would generally not be less than 8 people.
- iii. As groups grow in size they will need to be partitioned (the word "split" has negative connotations). This raises a number of important issues discovered out of our experience at Calvary Temple.
 - a) The main issue in Home Fellowship Groups is leadership and there is a major need for the growing Church to be constantly raising up new leadership. The small groups give tremendous opportunity for people to be developed in their leadership potential.
 - b) If a group is not partitioned after reaching around 20 people at the most, it tends to stagnate or level out.
 - c) When a healthy group is partitioned it is usually not long before both groups grow back to the strength of the original group - thus doubling the Church's size.
 - d) Should a group be divided too early leaving the two groups very small (less than 8 solid people), the effect is the same as pruning a tree back too far. It takes a long time for it to recover because some of the group's necessary resources have been cut off. At this level often uncomfortable relationships are forced.
 - e) We have discovered that if a group becomes sick or leaderless and is amalgamated with another group, that in a short time the attendance of the amalgamated group invariably tends to level out at no more than the size of the original larger group.

Conclusion - it is better to raise new leadership and persevere with a small group for a while as it will more than likely strengthen.

- iv. We believe that while the Home Fellowship Group should have direction and may include a teaching programme and appointed leadership, it should also be informal. As much as possible it should not copy the Church's Celebration (i.e. Sunday services).

Sometimes the use of refreshments throughout the evening can be a help in producing a less formal atmosphere.

- v. In the Full Gospel Central Church, Seoul, the cells are evangelistic in primary function. At this point most Home Fellowship Groups in Australia or the United States of America tend to be part of the Church's Pastoral Care programme instead.

This was the case at Calvary Temple, although the Home fellowship Groups enabled us to shepherd and disciple many of the new converts. This enabled us to have a very high retention rate of new converts.

However it was always the aim of this church to promote direct evangelism by the groups and to some extent this was achieved by constant letter box outreach to the entire city by the groups. The church which develops an effective Home Fellowship Group ministry will grow by HOOK (evangelism and by CROOK (Pastoral care)

4. THE FULL EXPRESSION OF CHURCH LIFE

Each Church needs three vital elements to be healthy. These are expressed in three Greek words:

- a)** CHARISMA - This is the aspect of exciting and stimulating worship expressed in the celebration. This will include the aspect of the operation of Spiritual Gifts and the Ministry of healing, mass or public evangelism and the impartation of the Holy Spirit
- b)** KERUGMA - This is the preaching and teaching of the Word. Strong Churches have a strong pulpit ministry. This will occur either in the context of the Church's Celebration or Congregation or both.
- c)** KOINONIA - This means fellowship and can only effectively occur in the small group situation. While a certain level of fellowship occurs in both the Celebration and Congregation aspects of Church life, the small groups give real relationships an opportunity to develop.

5. THE EXPRESSION OF PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

At Calvary Temple Home Fellowship Groups originated in 1976 as a serious attempt to break through the Personal Contact Limit. Its primary goal was to successfully shepherd the congregation.

Initially all of our follow-up programme, counselling and visitation was carried out by the Home Fellowship Group Leaders. For a time the follow-up of new converts was changed to a centralised system, but we have now reverted to total follow-up by the Home Fellowship Group. This is supported only by the New Life Course for new converts. The total number of groups has grown from eight at the start, to about 50 at present.

6. REASONS FOR FAILURE OF HOME FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

- a)** The group is not joined to the Pastoral Care Ministry of the Church and exists without a purpose.
- b)** The non-involvement of the Senior Minister.
- c)** Lack of substance and teaching by involvement of all the persons in the group.
- d)** Artificial leadership. The leadership should arise from within the Church rather than being imported.

7. GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOME FELLOWSHIP GROUP MINISTRY

- a)** Establish a model. Begin with one group led by the Pastor or Senior Minister to train the primary leaders.
- b)** The Senior Minister must have a direct continuing role in the training of leaders and contact with the leaders and groups.
- c)** Geographically based groups are the best in the long-term, though this is usually a more difficult system to start.
- d)** There must be accountability. Keep records and insist on a proper response by the leaders and the reporting of all needs and developments.