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**Nurturing the pastor's spiritual discipline of prayer through the
dynamic of spiritual direction**

Morris, Derek John, D.Min.

Andrews University, 1987

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**NURTURING THE PASTOR'S SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE
OF PRAYER THROUGH THE DYNAMIC
OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Derek John Morris

June 1987

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ABSTRACT

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by

Derek John Morris

Chairman: Robert M. Johnston

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

**Title: NURTURING THE PASTOR'S SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE
OF PRAYER THROUGH THE DYNAMIC
OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

Name of researcher: Derek John Morris

Name and degree of faculty advisor: Robert M. Johnston,
Ph.D.

Date completed: June 1987

Problem

Current research demonstrates that we cannot assume that seminarians have received sufficient guidance in spiritual formation prior to the completion of their Seminary training. Therefore, there is a great need to explore ways of nurturing spiritual formation for those involved in pastoral ministry. It was the purpose of this present study to explore the potential of spiritual direction as a dynamic for nurturing the pastor's spiritual discipline of prayer.

Method

A spiritual friend, who had received training in spiritual direction, was selected with guidance from Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. A twelve-month case study was established with the author of the present study as the directee. The experience was recorded in a spiritual journal.

Results

The process of spiritual direction proved to be a powerful dynamic in nurturing the spiritual discipline of prayer in the directee. The spiritual journal records a process of significant spiritual formation.

Conclusions

While no normative conclusions can be drawn, the recorded experience of the author is a testimony to the potential of spiritual direction as a dynamic for nurturing spiritual life in ministry.

DEDICATION

To my wife Bodil, who shares with me
the gift of friendship and love,
and to my two sons
Christopher and Jonathan
who are teaching me about the Father's love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Justification of the Study	3
Limitations of the Study	5
Definition of Terms	6
Biblical Quotations.	8
II. EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	9
Survey of the Old Testament.	9
Survey of the New Testament.	14
Survey of the Writings of Ellen G. White	24
Methodist Roots and the Social Meeting	24
Counsel on Seeking Personal Spiritual Direction	31
Summary	36
Historical Development of the Concept of Spiritual Direction in the Christian Church	37
Primitive Christianity through the Patristic Era	37
The Imperial-State Church and the Rise of Monasticism	43
The Middle Ages	53
The Reformation Era	57
Modern Christianity	65
Contemporary Literature	69
Summary	82
III. THE TWELVE-MONTH CASE STUDY IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	84
Identifying a Working Model	84
Selection of a Spiritual Friend	91
The Telephone Call and Get-Acquainted Visit	94
The Initial Session and Covenant	97
Learnings about the Process of Spiritual Direction	100
Spiritual Commitment of Spiritual Friend	100
Good Listening Skills	101
Loving Confrontation	102
Value of Accountability	104
Spiritual Counsel	104

Prayer and Direction	107
IV. THE IMPACT OF THE PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION UPON MY SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER	110
Developing a Contemplative Attitude	110
Sensing My Spiritual Poverty	114
Moving in Solitude and Silence	118
Healing of the Imagination	123
Contemplative Reading of Scripture	130
Summary	133
V. CONCLUSION	134
Personal Reflections	134
Recommendations for Further Study	136
APPENDIX A: SPIRITUAL JOURNAL	139
APPENDIX B: DEBRIEFING INTERVIEW	193
APPENDIX C: REFLECTIONS OF ASSOCIATES	199
Reflections of Bodil Morris, Wife.	199
Reflections of Ray E. Crissey, Church Elder.	202
Reflections of Christopher A. Daley, Church Elder	203
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.	208
VITA	218

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the well-being of pastors, and his valuable insights in the final stages of this project.

To the faithful members of the churches that I have pastored, who have prayed with me and for me. Their love and devotion to Jesus have helped me to hear the call to spiritual leadership.

Most of all, I want to confess my heartfelt gratitude to God. Meeting me in the midst of my poverty, He reaches out to me with arms of love, and welcomes me into His presence. There I have found peace, and freedom, and fullness of joy.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a thought-provoking monograph, published in 1986 by the Alban Institute, Forster Freeman asserts that there is an urgent need in Protestant Seminaries for Christian spiritual direction.¹ He suggests that the provision of spiritual direction in a seminary setting would be a strong force in increasing readiness for ministry.² In the preface to Readiness for Ministry Through Spiritual Direction, Freeman speaks in first-hand language about his own ministerial training:

By the time I was in my middler year I perceived that the spiritual guidance I hoped to provide eventually to parishioners I not only was not being trained to give but also had not experienced myself. How would I be able to provide what I had not received?³

Freeman cites the results of a survey, conducted by an Alban Institute research team, of 102 seminary

¹Forster Freeman, Readiness for Ministry Through Spiritual Direction (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1986), p. 5.

²Ibid., p. 80. Freeman's ruling hypothesis is that men and women students in Protestant seminaries would benefit more from their training for service in the church and world when that training included specific assistance in the area of personal spiritual formation. See pp. 19-36.

³Ibid., p. 3.

graduates which demonstrates that his experience was not unique.¹ The research revealed a distressing picture:

Sustaining and fostering personal integration and wholeness within a parish setting was a difficult task for these graduates. . . .

Only in retrospect did they realize that they had gone through four years of seminary education without once being asked about their personal life, their relationship with God, their experiences of Christ, the meaning of suffering in their lives, the ups and downs of their own spiritual journey, the ways in which they got centered and grounded, their personal discipline of meditation, prayer, and scriptural study, the spiritual giants of their lives, and their attempts at finding a spiritual father/mother/guru/friend for the present, and the activities that fed them spiritually.²

Freeman's monograph is worthy of careful consideration, particularly for those involved in pastoral formation in a Seminary setting.³ But I suggest that it also provides an important back-drop for this present study. As Celia Allison Hahn points out, in her forward to Freeman's monograph: "The importance of this book extends to clergy who now hunger for the help in spiritual formation they did not receive in seminary."⁴

¹Roy M. Oswald, Crossing the Boundary Between Seminary and Parish (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1980). The graduates came from ten different Protestant seminaries, representing eight different denominations, who had been engaged in parish ministry for one to three years.

²Ibid., p. 18, cited by Forster Freeman, Readiness for Ministry Through Spiritual Direction (Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1986), pp. 7-8.

³See recommendations on pp. 82-86.

⁴Ibid., p. i.

The focus of this project is also on the concept of spiritual direction, but it seeks to move beyond the time of Seminary training and to explore the potential of spiritual direction as a dynamic for nurturing spiritual life in the pastoral setting.

Justification of the Study

This study on spiritual direction is significant for several reasons. First, Seventh-day Adventist pastors have received little direction in the area of spiritual formation in their college and Seminary training.¹ There has been a strong emphasis on the two foci of theology and praxis, with little attention given to the basic issue of spiritual life.

Second, no support system has been established in the pastoral setting which provides spiritual guidance and counsel to the pastor. Traditionally, the Conference Ministerial Director has received no training in the ministry of spiritual direction, and he is not readily accessible to the local pastor on a regular basis.

¹In February, 1985, Spirituality for Ministry, CHMN 616, was taught for the first time at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, MI. The course was developed and taught by Dr. C. Raymond Holmes. This course explores the basic issues of spiritual life and introduces students to the concept of spiritual direction. An experiential knowledge of the direction process is an important component of the course. At present, Spirituality for Ministry is taught once a year as an elective.

Third, the testimony of fellow Seventh-day Adventist ministers and my own personal experience confirms that which the Alban Institute research team reported:

Many found themselves disillusioned by their failure to maintain their own sense of spiritual feeding and growth. Most were genuinely surprised as they had assumed that their spiritual life would be easily maintained or even grow by virtue of their work as pastors. Instead, they experienced a gradual decline or loss of spiritual awareness and wholeness during the two years following graduation. Even though they tried to find the time, place and opportunity for private prayer and reflection, they found their own attempts inadequate and the process very difficult. Some confessed feeling most depleted spiritually just when things were going well in the parish because they were not able to find the time or resources to nourish their own spirits.

In addition to feeling this personal vacuum, assumptions on the part of the congregation that the pastor is spiritually whole and healthy worked against their spiritual growth; the minister's needs were ignored or resisted. . . . As a total group they expressed feelings of inadequacy in the chief marks of their calling: scripture, prayer, and worship.¹

It is significant to note that many assumed their spiritual life would grow as a result of their work as pastors, but they were surprised to discover that the opposite was true.²

¹Oswald, p. 18 (emphasis supplied).

²Several other surprises in the area of spirituality were cited by Oswald:

"Not knowing how to support my personal spiritual life; my spiritual life did not grow as expected--am not spending much time with it; lack of spirituality of clergy in the Diocese; my spiritual discipline fluctuates wildly; how hard it is to worship when I am conducting worship; the number of broken commitments to myself, i.e.,

When a pastor experiences a deep inner need for spiritual support, counsel, and direction to whom does he turn? Oswald makes this significant observation at the conclusion of his comments on personal spirituality and wholeness:

These graduates felt isolated as they worked on their own spiritual formation. Those who had the good fortune of finding a spiritual father/mother/friend as they began in the parish found the going somewhat easier.¹

It is my conviction that the process of spiritual direction is a valuable resource for the pastor who seeks to experience spiritual growth and vitality in the local parish.

Limitations of the Study

The focus of this study is specifically on the dynamic of spiritual direction as a means of nurturing the spiritual discipline of prayer in the local pastor. Through the process of a twelve-month case study in spiritual direction, with myself as the directee, I explore both the process of spiritual direction and its

time for study and prayer; how much self discipline is required to be a good pastor; resistance on the part of people to support clergy in disciplines of spiritual growth; one year into first pastorate--shaking of theological foundation--began thinking--had to build a functioning faith" (ibid., p. 22).

¹Ibid., p.18.

potential impact upon spiritual life. I recorded this case-study experience in a spiritual journal.¹

Because the nature of this study is that of a subjective experience and not quantitative research, no normative conclusions can be reached. Rather, this project is presented in the form of a testimony, with the anticipation that it will stimulate further discussion and study of the relevance spiritual direction both in the Seminary setting and in the local parish.

Definition of Terms

Apophatic meditation is the process of emptying the mind. It emphasizes the via negativa, calling all particular expressions of God radically inadequate. This was the dominant religious path of Eastern meditation, and also some Western mystics.

Contemplation is the experience of finding freedom from one's own preoccupations and paying attention to another, namely God, as He reveals Himself in Scripture, nature, one's own life, and the life of the world.²

¹All spiritual journal entries are referred to by the date of entry and can be found in Appendix A. For example, Appendix A: 10/3/85 in the footnote refers to the journal entry on that date.

²This differs from a mystical definition of contemplation as "the highest union with God . . . culminating in the direct knowledge of God" (Michael Cox, Handbook of Christian Spirituality (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), p. 130).

Kataphatic meditation is the process of focusing the mind on positive symbols and images. Kataphatic meditation underscores the via affirmativa, the human capacity to reach God through nature, images, and symbols, and is the dominant form of meditation in the West.

Meditation is that process whereby one opens his mind to God's initiatives. The two classic approaches have been kataphatic and apophatic.

Prayer is one's awareness of and personal response to God's presence which involves a person-to-person communication with Him.¹ It is participation in a dialogue, not only of words but also of lives, that has been begun by God.

Spiritual Direction is help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication with him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.²

¹While Christian meditation involves thinking about God and focusing of thoughts upon Him, it is not essentially prayer. However, prayer can and often does take place in the setting of meditation.

²I am indebted to William A. Barry and William J. Connolly for my working definition of spiritual direction.

Spiritual Discipline is that practice which places ourselves before God so that He can transform us.¹

Spiritual Friend is the term used for the one who leads out in the process of spiritual direction. However, other terms such as spiritual companion, soul friend, and spiritual director are used interchangeably in this project report.²

Biblical Quotations

All Biblical quotations in this project report are taken from the New International Version of the Bible.³

¹Prayer is considered one of the spiritual disciplines that is central to experiential Christianity.

²I have purposely avoided the use of the term spiritual director in this case study because of its authoritarian connotations. Henri Nouwen suggests that the term friendship indicates "a real intimacy between the spiritual director and the Christian. This intimacy is not a mutual attachment to each other, however, but a shared attachment to God through Jesus Christ" (Kenneth Leech, Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), p. ix). Nouwen notes that it is in the space created by this common attachment to God that spiritual direction takes place (Leech, p. ix).

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CHAPTER II

EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Survey of the Old Testament

It is a clear teaching of the Old Testament that God is the ultimate source of spiritual direction and that one should seek counsel from Him. The Psalmist David declares the promise of the Lord: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you."¹ And David experienced the fulfillment of that promise in his own life. He testifies, "I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me,"² and "Your statutes are my counselors."³ Asaph echoes this same thought in one of his psalms: "You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory."⁴ The prophet Isaiah declares, "All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, wonderful in counsel, and magnificent in

¹ps 32:8.

²ps 16:7.

³ps 119:24.

⁴ps 73:24.

wisdom,"¹ and gives the word of assurance from the Lord that "whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."²

Tilden Edwards suggests that such Old Testament passages "summarize the abiding 'deep awareness' of Hebraic tradition: the direct guidance from the sacred, from Yahweh, and from his revealed Torah (the first five books of the Bible), lived out in a covenanted community."³ For example, Rebekah went personally to inquire of the Lord and was given specific counsel.⁴ Similarly, during the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel, Moses records that "anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp."⁵

In addition to these examples of seeking spiritual guidance directly from the Lord, numerous references in the Old Testament Scriptures speak of seeking spiritual direction through the prophet or

¹Isa 28:29. Isaiah also attributes to the coming Messiah the name of Wonderful Counselor in Isa 9:6.

²Isa 30:21.

³Tilden Edwards, Spiritual Friend: Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 36.

⁴Gen 25:22.

⁵Exod 33:7.

priest¹--the individual who serves as the agent through whom the Lord God offers spiritual direction and counsel to His people.

John McNeill, in his classic work entitled A History of the Cure of Souls, comments concerning these guides of Israel who offered spiritual direction:

From early times there had existed in Judaism three distinct classes of experts in religion: the Priests, a hereditary class whose work and teaching were connected with public worship and ceremonies; the Prophets, who gave utterance in the name of the Lord on religious and moral issues and sometimes rebuked and directed prominent individuals; and the Wise Men (hakhamim) who counseled their fellows of all ranks and callings on the principles of the good life and details of personal conduct. . . . These three well-established vocations are expressly mentioned together in one passage--that in which Jeremiah's enemies assure one another that when his message is repudiated "the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer 18:8).²

McNeill observes that "when in later times prophecy declines and the priesthood became impaired by political pressure, the scribes and rabbis maintained, with variations, the functions of the wise men of earlier days, and became a dominant force in Jewish religion."³ These wise men chiefly offered spiritual direction and guidance to individuals. The names of four early wise

¹Num 27:21; Judg 18:5; I Sam 9:9; 10:22; 14:36; 22:10; 1 Kgs 22:5, 8; 2 Kgs 3:11; 22:13; Jer 21:2; 37:17; Ezek 20:1.

²John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 2.

³Ibid.

men of Israel are preserved in a passage which speaks of the great wisdom of Solomon:

Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite--wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol.¹

Notice that the author shows his awareness of other collections of the sayings of wise men, in addition to that of Solomon. As McNeill points out: "All these books present an accumulation of the sayings of wise men who were practical counselors of souls, proclaiming reverence for God and justice to men, and making plain the path of right conduct."²

Solomon gives this counsel in the "Sayings of the Wise":

Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips. So that your trust may be in the Lord, I teach you today, even you.³

He takes seriously the offering of spiritual guidance and direction with the goal of enabling the hearer to grow in his or her personal relationship with the Lord.

¹1 Kgs 4:30-31. Historians see in the wise man of Israel a common phenomenon of ancient Semitic cultures such as Egypt and Babylon. Some of these dispensers of guidance left collections of their teachings. Among the most significant Egyptian books are The Teaching of Kagemma and The Teaching of Amen-em-apt from the Egyptian culture and Maxims of Ahikar from the Euphrates region.

²McNeill, p. 9.

³Prov 24:17-19 (emphasis supplied).

But the giving of spiritual direction and guidance in the Old Testament is not a work limited to the prophet, priest, or wise man. There is a strong emphasis on the responsibility of each parent to offer spiritual direction to his or her children:

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.¹

Solomon's counsel to "train up a child in the way he should go" also clearly implies the importance of direction and counsel in the task of spiritual formation.²

Although Sirach is not a part of the Protestant Old Testament Scriptures, it offers us a real insight regarding Ben-Sira's view of spiritual guidance and counsel.³ He suggests the type of guidance to seek, warning against those who are affected by self-interest or prejudice:

Put no trust in these for any counsel!
But rather with a man that feareth always,
Whom thou knowest to be a keeper of the Law;
Whose heart is at one with thine own,

¹Deut 6:6-9.

²Prov 22:6.

³Ben-Sira's Book of Wisdom belongs with the Hokmah, or Wisdom Literature of the Hebrews. There are differences of opinion regarding the dating of Sirach. The consensus is between 275-175 B.C. Sirach is included in the Roman Catholic canon.

Who, if thou stumblest, will be grieved for thee.
 Do thou also take knowledge of the counsel
 Of (thine own) heart,
 For thou hast no one more true to thee.
 The heart of a man telleth (him) his
 opportunities
 Better than seven watchmen on a tower.
 But in all this intreat God,
 That He may direct thy steps in truth.¹

Here we see, as in the Old Testament Scriptures, the emphasis on God as the ultimate source of true spiritual direction and guidance, but also included is much wise counsel in the selection of a spiritual friend, and encouragement to exercise one's own gift of discernment.

Survey of the New Testament

We see the concept of spiritual direction clearly modeled in the ministry of Jesus. He provided the only perfect illustration of spiritual direction as incarnational.² Thus, when Jesus called His disciples, He said to them, "Follow me."³ He invited them to learn by observation. On another occasion he said, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."⁴ Similarly, when He ordained the twelve, it was His desire

¹Sirach, 37:11-15. Robert H. Charles, ed., The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 1:445-46.

²See Chapter 3 on models for spiritual direction.

³John 1:43.

⁴Mark 1:17.

that "they might be with Him. . ."1 To be with Him was to be drawn to Him--to be drawn to God. The Gospel record testifies that those who sensed their spiritual poverty were drawn to Him. They saw in Him the hope of healing and cleansing and renewal. The spiritual guidance and direction they longed for, they received. And the accusation that His enemies hurled at Him was true: Jesus was "a friend of tax-collectors and sinners."2

As one examines the Gospel record, it becomes apparent that Jesus preferred to interact with a limited audience rather than a multitude.³ John McNeill makes the following observation in this regard: "The conversations of Jesus as given in the Synoptic Gospels exhibit his method and power in the guidance of souls. Much of his teaching was uttered in dialogue."⁴

But Jesus was not insensitive to the needs of the multitude. On one occasion, when Jesus and His disciples were in search of a solitary place to find rest, the multitude followed after them.⁵ The Gospel writer Mark records: "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without

¹Mark 3:14.

²Matt 11:19.

³John 3:1-21; 4:4-42.

⁴McNeill, p. 72.

⁵Mark 6:31-33.

a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things."¹ He would not be able to offer them the ongoing spiritual direction that He gave to His disciples, but He does provide some spiritual guidance in the form of oral teaching. Exactly what He taught them on that occasion, the record does not say; but, from the context, we can deduce that it was practical, concrete spiritual direction. He could not leave them wandering aimlessly. These sheep needed a shepherd. They needed definite spiritual direction. And so Jesus taught "as one who had authority."²

As noted earlier, an important part of the spiritual direction that Jesus provided for His disciples was modelling--just "being with Him." They were to learn by observation. But the disciples also received spiritual direction in the form of oral teaching. This counsel was reserved for those under his special direction and was not given to the multitude. For example, having taught the parable of the sower to the multitude, Jesus opened to His disciples its deeper meaning.³ He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those outside, everything is said in parables..."⁴ Jesus specifically

¹Mark 6:34.

²Mark 1:22.

³Mark 4:13-20.

⁴Mark 4:11.

warned His disciples about the influence and spirit of the Pharisees.¹ He confronted them when they were caught up with a spirit of pride and elitism² and when they showed a lack of faith and understanding.³ At times He challenged them to move forward in faith, as He did when He asked the question, "Who do you say I am?"⁴

As the disciples observed His relationship with the Father, they were challenged to seek a deeper fellowship with God. On one occasion, after Jesus had been in communion with His Father, the disciples came to Him and asked, "Lord, teach us to pray."⁵ The disciples were not expressing total ignorance regarding the spiritual discipline of prayer. And yet, as they observed the communion experience of Jesus, they received valuable spiritual direction. Luke, in particular, emphasizes that Jesus was a man of prayer,⁶ and this modelling created a desire in the hearts of the disciples for further spiritual growth. Jesus responded to their request by offering concrete instruction and ongoing

¹Mark 8:14-21.

²Mark 9:33-35; 9:38-40; Luke 9:51-55.

³Mark 4:40; 8:17, 21, 33.

⁴Mark 8:29.

⁵Luke 11:1. It is significant to note from this text that John the Baptist also taught his disciples to pray. Apparently, John was also concerned about the spiritual formation of those whom God led to him for spiritual guidance and direction.

⁶Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28-29; 22:32, 40-46.

admonition. Thus, by modelling and oral teaching, He enabled His disciples to experience a deeper fellowship with God.

In His parting instructions to His disciples, Jesus challenged them to continue the work of spiritual direction that He had offered to them. The admonition of Jesus to Peter constituted an important part of their ongoing challenge: "Feed My sheep".¹ This counsel to "feed My sheep" made a deep impression upon the life and ministry of Peter. His admonition to church elders, reveals the importance he placed upon spiritual guidance and direction:

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.²

Here again we see an incarnational model of spiritual direction, with an emphasis upon the offering of spiritual guidance and direction through modelling and example. This follows the pattern of the Chief Shepherd. And notice that the work of spiritual direction is

¹Matt 28:19; John 21:17. This admonition by Jesus to offer spiritual guidance and direction was not a call to rulership but a call to servanthood (Mark 10:42-44; Matt 23:8-12).

²1 Pet 5:2-4.

ongoing. It needs to continue until "the Chief Shepherd appear."

The most numerous allusions to the concept of spiritual direction in the New Testament are found in the writings of Paul. He expresses the responsibility for ongoing spiritual guidance and direction in terms of spiritual fatherhood. Note his words to the church members in Corinth:

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me.¹

Paul addresses the believers in Corinth as their spiritual father; they are his "dear children". This suggests an ongoing relationship and responsibility. Tilden Edwards recognizes this concern in the writings of Paul and sees him as an important source of the concept of spiritual guidance in the New Testament.² He notes:

He [Paul] held a developmental view of human spirituality. He speaks of the napioi, the beginners who are ready to be fed only with milk, and the teleoi, the mature who can be fed solid food, those with spirit-filled knowledge (1 Cor 3:2; 2:13-16; Eph 4:13-15; Col 1:10).³

Just as Paul has been involved in their early spiritual formation, so he wants to provide ongoing spiritual guidance and direction. In harmony with the

¹1 Cor 4:14-16 (emphasis supplied).

²Edwards, p. 42.

³Ibid., p. 42.

example of Jesus as a spiritual guide, Paul saw modelling as an important means of offering spiritual direction. He urges the believers to imitate him; to follow his example. This counsel is repeated to other Christian communities.¹

In calling for the believers to be followers of him, Paul is in no way assuming the role of a master. Rather, he says, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."² He is not their guru. He is only a guide, pointing people to God and inviting them to experience a deeper personal fellowship with Him.

The focus of Paul's spiritual direction is that the believers might develop spiritual maturity, and that they might experience an intimate relationship with Christ. This burden is beautifully expressed in his exhortation to the believers in Ephesus:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.³

¹Gal 4:12; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:16; 2 Thess 3:7.

²1 Cor 11:1.

³Eph 3:14-19.

Notice, Paul does not want those under his spiritual direction to simply know about God, but to know Him experientially.

We see Paul's concept of spiritual direction spelled out in greater detail in his relationship with Timothy. First, we notice the quality of their relationship. Paul refers to Timothy as "my dear son," and "my true son in the faith."¹ He is implying his spiritual fatherhood. Paul speaks differently to Timothy than he does to the congregation at large. There is a deeper level of love and trust. Second, Paul expresses concern for Timothy's spiritual well-being: "Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayer."² This is an important focus of their relationship. And third, Paul encourages Timothy to continue to move forward in his spiritual journey. He affirms Timothy for his sincere faith and encourages him "to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,"³ and to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."⁴

Paul also offers Timothy specific counsel as part of the spiritual direction relationship. He encourages Timothy to be a man of prayer,⁵ to be a man of faith,⁶

¹2 Tim 1:2; 1 Tim 1:2.

²2 Tim 1:3.

³2 Tim 1:6.

⁴2 Tim 2:1.

⁵1 Tim 2:1-3.

and to be a faithful preacher of the word.¹ It is significant that Paul also encourages Timothy to offer spiritual guidance and direction to others: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and purity."²

This admonition to be involved in spiritual direction is not limited to Timothy as a minister. Paul exhorts the believers to be involved in mutual spiritual guidance and direction. Edwards makes the following comment in this regard:

Paul exhorted these struggling fellowships, lacking the common conditioning and guidance of Jewish tradition, to provide spiritual guidance and correction for one another, an emphasis passed down through the history of spiritual guidance as "mutual edification" and "fraternal correction."³

Paul exhorts the believers to "carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."⁴ He encourages the spiritually strong to counsel and direct those who are weak: "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently."⁵ He affirms them for the mutual

¹Tim 6:12.

²Tim 4:1-2.

³Tim 4:12 (emphasis supplied).

⁴Edwards, p. 42. See also McNeill, p. 85.

⁵Gal 6:2.

⁶Gal 6:1.

spiritual direction that is already taking place:

"Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing . . . warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone."¹ McNeill suggests that "in such passages we cannot fail to see the Apostle's design to create an atmosphere in which the intimate exchange of spiritual help, mutual guidance of souls, would be a normal feature of Christian behavior."²

We conclude our New Testament survey with a consideration of James' admonition in regards to mutual edification and guidance: "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."³ Undoubtedly, this admonition has special reference in this context to the anointing of the sick. But it clearly has a broader application. The healing referred to in this passage is not limited to physical healing.⁴ Spiritual healing is promised in the context of mutual direction, confession, and prayer.

From our brief study of the New Testament record, we discover the importance of spiritual guidance and direction as a means of nurturing ongoing spiritual formation in the believer. The focus of this spiritual

¹Thess 5:11, 13.

²McNeill, p. 85.

³Jas 5:16.

⁴Jas 5:14.

direction is both through modelling and also through spiritual counsel and instruction. It is given in person and also by letter. Examples of both one-way spiritual direction and also mutual guidance and encouragement are present. To what extent these concepts of spiritual guidance and direction were implemented in the life of the early Christian church we are uncertain. McNeill makes this observation:

The fact that they were stressed in the literature of exhortation may suggest that they were realized only in a disappointing degree . . . Yet the apostolic apprehension of the Christian cure of souls was not a vain dream. It was because many Christians--though perhaps a minority of them--faithfully adhered to these principles, that the Church emerged as a firmly knit organization.¹

Survey of the Writings of Ellen G. White²

Methodist Roots and the Social Meeting

Robert and Eunice Harmon were earnest and devoted members of the Methodist Episcopal Church,³ and their daughter Ellen usually attended the Methodist meetings

¹McNeill, pp. 86-87.

²A note of clarification is necessary for the reader regarding the extensive treatment of this author. While the writings of Ellen G. White are not regarded as Scripture, the Seventh-day Adventist Church does recognize that Ellen G. White was blessed by the Spirit with a prophetic gift. Thus, I have chosen to give special attention to her insights on the topic of spiritual guidance.

³Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 1:9. Their second advent view, however, led to their separation from the Methodist church in 1843.

with her parents.¹ At a Methodist camp meeting at Buxton, Maine, in the summer of 1840, Ellen was converted and found a "precious assurance" in Jesus Christ.² Soon after returning from camp meeting she was baptized by immersion in the sea by a Methodist minister, and later that same day was received into full membership of the Methodist church.³

Ellen also participated in the class meetings which were held in private houses.⁴ At one such class meeting that she attended with her brother Robert, she gave a testimony of her spiritual journey:

When I was called upon to speak, I arose, free in spirit, with a heart full of love and peace. I told the story of my great suffering under the conviction of sin, how I had at length received the blessing so long sought, an entire conformity to the will of God, and expressed my joy in the tidings of the soon coming of my Redeemer to take His children home.⁵

She was disappointed by the response of her Methodist brothers and sisters: "several sisters groaned and moved their chairs noisily, turning their backs on me."⁶ Nevertheless, Ellen and her brother attended another

¹Ibid., p. 16.

²Ibid., p. 17.

³Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁴Ibid., p. 35.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

class meeting not long after this.¹ She recounts the incident:

We wanted an opportunity to speak of the precious love of God that animated our souls. I particularly wished to tell of the Lord's goodness and mercy to me. So great a change had been wrought in me that it seemed my duty to improve every opportunity of testifying to the love of my Savior. When my turn came to speak, I stated the evidences I enjoyed of Jesus' love, and that I looked forward with the glad expectation of meeting my Redeemer soon I had found peace, joy and perfect love. Thus my testimony closed, the last that I was to bear in class with my Methodist brethren.²

Their testimonies were again resisted and Ellen and Robert were convinced that they "ought no longer attend the class meeting."³ Shortly after this experience, Ellen and her family were dropped from membership in the Methodist church because of their hope in the soon coming of Jesus.⁴

Ellen did not forget her Methodist roots. She saw great value in the mutual spiritual guidance and edification offered at the class meetings and sought to encourage this practice in the early Adventist church in the form of the Social meeting. Unlike Wesley, Ellen White does not refer to Jas 5:16 as a basis for this gathering. Rather she refers to the promise of the prophet Malachi: "Then those who feared the Lord talked

¹Ibid., p. 36.

²Ibid., p. 37.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 43.

with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name."¹

Her most extensive discussion on the Social meeting is found in *Testimony 20*, published in 1871. It is significant to notice the close parallel between Ellen White's description of the Social meeting and the class meeting of Methodism. She stated that "all should be prompt to the hour appointed."² Wesley had encouraged all "to come punctually at the hour appointed."³ Ellen White urges that "the meeting should open at the appointed hour if possible, be there few or many present," and mentions a brief time of prayer and singing.⁴ Wesley had urged "to begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour, with singing or prayer."⁵ Regarding the focus of the Social meeting, Ellen White refers to them as "meetings for conference and prayer."⁶ She states:

We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, to gather

¹Mal 3:16.

²White, Testimonies, 2:577.

³John Wesley, The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, 14 vols. (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, 1831), 8:272.

⁴White, Testimonies, 2:578.

⁵Wesley, p. 272.

⁶White, Testimonies, 2:577.

strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations. . . . All have not the same experience in their religious life. But those of diverse exercises come together and with simplicity and humbleness of mind talk out their experience. . . . A living experience is made up of daily trials, conflicts, and temptations, strong efforts, victories, and great peace and joy gained through Jesus.¹

She states, "Difficulties are removed and help is given as in social meeting God's people relate their experiences."² Wesley's counsel for the class meeting is remarkably similar. He encourages those present "to speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting."³

However, there are some clear differences between the Social meeting of early Adventism and the class meeting of Methodism. First, the Social meeting did not have the fixed organizational structure of the class meeting. Second, and more important, the Social meeting was more positive in its focus. The Social meeting was clearly a time to "confess our faults, one to another and pray for one another." Note the following excerpt from White's diary, January 1, 1887, written while visiting Basel, Switzerland: "We then had a social meeting. Many

¹Ibid., 2:578-79 (emphasis supplied).

²Ibid., 6:382 (emphasis supplied).

³Wesley, p. 272.

testimonies were borne and many confessions made well wet down with tears. It was a profitable meeting."¹ Five weeks later, on February 5, 1887, she writes of another social meeting that she conducted in Tramelan, Switzerland, where there was much specific confession of sin. Brother Guenin's son "spoke with deep feeling, confessing his wrongs. His tears flowed freely."² During this Social meeting there was specific confession to those who had been wronged: "A young man who had fallen into great sin arose and made a humble confession, and asked the forgiveness of those he had injured."³ Note also an excerpt from her diary, February 23, 1889: "We had a very excellent social meeting which lasted until sundown. . . . Confessions were made by some, very humiliating to the soul, but essential for them, that the fruits might appear unto righteousness."⁴

While confession was important, Ellen White emphasizes that the Social meeting was not a time to recount every temptation and failing. Ellen White gives this admonition: "The closet is the place to tell all their private difficulties, and trials, and temptations. A common meeting to worship God is not the place to open

¹White, MS 29, 1887, Ellen G. White Research Center (EGWRC), Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 2.

³Ibid.

⁴Idem., MS 18, 1889, (EGWRC), p. 5.

the privacies of the heart."¹ We notice also this positive focus in a manuscript written in 1894:

What inspiration it should give us to consider the fact that all the heavenly universe is represented as listening with pleasure to the words that are spoken exalting the name of God in the earth. . . . they are not words that express doubt, unbelief, and complaint; for such words do not honor the Redeemer. The words to which God and the angels listen with delight are words of appreciation for the great Gift that has been made to the world in the only begotten Son of God.²

Similarly, in a 1903 manuscript, we read:

"Instead of thinking and talking about the faults of their brethren and sisters, and about their own trials, they will think and talk of the love of Christ. . ."³

Clearly, there is a positive focus here, focusing not only on confession and mutual edification, but also on praise to God.

It is significant that in a letter written to her son Edson in 1907, Ellen White writes: ". . . if there were fewer sermons and more social meetings, we would find a different atmosphere pervade our churches and our camp meetings. Seasons of prayer should be held for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit."⁴

¹Idem., Testimonies, 2:578.

²Idem., MS 32, 1894, (EGWRC), p. 3.

³Idem., MS 127, 1903, (EGWRC), p. 6.

⁴Idem., Letter 292, 1907, (EGWRC), p.4 (emphasis supplied).

We see a clear emphasis in the writings of Ellen White on the value of the Social meeting experience. Finding its roots in the class meeting of Methodism, the Social meeting of early Adventism is a time for mutual spiritual direction and guidance.¹ It is a time to give praise to God and to encourage one another in the Lord. It is a time for mutual edification and fraternal correction, as taught in the New Testament by the apostle Paul and revived in the Reformers, Pietists, and Methodists.²

Counsel on Seeking Personal Spiritual Direction
God as the true Source of
 spiritual direction

Ellen White strongly emphasizes that God is the true source of spiritual guidance and direction. She encourages the Christian pilgrim to "seek wisdom from God; for through earnest prayer he will learn the way of the Lord more perfectly than if instructed by some human counselor."³ Speaking of the experience of Joshua, she states:

¹Other relevant unpublished material by Ellen White on the topic of Social meetings include: Letter 5a, 1881; Letter 23, 1882; Letter 20, 1884; MS 26, 1885; MS 29, 1887; MS 81, 1901.

²It would be a very fruitful Doctor of Ministry project to explore this Social meeting concept in greater detail and test it in a local church setting.

³Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1923), p. 220.

If men will walk in the path that God has marked out for them, they will have a counselor whose wisdom is far above any human wisdom. Joshua was a wise general because his guide was God. . . .

There is no greater deception than for man to suppose that in any difficulty he can find a better guide than God, a wiser counselor in any emergency, a stronger defense under any circumstances.¹

When offering counsel to one in need of spiritual direction, she says "Let God be your counselor,"² and to another "make Christ your counselor."³

In the context of looking to God as the true source of spiritual guidance, Ellen White counsels against depending upon human guides for wisdom: "When you desire wisdom, go to the light of the world. Do not turn to any living soul; men are but erring mortals: in their human wisdom they may encourage when they should discourage, and discourage where they should encourage."⁴ Similarly, in reference to Christ as the True Foundation, she states: "Upon no finite being can we depend for

¹Cited in Francis D. Nichol, ed. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 10 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953), 2:993.

²White, Testimonies, 2:285.

³Idem., The Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1905), p. 359. Speaking of the ways in which God offers spiritual guidance and direction, she states: "There are three ways in which the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us, and to fit us to guide others. . . . in His Word, the Holy Scriptures. . . . in His providential workings. . . . through the appeals of the Holy Spirit" (Testimonies, 5:512).

⁴Idem., Letter 55, 1897, (EGWRC), p. 12.

guidance."¹ The caution is against dependance upon human guides for wisdom. Speaking specifically to a minister on this issue, she give the following admonition:

It is too often that those who are looked up to are not what they are supposed to be. . . . How does the heavenly Father regard this? His counsel is always reliable, and He has evidenced His great love for the human race, and He looks on with sadness when His children are encouraged to turn away from Him and place their dependance unto finite men, whom they know not, and whose judgment and experience may not be reliable. . . . We are not safe in taking men as our authority or our guide, for they will surely disappoint us.²

We see in these statements a clear emphasis on God as the true Guide of souls. He is the source of all perfect spiritual guidance and direction. Our dependance must always be upon him and not upon human guides.

Seeking spiritual direction from individuals

In the light of Ellen White's strong emphasis on God as the only true Guide of souls, is there any place for human instruments in the work of personal spiritual direction and guidance?³ Ellen White clearly asserts that God chooses to use human agents as one way of accomplishing His work. She emphasizes: "The Lord has need of you. He does not do His work without the

¹Idem., The Desire of Ages, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), p. 414.

²Idem., Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pp. 385-86 (emphasis supplied).

³We have noted that Ellen White encouraged mutual spiritual direction in a group setting in the Social meeting.

cooperation of the human agent."¹ Similarly, White makes this observation regarding the importance of the human instrument:

The Holy Spirit is to work through human agencies. A partnership between God and the workers must be maintained. Man works because God works in him; all the efficiency and power is of God. Yet God has so arranged that all the responsibility rests with the human agent. These are the appointed conditions of partnership. Men are required to move among men, doing divine work.²

God has chosen to use human agents in offering spiritual guidance and direction. Speaking specifically in regard to those involved in ministry, she states:

"There are men whom God has raised up as counselors, men whom He has taught, and whose heart and soul and life are in the work."³ Similarly, in a letter written in 1893, she asserts that "some men have insight into matter, having the ability to counsel. It is the gift of God."⁴

Ellen White sees this ability to offer spiritual guidance especially present in certain aged ministers, and encourages them to offer spiritual direction to young pastors: "God calls upon His aged servants to act as counselors . . . appreciate their advice, their words of counsel. Treat them as fathers and mothers who have

¹Idem., Testimonies, 6:40.

²Idem, "If Ye Know These Things, Happy Are Ye If Ye Do Them," Review and Herald, November 4, 1902, p. 9.

³Idem, Testimonies, 5:271.

⁴Idem, Selected Messages, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 2:361.

borne the burden of the work."¹ Later in the same article, she gives the following admonition:

Let the young men unite with experienced laborers who understand the Scriptures, who have long been doers of the Word, who have brought the truth into the practical life, relying upon Christ day by day, who seek the Lord as Daniel did. . . .

In word, in spirit, in principle, the men who have made God their trust are an example to the youth connected with them. These faithful servants are to link up with young men, drawing them with cords of love because they are themselves drawn to them by the cords of Christ's love.²

Here we see a clear reference to spiritual direction by modelling, just as Elijah offered spiritual direction to Elisha, Jesus to His disciples, and Paul to Timothy. Ellen White clearly intends that this association accomplish far more than skill training.³ It is primarily the important work of spiritual formation, and offering spiritual guidance and direction.

In reference to the personal qualities of those who offer guidance, Ellen White states that

Those holding the positions of counselors should be unselfish men, men of faith, men of prayer, men that will not dare to rely upon their own human wisdom, but will seek earnestly for

¹Idem., Selected Messages, 2:227.

²Ibid., 2:229 (emphasis supplied).

³Ellen White asserts that "the Lord desires the younger laborers to gain wisdom, strength, and maturity by association with these faithful men." See Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 574.

light and intelligence as to what is the best manner of conducting their business.¹

She suggests that it is especially important for those who give counsel to truly represent Christ: "With steadfast purpose, let every man seek to have the mind of Christ. Especially should those who have accepted the positions of directors or counselors feel that they are required to be in every respect Christian gentlemen."²

Summary

There is a clear emphasis in the writings of Ellen White on God as the only true source of spiritual guidance and direction. We are not to depend on the wisdom of human beings. However, she sees merit in seeking spiritual guidance and counsel. She emphasizes the importance of spiritual direction through modelling and interpersonal relationship in a personal setting. But the strongest emphasis is upon mutual spiritual direction and edification in a group setting. She referred to this gathering as the Social meeting, which finds its roots in the class meeting in Methodism. We have noted that she placed great importance upon this meeting as a powerful dynamic in the life of the church,

¹Nichol, The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 2:993.

²White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 262.

and strongly encouraged its practice during her lifetime.¹

Historical Development of the Concept of Spiritual Direction in the Christian Church

Primitive Christianity through the Patristic Era

One of the most notable common attitudes among the early Christian believers was the expectation of the imminent return of Christ, and the end of all earthly, historical existence. This focus, as Clebsch and Jaekle observe, strongly influenced spiritual guidance and direction within the Christian community: "The expectation of the parousia galvanized all pastoral helping, for these individual problems were conceived as circumstances to be endured briefly until the cataclysmic vindication of the hopes of the faithful."² The emphasis of spiritual guidance was to encourage the believer to turn away from evil until the coming of the Lord, a task considered possible for faithful, baptized Christians. In The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, believers are encouraged to assemble often "intent upon what concerns your souls. Surely, of no use will your lifelong faith

¹It is outside of the limitations of this study to consider why the Social meeting became defunct, despite strong admonition regarding its value. It is my desire that this brief study would stimulate further consideration of the Social meeting as a powerful dynamic in the church today.

²William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p.14.

be to you if you are not perfected at the end of time."¹
 The mutual spiritual direction, edification, and correction is clearly implied, with an emphasis upon sustaining until the parousia.

However, even before the close of the New Testament canon, the problem of post-baptismal sin is very evident. Of the seven churches to whom John the Revelator writes letters of admonition, five are exhorted to repent. The primitive Christian church wrestled with the issue of post-baptismal sin, as McNeill observes:

Since the Christian rite of baptism required earnest repentance and renunciation of sin, and baptismal repentance seemed decisive and final, the Church authorities were embarrassed by instances of serious misdemeanors by the baptized. Were the offenders to be simply and finally rejected, or were they, as St. Paul evidently held, to be encouraged to repent and return?²

By the middle of the second century, post-baptismal sin had become such a pressing issue that Hermas addressed the problem in his book entitled The Shepherd of Hermas. The book is a record of the author's vision of an angel of penance who appeared to him in the form of a shepherd. This heavenly messenger imparted the divine message that forgiveness was available to those who committed post-baptismal sin, but that this kind of

¹Johannes Quasten and Joseph C Plumpe, eds., Ancient Christian Writers, 44 vols. (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1948), vol 6: The Didache, translated and annotated by James A Kleist, p. 24,(16:2).

²McNeill, p. 89.

repentance was available only once. Notice the emphasis of the Shepherd in this interchange with Hermas: "And therefore I say to you, that if any one is tempted by the devil, and sins after that great and holy calling in which the Lord has called His people to everlasting life, he has opportunity to repent but once."¹

Clebsch and Jaekle comment on the impact of this document:

Claiming the authority of the Lord, the Shepherd urged that pastors regulate repentance and penance. So popular was the writing that it was considered Scripture by some of the famous fathers of the church, such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen. Hermas taught that God forgave sins because God was merciful and men were weak. Before baptism, sin sprang from ignorance; in baptism, the believer was cleansed and made holy, gaining a new knowledge and a new condition enabling him to live in purity and righteousness. But since such persons in fact did commit sins, Hermas posed the practical answer that after baptism there might be one more opportunity for repentance and mercy, provided the believer showed clear proof of true repentance and made payment for his error.²

Tertullian, like Hermas, permits only one repentance after baptism, but he gives more explicit information on the penitential discipline:

Since this second and last penitence is so serious a matter, it must be tested in a way which is proportionately laborious. Therefore, it must not be performed solely within one's own conscience, but it must also be shown forth in some external way. This external act, rather

¹Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., The Ante-Nicene Fathers, 10 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 2:22 (emphasis supplied).

²Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 16.

expressively designated by the Greek word for it in common use, is the exomologesis.¹

This act of exomologesis was viewed as an act of discipline "which leads a man to prostrate and humble himself."² This confession was to take place "among brethren and fellow-servants."³ Tertullian also suggests that as a penitent "you should prostrate yourself at the feet of the priest."⁴ However, as Le Saint points out:

This text may not be used to prove that in the exomologesis there was a detailed confession of sin to ecclesiastical authorities, followed by episcopal absolution. . . . When the sinner confesses coram ecclesia, he humbles himself before all the brethren and begs the intercession of all.⁵

Origen also demands public confession of sin, but makes room for private confession. In his homily on Psalm 37 he suggests that one should seek out a suitable person to whom to make confession, "who knows the

¹Johannes Quasten and Walter J. Burkhardt, eds. Ancient Christian Writers, 44 vols. (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1959), vol. 28: Tertullian: Treatises on Penance, translated and annotated by William P. Le Saint, p. 31.

²Ibid.

³Ibid, p. 33.

⁴Ibid., p. 32.

⁵Ibid., p. 174. However, as McNeill observes, "none of the third century Fathers authorized the repetition of the exomologesis . . . and the traditional formula, "one baptism, one penance," was reaffirmed by St. Ambrose of Milan (d. 397) and favored in the West to the end of the sixth century (p. 93). One of the most remarkable transformations in the history of Church discipline is the gradual admission, and ultimately the requirement, of the frequent penance.

discipline of compassion and sympathy . . . a learned and merciful physician."¹ Reflecting upon Origen's contribution to the concept of spiritual guidance, McNeill observes:

. . . Origen associates this function of physician of souls with priests. They are to admonish, exhort and instruct the sinner, bring him to repentance and correct him of his faults and so fit him for the favor of God. . . . The priest is the sinner's friend and expert spiritual counselor. This private soul guidance, whether by a priest or by another qualified "physician," may have been increasingly common. Evidently, it was often the prelude to the public ecclesiastical penance.²

During the times of oppression, from the well-known persecution at Lyons and Vienne in Gaul in A.D. 177 until the abdication of Diocletian in A.D. 306, there was a great need for spiritual guidance in reconciling those who had compromised their faith. We noted earlier that one occasion of post-baptismal repentance was allowed, excluding such sins as adultery, idolatry, and murder, but now even idolatry was considerable forgivable. Not only was there a need for reconciliation but also the sustaining of the faith and courage of believers who were condemned to imprisonment and death.

But the concerns during times of adversity would change drastically during times of prosperity. Charles

¹Cited by McNeill, p. 95.

²Ibid., 95. Augustine also recommended private confession in preparation for public confession and offered spiritual guidance and direction in the context of those interviews.

Cochrane suggests that "the year 313 has rightly been taken to mark a turning-point in European history."¹ As a result of the Edict of Milan, Christianity was now a religio licita, and Constantine pursued his goal of making the world "safe for Christianity."² Clebsch and Jaekle make the following observation:

Sudden favor from populace and imperial throne riveted pastors' attention to the enterprise of guiding perplexed persons to interpret and construe their decisions and actions as involving at once cultural significance and Christian meaning.³

There was a fusing of classical civilization and Christianity "which sought less to inculcate given principles of Christian tradition than to educe from the civilization standards and norms that opened themselves most readily to Christian sanctions."⁴

Walker asserts that "a fateful union with the state had begun,"⁵ a union that would lead to the secularization of the church and have a marked impact upon spiritual direction for the next eight centuries.

¹Charles Norris Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p.177.

²Ibid., p. 197.

³Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 19.

⁴Ibid., p. 20.

⁵Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), p. 102.

The Imperial-State Church and the Rise of Monasticism

With the end of church-state enmity, the Christian church increased by leaps and bounds. But a negative effect of the popularization of Christianity was the secularization of church life.¹ This led many to take flight into the desert to pursue an ascetic and spiritual life. Herbert Workman, in his book The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal, emphasizes that:

. . . monasticism was not the flight of cowards to the wilderness from the persecution of Marcus Aurelius or Decius. When the penalty for confessing Christ was the cross or the stake, there was no need to find an artificial cross. It was not persecution but rather its cessation that made the hermits.²

Jesus had encouraged the surrender of the worldly self and the willingness to forsake all in order to seek the Kingdom of God. But, as Edwards points out:

Such advice became increasingly difficult to take seriously within the bounds of the Church, with its indiscriminate growth after "establishment" under the Emperor Constantine. The Church increasingly became domesticated, an external form, containing everyone. The yearning for discovery of its full heart seemed to call people elsewhere, especially to the desert.

It is in the desert that spiritual direction was born as a full-fledged charism, a gift of especially profound personal experience and insight.³

¹McNeill, p. 105.

²Herbert B. Workman, The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal (London: The Epworth Press, 1913), p. 82 (emphasis supplied).

³Edwards, p. 51.

By the end of the third century, and particularly in the fourth and fifth centuries, Christians streamed into the deserts of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. According to Kenneth Leech, this was "the first sign of spiritual direction within the Christian tradition on any sizeable scale."¹ Edwards states that "at its height, as many as twenty thousand people lived in the desert alone or in monastic groups, and countless others visited them for counsel."² Early monasticism was primarily a lay movement. As Louis Bouyer points out: "The monk was simply a Christian, and, more precisely, a devout layman, who limited himself to taking the radical means to make his Christianity integral."³

Christian monasticism first appeared in Egypt.⁴ Pachomius is considered to be the founder of Egyptian Cenobitism. Pachomius is significant in that, after having dwelt for some years with an anchorite named Palaemon, he gathered three disciples around him and formed his first monastery, the hermits of Thebaid. Workman suggests that Pachomius grasped the truth which other hermits had missed; namely, "to save souls you must

¹Kenneth Leech, Soul Friend: The Practice of Christian Spirituality (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 41.

²Edwards, p. 50.

³Louis Bouyer, A History of Christian Spirituality, 3 vols. (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), 1:317.

⁴Workman, p. 86.

bring them together."¹ From this simple beginning, Pachmonius' followers would expand into a group of nine monasteries at Tabennisi.²

The development of the monastic movement was to have a lasting impact upon the concept of spiritual direction. It was in the desert of Egypt that the concept of spiritual guidance and direction would take on a new focus, with the emergence of the "abba"³. Dom Pierre Salmon emphasizes this point, in his book The Abbot in Monastic Tradition:

The word abba assumed in meaning during the flowering of Egyptian monasticism in the fourth century: it denotes first of all and principally a spiritual man, regardless of the actual direction of sons. The abba is essentially a man of experience, a perfect monk who has fully realized in himself the calling of monastic life, and who can serve as a model for others . . . one must also be filled with the Spirit, endowed with discernment and the gift of speaking words which are adapted to the spiritual needs of each individual.⁴

¹Workman, p. 88.

²In A.D. 333, Athanasius visited the monasteries of Pachmonius. If, instead of focusing on the hermit life, Athanasius had written an account of the community life inaugurated by Pachmonius and established by him under a Rule, the monastic movement would have moved ahead with greater rapidity.

³Leech asserts the disciples of the desert fathers "looked to them for holiness and purity of heart more than for teaching, and the central concept was that of spiritual fatherhood" (p. 41).

⁴Dom Pierre Salmon, The Abbot in Monastic Tradition (Washington, DC: Cistercian Publications Consortium Press, 1972), p. 4.

Sr. Donald Corcoran suggests that the phenomenon of the abba closely resembles that of the spiritual master and disciple in other great spiritual traditions: "The abba of early Christian monasticism played a role quite similar to that of the Hindu guru, Zen master, or Sufi sheik."¹ Though the origins of Christian monasticism are complex, "certainly one of the strongest factors was the simple fact that people were drawn to the desert to find an "elder," an accomplished ascetic and spiritual teacher capable of leading other persons to a greater experience of God."² The focus of the desert elder's spiritual direction was to increase the receptivity of the disciple to the Holy Spirit.³

Corcoran notes that "the first generations of desert fathers/mothers made no attempt to elaborate a spiritual doctrine for general use. There was simply the elder's response out of deep life in the Spirit to the persons, situations, and problems that were encountered."⁴ The master was, in a very real sense, the

¹(Sister) Donald Corcoran, "Spiritual Guidance," in Christian Spirituality, eds. Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff (New York: Crossroads, 1985), p. 446. The teachings of these desert fathers/mothers are contained in a collection of sayings known as the Apophthegmata Patrum, the Sayings of the Fathers. The sayings testify to the rich wisdom of the desert elders, but tell us little about the techniques of spiritual direction.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 450.

⁴Ibid., p. 446.

teaching.¹ Edwards notes that the desert father's guidance "was so personal that it often involved the disciple's living in the same cell and learning from the abba's whole way of being, not just from his words."² We are reminded of the call of Jesus to his disciples to "be with Him," offering spiritual guidance and direction through modelling.³

In the early monasteries, the abba was generally not the overseer or higoumene,⁴ and he did not have Holy Orders.⁵ Yet, the abba's disciples regarded him with absolute confidence and obedience. Salmon makes the following comment regarding the issue of obedience:

Once confidence had been placed in an abba, or elder, it must not be withdrawn and given to another; . . . certain texts even go so far as to start that any doubt concerning the authority of the abba or the smallest criticism of his person or his actions constituted a grave sin. This

¹Ibid. John Cassian, who spent ten years in the desert, wrote in his conference on perfection: "A saintly life is more educative than a sermon." See Owen Chadwick, ed., Western Asceticism (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 247.

²Edwards, p. 52.

³Leech observes that "in the tradition of desert spirituality, two individuals stand out as teachers and guides: Evagrius and Cassian. Evagrius Ponticus (345-99) has been called the "father of our literature of spirituality" (p. 42).

⁴As monasticism becomes more organized, there tends to be a blending of these two functions.

⁵Being ordained to the priesthood was not considered necessary for giving spiritual direction. In fact, spiritual fatherhood spread in the East chiefly in monastic settings which were purely lay so that it tended to become the heritage of the layman.

fidelity in all trials was only possible through an unconditional obedience, a total submission: it is this which the ancient Fathers recommend for our emulation.¹

The gradual institutionalization of monastic life substituted a special rule of life and community formation for the highly personal and charismatic spiritual direction of the desert abba and his disciple in primitive monasticism.² "The 'abba' became the 'abbot' or 'abbess' drawing into himself or herself both the discernment function of the Desert Father/Mother and the organizational authority of a ruler."³ The monastic ideal was accomplished by the adopting of precise schemes of spiritual development. Thus, as a result of this movement, spiritual direction became institutionalized and formalized. An important monastic rule which illustrates this formalization is the Rule of St. Benedict, A.D. 529. Incorporated into this Rule was a twelve-step ladder of humility. The faithful monk would:

1. Constantly fear God, remembering that hell awaits those who hold God in contempt and heaven those who fear Him, and that all

¹Salmon, pp. 5-6.

²Corcoran, p. 445. Leech observes that "the desert movement remained the source of spiritual nourishment for centuries to come" (p. 45). Its most recent manifestation was the Russian poustinikki of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

³Edwards, p. 56. Edwards sees value in maintaining spiritual directors in fringe, horizontal positions with their directees, lest the complexity of relationship, especially if it involves legal power, eclipses the simple presence of one to another crucial for spiritual friendship.

- human actions are reported hourly to God by angels;
2. Neither love his own will nor delight in his own desires;
 3. Submit in total obedience to his superior;
 4. Endure in silent patience all obstacles, and even injuries, that beset his path;
 5. Hide neither his evil thoughts nor his secret sins but in humble confession reveal them to his abbot;
 6. Be content with lowliness and regard himself as a bad and worthless worker in all that he is assigned to do;
 7. Not only acknowledge himself inferior to all others but believe it in the depths of his heart;
 8. Do nothing unless authorized either by the monastic rule or by the example of his superiors;
 9. Keep silence until asked a question;
 10. Never be easy or quick to laugh;
 11. Speak gently, without laughter, humbly and gravely, in a few reasonable words;
 12. Exhibit his lowliness to all who saw him and in all his deeds.¹

We see in Benedict's rule a spiritual direction that is institutionalized and rigid. Total submission is demanded. McNeill emphasizes the importance of unquestioning obedience within Benedictinism: "an attempt must be made even to obey impossible commands."² And "one who fails to obey a superior must make amends by falling down before the offended official or senior, remaining in that posture until he is pardoned."³

¹Justin McCann, ed. The Rule of Saint Benedict (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1952), pp.36-49, cited by Clebsch and Jaekle, pp. 21-22. Benedict's ladder of humility was a paraphrasing and rearranging of the steps of humility of John Cassian. Only the first and last steps were original to Benedict.

²McNeill, p. 108.

³Ibid.

This system of spiritual direction, in the form given it by Benedict, "imbedded itself in the imagination of medieval life, and by the twelfth century it had permeated popular as well as monastic piety."¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, early in the twelfth century, wrote a treatis entitled The Steps of Humility and Pride which dealt extensively with Benedict's ladder.²

These formalized systems for spiritual growth and Christian devotion were extremely important in providing structure for spiritual guidance and direction not only for the monks but also for the common people.

Clebsch and Jaekle comment that:

While the elite spiritual class took the whole progression as their ideal, secular folk were to be guided by their pastors into achieving at least the first three steps of the ladder of humility. In Benedict's rescension, that meant first to fear God, then to purge one's desires, and finally to obey the church.³

Of all of the Popes, "none was more the pastor of

¹Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 22.

² Bernard of Clairvaux added his own four-step ladder of love in his treatis entitled On Loving God:
 1. Man loves himself for his own sake; 2. Man loves God for his own benefit; 3. Man loves God for God's sake; 4. Man loves himself for God's sake. See complete text in M. Basil Pennington, The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux: Treatis II, trans. Robert Walton (Washington, DC: Cistercian Publications Consortium Press, 1974), pp. 115-121. Leech notes that "in the contemplative community at Clairvaux, there was an institution called "confession" which was not the sacrament of penance as we know it, but the manifestation of conscience to a spiritual guide" (p. 52).

³Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 22.

the Western Church than Gregory the Great (590-604)."¹ His book Liber Regulae Pastoralis² was written at the beginning of his pontificate.³ Pope Gregory "codified, regularized, and stressed the work of pastors as that of guiding troubled people into Christian belief, the Christian cultus, and Christian morality."⁴ McNeill observes that:

For Gregory the priestly office is one of authority over souls and "the government of souls is the art of arts." This control is to be exercised, however, in the greatest humility and with selfless devotion. Example, for Gregory, counts not less than precept. The guide of souls must be a compassionate neighbor to all, but superior in spiritual qualities. He should be a mother in tenderness, but a father in discipline.⁵

As a monk for sixteen years at the monastery of St. Andrew, Gregory had followed the Rule of St. Benedict. Henry Davis, in his introduction to Gregory's

¹McNeill, p. 109.

²Gregory referred to his work by this name in a letter to Leander of Seville, though since its first translation into English in the ninth century, under the direction of King Alfred the Great, it has been referred to as Pastoral Care.

³Gregory's work consists of four parts. The first explains the difficulties and requirements of the pastoral office. The second deals with the inner and outer life of the good pastor. The third, which contains extremely practical advice concerning the work of spiritual direction, presents different approaches for offering guidance to various classes of people. And the fourth deals briefly with how the pastor should be aware of his own weaknesses.

⁴Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 23.

⁵McNeill, p. 109.

work on Pastoral Care, suggests that "there is every reason to assume that Gregory, in conceiving the plan for Liber Regulae Pastoralis, intended to provide the secular clergy with a counterpart to this Regula."¹

Gregory's writing on pastoral care was to have a significant impact on spiritual guidance and direction in the West. Davis notes:

The esteem in which the Pastoral Care was held by one of England's great sons is evident from the words which Alcuin wrote to Eanbald, the archbishop of York in 796: "Wherever you go, let the pastoral book of St. Gregory be your companion. Read and re-read it often, that in it you may learn to know yourself and your work, that you may have before your eyes how you ought to live and teach."²

In part III of Pastoral-Care, Gregory gives numerous practical insights into the art of offering spiritual guidance and direction to various classes of people.³ But in his concluding remarks, Gregory reaffirms once more the importance of modelling in the work of spiritual direction:

We are brought back in the zeal of our charity to what we have already said, namely, that every preacher should make himself heard rather by deeds than by words, and that by his righteous

¹Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe, Ancient Christian Writers, 44 vols. (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1950), vol. 11: St. Gregory the Great: Pastoral Care, translated and annotated by Henry Davis, p. 10.

²Ibid., p. 10-11.

³Ibid., p. 12. The list of different types of souls given in Pastoral Care 3.1 corresponds very closely to the list given by Gregory of Nazianzus in his Orations or Discourses.

life should imprint footsteps for men to tread in, rather than show them by word the way to go.¹

Much could be said concerning other spiritual leaders during this period. One thinks of the Venerable Bede (d. 795), Alcuin of York (d. 804), Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109), Richard of St. Victor (d. 1142), and others. But McNeill observes that "there is not much new thinking in all this, but a reliance upon the Fathers, with applications, of course, to conditions of the writer's time."²

The Middle Ages

By the twelfth century, the Catholic Church had permeated the common life of European society. Spiritual guidance and direction in this setting "centered upon the power of divine grace to heal both the inherent and the accidental deformities of human existence. Ministers imparted this healing by means of objective, sacramental embodiments of grace."³ Spiritual direction as sacramental becomes the model, and guidance is offered by the priest through the administration of the sacraments. Clebsch and Jaekle comment on this shift of focus: "Sacramental grace not only served to restore medieval men and women to an assumed prior condition of health,

¹Ibid., p. 232 (emphasis supplied).

²McNeill, p. 136.

³Clebsch and Jaekle, p. 24.

but also granted power for spiritual growth toward the universal desideratum of eternal bliss."¹

This was a time of significant upheaval for the medieval parish. The great mendicant orders of the Franciscans and Dominicans were founded to keep the church in touch with the artisan and bourgeois class of the town. During this time of change:

. . . the church codified the sacramental system by designing and defining the seven official sacraments of catholicism. A concomitant thrust toward standardization of pastoral care may be seen in the fact that the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) sought to eliminate the highly popular but locally variant penitentials by which diverse ministrations of the guiding and reconciling functions were being performed.²

Despite this strong emphasis on sacramental grace, there was a progressive deterioration of the sacramental discipline in the Middle Ages. McNeill suggests that it was related to the practice of Indulgences which came into being during the crusading era.³ He notes:

The habitual use of commutations and money compositions in the penitentials made all too easy the commercializing of indulgences. . . . There is little thought of true penitence in all

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 25.

³McNeill, p. 148. The doctrine of the Treasury of Merits was developed by Alexander of Hales (d. 1245) and expounded by Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274). It consisted of the combined infinite merits of Christ, the Virgin and the Saints, and was placed by Aquinas under the administration of the pope. Indulgences were granted from this store of merit. Pope Clement VI affirmed the doctrine of the Treasury in 1343 and 1350.

this, but a growing spirit of cupidity which reached to the highest circles in the church. Many of the popes had endeavored to resist the tide, but the Renaissance Papacy became immersed in it, and authorized papal agents contributed to the general deterioration and commercialization of indulgences which...completed the destruction of the ancient penitential system.¹

In the midst of this deterioration and abuse, some churchman sought to take seriously the spiritual guidance of believers. For example, the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Pecham, developed a handbook for priests in 1381.² His concern was that layman be given sound spiritual instruction and guidance. Also, with an increase in literacy among laymen, attempts were made to provide "reading material in the vernacular for the guidance of mind and conscience."³ "Laymen were now invited not only to learn, but to share with one another, the great concerns of the soul."⁴ William Caxton, in his book Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye, emphasizes the importance of a devout and true friend to be present and support a person at the time of his death.⁵ This is a

¹Ibid., pp. 149-150.

²Pecham's handbook required that priests should faithfully instruct their people in the Fourteen Articles of the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the two Evangelical Precepts, the Seven Capital Sins, the Seven Principal Virtues, and the Seven Sacraments of Grace. This led to the development of similar handbooks for layman.

³McNeill, p. 151.

⁴Ibid., p. 161.

⁵Ibid., p. 162.

clear reference to mutual edification and spiritual friendship.

In addition to these handbooks for pastors and laymen, collections of exempla were also gathered.¹ These exempla were a means of offering spiritual counsel and guidance: "It was fully recognized by the clerical purveyors of these anecdotes that they were the bait for the hook by which souls might be caught and drawn heavenward."² John Bromyard (d. 1418) compiled more than one thousand exempla in his Summa praedicatorum.³

Another important part of this expanding literature of piety during the Middle Ages were the works of Wyclif, Groote, A Kempis, and Ludolf of Saxony.⁴ In much of this writing, Christ is presented as the worthiest of all "examples." Once again spiritual direction by modelling comes to the fore, as Christ is lifted up as the source of all true spiritual guidance and direction. Thus, in spite of the progressive

¹From the early thirteenth century, separate collections of the exempla were compiled. These exempla were spiritual sayings, or examples. Many came from the pens of renowned Dominican and Franciscan preachers. They offered guidance on preaching and on how to bring the message to the level of the hearer.

²McNeill, p. 153.

³Important compilers of exempla include Jacques de Vitry, Caesarius of Heisterbach, and Jordan of Saxony.

⁴Ludolf of Saxony was a Carthusian monk whose book, Life of Christ, had a deep impact upon Ignatius Loyola. Ignatius read the book in 1521 and Ludolf's recommendations on prayer are reflected in the Spiritual Exercises.

deterioration in ecclesiastical life, especially in regards to sacramental penance and its practices, we see a serious attempt to maintain sincere religion and provide meaningful spiritual guidance and direction.

The Reformation Era

With the coming of the Reformation, the focus of spiritual guidance and direction shifts once again from sacramental to mutual edification.¹ When Luther spoke out against the abuses and corruptions within the Church, he not only denounced indulgences, but he brought into question the whole procedure of confession.² In De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae Praeludium, Luther states:

The first and principal evil connected with the sacrament of penance is that the sacrament itself has been made so utterly void that not a vestige of it remains. . . . They [Romanists] say nothing about saving faith required of the people, but are garrulous about the absolute powers of the popes. Christ, however, said nothing at all about power, but spoke only of faith.³

In regards to confession of sin, Luther states:

If we lay bare to a brother what lies on our conscience, and in confidence unveil that which

¹See the Interpersonal relationship model in Chapter 3.

²Luther was by no means the first to denounce indulgences. John Wyclif, in his Trialogus (1382), called it blasphemy; and John Hus boldly denounced it in Prague, June 7, 1412.

³Martin Luther, Reformation Writings of Martin Luther, 2 vols., translated and annotated by Bertram Lee Woolf (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), 1:280.

we have kept hidden, we receive, through the mouth of a brother, a comfort which God has spoken. When we accept this in faith, it gives us peace by the mercy of God through the words spoken to us by a brother.¹

Luther boldly asserts in the same context that "Christ manifestly gave the power of pronouncing forgiveness to anyone who had faith in Him."² In Luther's theology, this concept of mutual spiritual direction and edification is to be associated with his doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. McNeill comments on this important concept:

Luther would therefore have every Christian, man or woman, allowed to hear confession and every sinner free to choose whom he will of his Christian neighbors to perform this service and absolve him in the word of Christ. All the minute particulars of sin and its circumstances may be ignored. What matters is that a brother has sinned and needs help within the Christian brotherhood.³

Luther encouraged each man to be his brother's keeper in a spiritual fellowship, as was aptly expressed by the principle "Seelsorge aller an allen."⁴

In Zurich, Switzerland, Zwingli showed a real concern for spiritual guidance in Der Hert, which was published in 1524.⁵ He emphasizes the importance of

¹Ibid., 1:285.

²Ibid., 1:286.

³McNeill, p. 168 (emphasis supplied).

⁴Ibid., p. 190.

⁵Zwingli not only emphasized the faithful preaching of repentance but also the need for spiritual guidance and direction of believers. While it is not a

modelling as a means of giving spiritual guidance and direction:

Therefore the shepherd must not let himself be shaped according to humanly created teaching but according to the word of God which he preaches, or else he plants nothing but hypocrisy. And since Christ is a perfect model, the shepherd must see that he relies only on his example.¹

John Calvin emphasized the importance of offering spiritual guidance and direction on an individual basis. In the context of the visitation of the sick, he states: "The office of a true and faithful minister is not only publicly to teach the people over whom he is ordained pastor, but as far as may be, to admonish, exhort, rebuke and console each one in particular."²

The work of personal spiritual guidance was actively pursued, and frequently discussed, by followers of the Reformers. Handbooks were developed for pastors, as in the Middle Ages. Perhaps the most significant of these was entitled Von der wahren Seelsorge (On the True Cure of Souls), by Martin Butzer.³ Using Scripture as

systematic treatment of the issue of spiritual direction, it testifies to Zwingli's genuine concern.

¹Huldrych Zwingli, Huldrych Zwingli Writings, 2 vols, trans. H. Wayne Pipkin (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications), 2:91.

²McNeill, p. 197.

³Butzer's book was published in 1538 in German and Latin. His concern for spiritual guidance and direction would have an impact on Lutheran Pietism.

his authority, he argues that "we owe one another mutual care in things of body as well as of the spirit."¹

One cannot pass over the development of the concept of spiritual direction in this era of church history without a consideration of the contribution of Ignatius of Loyola. John Olin suggests that "one of the most important events in the story of the Catholic Reformation is the founding of the Society of Jesus."² Our concern in this study is not with the impact of the Jesuits as an order, but rather with Ignatius' contribution to the concept of spiritual direction. His Spiritual Exercises, published in 1540, had a profound impact upon spiritual guidance and direction in the centuries that followed.³ Latourette notes:

These (Spiritual Exercises) were for the examination of conscience and to serve as a guide for meditation, contemplation, and prayer. Normally they were to require about four weeks and were to be taken under the supervision of a spiritual director. They were to enable the one who used them to conquer himself, to regulate

¹Martin Butzer, De vera animarum cura veroque officio pastoris ecclesiastici, p. 269, cited by John T. McNeill, p. 177-178. He draws from Ezekiel 34:16 to develop five aspects of spiritual guidance: 1. To draw to Christ those who are alienated. 2. To lead back those who have been drawn away. 3. To secure amendment of life in those who fall in sin. 4. To strengthen weak and sickly Christians. 5. To preserve Christians who are whole and strong, and urge them forward in all good.

²John C. Olin, The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 198.

³Ignatius was profoundly influenced himself by a reading Life of Christ by Ludolf of Saxony and The Imitation of Christ by Thomas A Kempis.

life, and to avoid coming to a decision from any inordinate affection.¹

This is a very structured approach to the work of spiritual direction. The Spiritual Exercises were intended for use in times of retreat, and, as Leech points out, the issue of discernment is seen as a crucial part of spiritual direction.² Edwards makes the following comment regarding the significance of Ignatius' contribution:

The discernment and other spiritual practices of Ignatius were spread widely in the Roman Catholic world after his death. In many religious communities, they provided the basic form of personal spiritual practice. Since the Second Vatican Council they have undergone a renaissance of interest and modification. . . . it is the most "tested" and ongoing experimental approach to Christian spiritual direction.³

Two other highly influential figures of this same era are Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross. Theresa of Avila, author of Interior Castle and founder of the Discalced Carmelites, is regarded as the leading Spanish mystic.⁴ John of the Cross, her spiritual son, is considered to be one of the greatest spiritual directors of the Church.⁵ He was utterly convinced of the need for

¹Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 844.

²Leech, p. 59.

³Edwards, p. 60.

⁴Theresa of Avila (1515-1582) is regarded by some as the outstanding Spanish woman of all history.

⁵John of the Cross (1542-1605) was educated by the Jesuits and entered the Carmelite order.

spiritual direction. Notice the intensity of the following remark: "God is desirous that the government and direction of every man should be undertaken by another man."¹ And he notes that

the Holy Spirit is the principal agent and mover of souls and never loses care for them; and the directors themselves are not agents but only instruments to lead souls. . . . Let them not, therefore, merely aim at guiding the soul according to their own way and the manner suited to themselves, but let them see if they know the way by which God is leading the soul.²

Both Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross "promulgated their conviction that spiritual direction for both people under vows and lay church members was a necessity for the renewal of the church."³

A contemporary of John of the Cross was Dom Augustine Baker, who is considered the most important spiritual director of the seventeenth century.⁴ He, like John of the Cross, emphasized that the Holy Spirit is the only sure Guide and master. His comments on the

¹John of the Cross, cited by Alan Jones, Exploring Spiritual Direction: An Essay on Christian Friendship (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), p. 79.

²Ibid. His most significant works were Ascent of Mount Carmel, The Dark Night, and Living Flame of Love. He spoke at length about "the dark night of the soul;" a period of aridity preceding or at the beginning of the state of union or perfection. He suggests that the guidance of a spiritual director is especially helpful during this time, though it seems to offer no consolation.

³Freeman, p. 5.

⁴Dom Augustine Baker (1575-1644) was a Benedictine monk.

qualities required for a spiritual director show great insight:

The instructor, therefore, is to behave himself towards them all according to the quality and needs of each spirit, always remembering that his office is not to teach his own way, nor indeed any determinate way of prayer but to instruct his disciples how they may themselves find out the proper way for them, by observing themselves what doth good and what causeth harm to their spirits; in a word, that he is only God's usher, and must lead souls in God's way and not his own.¹

However, unlike many of his contemporaries, Dom Augustine Baker did not see direction as a constant need.²

The followers of Ignatius both experienced and were trained in the art of spiritual guidance of souls.³ Neapolitan Alfonso de Liguori (d. 1787), founder of the Redemptorists, focused on the importance of spiritual direction in his Instruction. He stressed that direction was concerned with the pursuit of higher spiritual attainment rather than with the sacramental pardon of sins.⁴

¹Dom Augustine Baker, Holy Wisdom, ed. J. Norbert Sweeney (London: Burns and Oates, 1876), p. 35 (emphasis supplied).

²Leech, p. 62.

³This assertion still holds true. Ephrem Carr, of St. Meinrad School of Theology, estimated in 1983 that more than 90 percent of present Roman Catholic training programs in spiritual direction in the United States are under the auspices of the Society of Jesus.

⁴McNeill, p. 293. Manuals on spiritual direction were prepared for priests: e.g. The Way to Guide Souls by Francois Guillore, which grew out of his own experience of direction.

In the writings of Francis de Sales, we see an insistence on the necessity of spiritual direction.¹ We also see an extremely high view of authority for the spiritual director. In his Introduction of the Devout Life, he devotes an entire chapter to "the necessity of a guide in order to enter the path of devotion."² And he states that "this spiritual guide should always be an Angel in your eyes."³ He is also the author of the much quoted comment in regards to selecting a spiritual guide: "Who will find this friend? . . . 'choose one person among a thousand,' says John of Avila. But I say, among ten thousand, for there are fewer than can be imagined, who are fitted for this ministry."⁴ While we find in these writings an emphasis upon spiritual direction for fundamental correction and progressive guidance, there is also an authoritative insistence on the sacrament of penance and confession.

¹Leech, p. 64.

²Before the Introduction to the Devout Life the need for direction had not been so definitely stated (See Leech, p.64.)

³Jerome M. Neufelder and Mary C. Coelho, eds., Writings on Spiritual Direction (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), p. 25. Jacques Benigne Boussuet (d. 1660) held along with de Sales that the director has "the place of God" toward those under his direction.

⁴Ibid., p. 37.

Modern Christianity

Under the leadership of Philipp Jakob Spener (d.1705), pietism placed great emphasis on the mutual priesthood of all believers and the importance of personal religion.¹ In Pia Desideria, Spener stresses the importance of mutual edification and direction as the priesthood of all believers. He expresses the desire that every Christian should have a confidential friendship either with his pastor or another understanding and enlightened Christian to whom he would render an account.² McNeill makes the following comment regarding Spener's contribution to the concept of spiritual direction: "He succeeded in setting on foot a movement that elevated the layman in his religious status and taught him to contribute to others by fraternal counsel and "aedificatio mutua," mutual upbuilding."³

Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (d. 1760) was deeply influenced by Spener. Under his leadership, the Moravian Brotherhood laid great emphasis upon mutual spiritual direction and edification: "The life of the early Moravians was marked by a close brotherly intercourse in prayer, song, instruction and daily

¹His book, Pia Desideria (Pious Longings), published in 1675, is considered a foundation book of the Pietist movement.

²McNeill, p. 183.

³Ibid., p. 184.

work....each member was to confide to the others the concerns of his soul."¹

The emphasis of the Reformers on mutual spiritual guidance and direction, which continued to flourish among the Pietists, finds further expression in England with the Quaker societies.² According to Leech, "the distinctive feature of Quaker guidance was the element of mutual admonition and mutual direction."³ McNeill notes that their overseers "are commissioned to visit those in trouble, bringing them spiritual support, and to maintain a general supervision of the "walk and conversation" of members."⁴ Edwards notes:

There is a disarming simplicity in the corporate and individual discernment practices of this seventeenth-century English movement [The Society of Friends]. They reflect the gentle, stable domesticity of the best English spirituality, together with a subtle attunement to "the Light within," with much mutual edification from the movements of this Light arising in shared silence.⁵

Unlike the director/directee relationship, common particularly among Roman Catholics, "the mutual edification of Quakers developed on top of a long history

¹Ibid., pp. 184-185.

²George Fox (1624-1691) was one of the few religious geniuses of English History.

³Leech, p. 87.

⁴Ibid., p. 273.

⁵Edwards, p. 60.

of emphasis on the value of the gathered community as a source of spiritual guidance."¹

This concept of the gathered community as a source of spiritual guidance finds expression in the Methodist movement.² John Wesley gave close attention to the concept of spiritual guidance and direction. The bands and classes gathered for mutual confession, guidance, and discipline.³ In his "Rules of the Band-Societies, December 25, 1738, Wesley states: "The design of our meeting is, to obey that command of God, Confess your faults to one another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."⁴ Wesley testifies that they obtained in this experience what to them was a totally new experience of Christian fellowship, and began to bear one another's burdens. This mutual spiritual direction, while building upon the example of the Reformers and the Pietists, clearly finds its roots in the teachings of the

¹Ibid., p. 61.

²Leech notes that it was in the Wesleyan band and class meetings that "mutual guidance was manifested most strongly" (p. 87).

³Towlson asserts that the Methodist class meeting was based on the Moravian model. See Clifford W. Towlson, Moravian and Methodist (London: Epworth Press, 1957), p. 185.

⁴Wesley, 8:272. Included in the rules are: to speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting; to desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

New Testament. McNeill comments that "the bands, classes and societies constituted a structure of active groups engaged in the mutual cure of souls in a way that would have delighted Bucer or Spener."¹ And Leech asserts that "the band and class meetings while they lasted formed an intensive type of mutual spiritual direction and training in the Christian life."²

The past two centuries have seen a gradual de-emphasizing of the concept of spiritual direction. The early enthusiasm of the Reformers for mutual edification and fraternal correction gradually diminished. In Methodism, the early dynamic of the class meeting as a setting for mutual spiritual direction became less and less common.³ In the Roman Catholic communion, the practice of individual spiritual direction nearly disappeared. Freeman suggests several reasons for the de-emphasis of spiritual direction in Roman Catholicism: (this was) "partly due to some directors' arrogating power to themselves, to theological controversies about the movement of grace, and to Jansenism's rigidity and negative view of human nature."⁴

¹McNeill, p. 279.

²Leech, p. 87.

³Leech notes that "by 1841, Daniel P Kidder was one of those who was lamenting the decline of the class meeting within the Methodist movement" (p. 87).

⁴Freeman, p. 5.

Contemporary Literature

Revival of interest in
Roman Catholicism

In the past two decades, there has been a significant revival of interest within Roman Catholicism of the concept of spiritual direction. An important leader in that revival of interest was one of the most esteemed and sought after spiritual directors in France, Jean Laplace.¹ His work, La Direction de Conscience ou Le Dialogue Spirituel, published in 1965, has been recognized as a classic work on spiritual direction.² It was translated into English in 1967.³ In his introduction he notes: "This book is addressed first of all to priests, and it must be admitted that among the clergy spiritual direction does not have a good press."⁴ Recognizing the criticism that spiritual direction in its institutionalized form did not respect the freedom of the individual, Laplace prefers to use the terminology spiritual dialogue/counsellor rather than spiritual

¹One cannot ignore the important contribution of the contemporary Christian mystic Thomas Merton. Note especially his books The Seven Storey Mountain (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1948), and Spiritual Direction and Meditation (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1960).

²Jean Laplace, La Direction de Conscience ou Le Dialogue Spirituel (Paris: Maisone Mame, 1965).

³Jean Laplace, The Direction of Conscience, trans. John C. Guinness (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967). Currently in print as Preparing for Spiritual Direction, trans. John C. Guinness (Chicago: Franciscan Press, 1975).

⁴Ibid., p. 13.

direction/director. He defines spiritual direction as "help that one man gives to another to enable him to become himself in the faith."¹ He also emphasizes the importance of personal freedom: "Its [spiritual direction's] first objective is to confront a person with the degree of freedom that he has, and help him to grow in it."² However, he limits the work of spiritual direction to the priest and suggests that, seen in its proper light, spiritual direction "once more becomes in the eyes of today's priests an eminently sacerdotal task."³

Two other leading proponents of spiritual direction within the Roman Catholic communion have been William Barry and William Connolly. In their book, The Practice of Spiritual Direction, they note:

A steadily increasing number of articles and books on prayer, spirituality, and the art of spiritual direction have been published. This is a very different situation from that of the late sixties and earlier when such workshops, training programs and books were virtually or completely unknown.⁴

In 1971, Barry and Connolly, along with four other Jesuits, founded the Center for Religious

¹Ibid., p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 27.

³Ibid., p. 54.

⁴William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, The Practice of Spiritual Direction (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), p. vii.

Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts.¹ This center, which has made a significant impact in the field of spiritual direction, has a three-fold purpose: "(1) to do research that contributes to the development of a modern spirituality, (2) to train experienced men and women for a more effective ministry of spiritual direction, and (3) to provide spiritual direction to the people of God."²

In the preface to their book, Barry and Connolly describe a developing focus in their approach to spiritual direction:

Over the years our spiritual direction has come to be focussed more and more on helping people develop their relationship with God.

As we have come to understand it, spiritual direction differs from moral guidance, psychological counseling, and the practice of confessional, preaching, or healing ministries (though having affinities with them) in that it directly assists individuals in developing and cultivating their personal relationship with God.³

Based upon that focus, they give the following definition for spiritual direction in The Practice of Spiritual Direction, which was published after eleven years of learning at their Center:

¹Barry and Connolly first began discussing the possibility of starting a spirituality center in the Boston area in 1970. Barry had received his doctorate in clinical psychology and was teaching pastoral counseling and doing spiritual direction at Weston School of Theology. Connolly had much experience in spiritual retreats and spiritual direction and was completing his doctoral studies in spiritual theology.

²Ibid., p. ix.

³Ibid.

We define Christian spiritual direction, then, as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.¹

Unlike Laplace, Barry and Connolly do not limit the task of offering spiritual direction to clergy. They note that "ordination is not necessary for effective spiritual direction."² Rather, they suggest that the criteria be that they are members "in the faith community,"³ and that they have "a deep faith in the desire and ability of God to communicate with his people, not only as community, but as individuals too. This faith...must spring from their own experience of God."⁴

Barry and Connolly conclude their discussion of spiritual direction by expressing the following desire: "It is our hope that spiritual direction will become more available to the people of God."⁵ Undoubtedly, as a result of their writings and training at the Center for Religious Development, their desire is finding fulfillment.

¹Ibid., p. 8. This definition seems so well-balanced and comprehensive that I chose it as the working definition of spiritual direction for this project.

²Ibid., 121.

³Ibid., p. 124.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 196.

Francis Vanderwall, a contemporary of Barry and Connolly, in his book Spiritual Direction: An Invitation of Abundant Life, also affirms that spiritual direction is not simply the work of the clergy.¹ He states: "Any sincere Christian can become a good spiritual director. . . . There is no reason why the non-clerical members of our church--the lay men and women-- . . . cannot become good spiritual directors."² Vanderwall also speaks of "another prejudice whose demise needs to be hastened--a spiritual director does not have to be a Catholic. Christians of other denominations who are prayerful people most certainly can be competent directors."³

In sharp contrast with this open attitude of Vanderwall, Jan Bots and Piet Penning de Vries assert that the work of spiritual direction is a priestly function and that "every session involving personal spiritual direction takes place within this sphere of

¹Francis W. Vanderwall, Spiritual Direction: An Invitation to Abundant Life (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981). Vanderwall is a Jesuit professor of theology at Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama, and is an experienced spiritual director.

²Ibid., p. 50.

³Ibid., p. 51. Vanderwall refers to Retreats International, publishers of a directory of spiritual retreat centers in the United States and Canada. This directory includes a fairly comprehensive list of approximately 500 spiritual directors, together with personal backgrounds on each one. For more information on this directory, write to Retreats International, 1112 Memorial Library, Notre Dame, IN 46556.

ecclesial activity."¹ They also assert that while the real spiritual director is the Holy Spirit, "the Church is the Spirit-bearer in this world; it is, then, the spiritual director, "Mother and Teacher" (Mater et Magistra, John XXIII)."²

Several other Catholic contributions to the current discussion on spiritual direction include John English Choosing Life,³ Carolyn Gratton Guidelines for Spiritual Direction,⁴ Damien Isabell The Spiritual Director: A Practical Guide,⁵ Josef Sudbrack Spiritual Guidance,⁶ and Adrian van Kaam The Dynamics of Spiritual Self Direction.⁷ Space limitations prevent a detailed examination of these works, but each is worthy of careful consideration.

¹Jan Bots and Piet Penning De Vries, "On Spiritual Direction," Review for Religious 40 (1981):495-496.

²Ibid., p. 495. Bots and de Vries are Dutch Jesuits and their article (pp. 495-502) is a revision of a chapter in a workbook that they prepared on spiritual direction Geestelijke leiding vandaag, Een werkboek (Amsterdam: Patmos, 1978).

³John English, Choosing Life (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

⁴Carolyn Gratton, Guidelines for Spiritual Direction (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1980).

⁵Damien Isabell, The Spiritual Director: A Practical Guide (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975).

⁶Josef Sudbrack, Spiritual Guidance (New York: Paulist Press, 1983).

⁷Adrian van Kaam, The Dynamics of Spiritual Self Direction (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1976).

Impact upon Protestantism

The revival of interest in spiritual direction in Catholicism has spilled over into Protestantism. Tilden Edwards, an Episcopalian priest, would perhaps be considered a leading spokesman.¹ Edwards is Director of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Washington, D.C.² In the Fall of 1973, Edwards began a long-term experiment in group spiritual direction.³ In the Spring of 1975, with the encouragement of Shaun McCarty, a number of spiritual director colleague groups were formed in the Washington, D.C., area under the supervision of Shalem.⁴

It was out of these colleague groups that the need surfaced for "a full-fledged, long-term program . . . for those wanting to give larger amounts of time to development as spiritual companions."⁵ As a result, the

¹An important contemporary of Edwards is Kenneth Leech, whose book Soul Friend was the major text for the Shalem Institute of Spiritual Formation's training program in spiritual direction.

²It was to Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation that I turned for a spiritual friend when setting up my twelve-month case study in spiritual direction.

³At that time, Edwards was serving both as associate Rector of the Episcopal parish of St. Stephen and the Incarnation in Washington and Director of the Metropolitan Ecumenical Training Center.

⁴Shaun McCarty is on the faculty of the Washington Theological Union, with a specialty in spiritual theology. He is a highly experienced spiritual director and retreat leader of the Roman Catholic communion.

⁵Edwards, p. 202.

first training program in spiritual direction was started at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in the Fall of 1978.¹ It was out of this experience that Edward's classic work on spiritual direction, Spiritual Friend, was born.² Published in 1980, this book has had a significant impact on the current discussion of spiritual direction. Donald Corcoran, in her article "Spiritual Direction" published in 1985, implicitly recognizes the impact of Edward's work: "The model of spiritual friendship seems to be the favored model for the director-directee relationship."³

Edwards moves away from the term "spiritual director" because of its authoritarian connotations for some, and prefers the term "spiritual friend" or

¹Edwards discusses the training program at Shalem in greater detail in his closing chapter of Spiritual Friend. There were two primary goals for the program:

1. To help increase the number of better prepared and tested spiritual directors available for theological schools, churches, chaplaincies, retreat centers, and related bases in church and society.
2. To pilot a new structure for such preparation, which would aid in developing the theoretical and practical knowledge needed for the development of similar structures elsewhere (pp. 202-203).

²See also Gerald May, Pilgrimage Home (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), for a detailed account of Shalem's two year research study on spiritual development and group spiritual guidance.

³Corcoran, p. 450.

"spiritual companion."¹ He defines spiritual friendship as follows:

Being a spiritual friend is being the physician of a wounded soul. And what does a physician do when someone comes with a bleeding wound?

Three things: He or she cleanses the wound, aligns the sundered parts, and gives it rest. That's all. The physician does not heal. He or she provides the environment for the dominant natural process of healing to take its course.²

Edwards emphasizes that "such friendships do not require spiritual masters, just attentive faithful companions."³ Thus, he affirms, as do Barry and Connolly, that spiritual direction is not a work simply for the clergy. He makes the following comment based in his experience with the training program at Shalem: "The chief criterion in our selection of participants has been to see whether others spontaneously seek out the person for spiritual counsel. This criterion can be met equally by laity, religious, and clergy."⁴

A major contribution of Edwards is his discussion of group spiritual guidance. He suggests that "group spiritual guidance is the standard form of guidance in

¹I have chosen to use borrow the title of "spiritual friend" from Edwards for this project in order to avoid the authoritarian connotations associated with the title of "spiritual director."

²Edwards, p. 125. See pp. 125-129 for the qualities of a spiritual friend.

³Edwards, p. 102.

⁴Edwards, p. 207. Edwards suggests that the best spiritual friends are mature people in the second half of life (p. 107).

the Christian tradition."¹ He affirms that "such a group has great potential value in our time."² In addition to filling the gap left by a shortage of experienced one-to-one spiritual friends, he notes:

For some people, such groups might actually be more helpful than one-to-one direction. The richness of insight available in a group can outstrip what is available in a one-to-one situation, even though there is less opportunity for direct personal focus. Also, the corporate nature and energy of a group can be mutually supportive and stimulating.³

Citing Shaun McCarty, Edwards suggests that, while there are definite benefits to group spiritual direction, one must also consider the potential disadvantages:

(1) a possible lessening of individual accountability through hiding within the group; (2) a greater threat to confidentiality; (3) the difficulty of self-disclosure in a group for some; (4) the practical difficulty of finding a time when all can get together regularly.⁴

Such a group requires leadership, according to Edwards, and the best preparation for being a group leader "is first to have been a member of one."⁵ As with one-to-one spiritual direction, he asserts that group leadership "is

¹Ibid., p. 174.

²Ibid. Note the parallel between this emphasis and that of Ellen White regarding group spiritual guidance in the Social meeting.

³Ibid., pp. 174-175.

⁴Ibid., pp. 175-176.

⁵Ibid., p. 192.

a position to which clergy, religious, and lay people may equally be called."¹

Another Protestant of the Anglican tradition, who has made a significant contribution to the current discussion on spiritual direction, is Alan Jones. He serves as director of the Center for Christian Spirituality at General Theological Seminary in New York, and is author of the book Exploring Spiritual Direction.² Jones also prefers the terminology spiritual friendship or spiritual companionship to avoid the connotation of something formidable or intimidating. Speaking in the context of spiritual warfare, Jones states:

If I am to engage in this fantastic battle for my life-in-God, I need the compassion of my companions. I need someone who penetrates my senseless chatter and sees the terrific thing there really is in me. This is a good definition of the ancient role of spiritual director or friend of the soul. . . . This friend of my soul is a bearer of good news. He or she, by simply staying by my side through the difficult times, proclaims that I am more than my cynicism and despair.³

Jones emphasizes that while God chooses to work through frail human instruments, "spiritual direction is God's

¹Ibid., p. 193.

²Jones' assistant at the Center for Christian Spirituality, Mary Coelho, has also made a contribution to the current writings on spiritual direction. Coelho co-edited a book with Jerome Neufelder entitled Writings on Spiritual Direction by Great Christian Masters (New York: Seabury Press, 1982).

³Jones, p. 26.

work."¹ The conviction that a spiritual friend has a part to play in the mystery of another person's spiritual formation "rests on a mighty act of faith."²

Jones shares four requirements for a spiritual friend, preserved in the tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy. There is real beauty in their simplicity. The first is love: "not any kind of love, but an openness and readiness to accept another into one's heart."³ The second requirement is discernment. Jones notes that discernment is "the heart of spiritual direction."⁴ Jones follows in the tradition of spiritual directors such as Francis de Sales who emphasizes that this "discernment is a charism (a gift) of the Holy Spirit."⁵ The third requirement is patience, "the courage to wait

¹Ibid., p. 73.

²Ibid. Jones goes on to enumerate various gifts or qualities that are important for a spiritual director, but emphasizes that seeing spiritual direction as God's work is "where we must begin and end" (ibid).

³Ibid., p. 77. Jones emphasizes that "when the Christian loves, he or she is sharing in a divine activity, for love is the work of the Holy Spirit" (p. 78).

⁴Ibid., p. 78.

⁵Ibid. This view reflects the model of spiritual direction as charismatic. Jones notes that "the gift of discernment must always be exercised within the context of love" (ibid).

and be still."¹ And the fourth is "an utter frankness and honesty on both sides of the relationship."²

Jones sums up his thoughts on spiritual direction in these words: "Spiritual direction, therefore, requires a great deal of sensitivity to others. It is a work of collaboration between us and God in whom we are both free and freeing instruments."³

A leading Protestant spokesman on spiritual direction in Great Britain is Martin Thornton, Canon of Truro. In 1979, he was commissioned by Graham Leonard, bishop of London, to develop "a substantial course of study for potential spiritual directors, both clerical and lay, men and women, in the hope that this would help fill a notorious Anglican gap, and supply a growing need."⁴ That extended syllabus was published under the title Spiritual Direction. Thornton reacts against "the ambulance syndrome"⁵ and suggests that spiritual direction is growth-centered rather than

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 79. In the Western tradition, St. John of the Cross compiled a similar list of requirements for a spiritual director. They included love, courtesy, holiness, detachment, and theological competence.

³Ibid., p. 79.

⁴Martin Thornton, Spiritual Direction (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1984), p. ix.

⁵Thornton defines the "ambulance syndrome" as the view that the pastor tries to pick up the pieces, but has nothing positive to offer. If there are no accidents "he is out of a job" (p. 9).

crisis-centered.¹ "Spiritual direction is the way forward. It is the positive nurture of man's relation with God. . . . if counselling deals with problems, direction takes over as soon as they are solved."²

Thornton suggests that spiritual direction can only be grasped by analogy or experienced in practice. He defines the relationship as "an amalgam of doctor and patient, coach and athlete, father and son, brother and sister,"³ though he maintains that in the last resort the relationship defies analysis. Unlike Edwards, Thornton does not recommend group spiritual direction but suggests that "direction is essentially a face-to-face, one-to-one affair."⁴

Summary

Our brief review of contemporary literature has shown a tremendous revival of interest in the concept of spiritual direction. This revival, while beginning in Roman Catholicism, has spilled over into Protestantism, with the favored model being that of spiritual friendship.⁵ Whether this revival will be sustained and

¹As opposed to the problem-centered approach of pastoral counselling.

²Ibid., pp. 10-11.

³Ibid., p. 29.

⁴Ibid., p. 129.

⁵See also Gerald May, Care of Mind/Care of Spirit: Psychiatric Dimensions of Spiritual Direction (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982).

what impact it will have upon my own denomination remains to be seen.¹ The aim of this project is in harmony with that of Barry and Connolly: "to promote the current of Christian spiritual life that runs deeper than short-lived enthusiasms."²

¹Barry and Connolly suggest that if the present interest in spiritual direction follows the course of other recent movements in American spirituality, the enthusiasm will not last much past 1990.

²Barry and Connolly, p. viii.

CHAPTER III

THE TWELVE-MONTH CASE STUDY IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Identifying a Working Model

In his book Models of the Church, Avery Dulles suggests that the church can best be understood through the use of various models.¹ None of these models is complete in and of itself, nor are they of equal merit, but each model helps us to come to a more adequate understanding of the mystery of the church. Similarly, in an examination of the process of spiritual direction, it is helpful to consider various models. David Fleming, in an article entitled "Models of Spiritual Direction," suggests five such models.² These models are by no means an exhaustive review, but they do represent a spectrum of approaches which have made their mark in the history of spiritual direction.

In our review of the historical development of the concept of spiritual direction, we have noticed various models coming to the fore. A first model is spiritual direction as institutionalized. This approach

¹Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Doubleday, 1974).

²David L. Fleming, "Models of Spiritual Direction," Review for Religious 34 (1975):351-357.

was common in the monasteries and in the Ignatian idea of the superior. Spiritual direction is formalized and is in the form of instruction regarding the spiritual and religious life. There is a definite sense of control over the life development of the directee. The following comment by Dom Pierre Salmon in his book The Abbot in Monastic Tradition illustrates this point:

Once confidence had been placed in an abba or elder, it must not be withdrawn and given to another. . . . This fidelity in all trials was only possible through an unconditional obedience, a total submission: it is this which the ancient Fathers recommend for our emulation.¹

In this setting, the freedom of the individual is lost. He must subject himself to the person whose function it is to fulfill the assigned task as director. Under this model, Fleming suggests that spiritual direction "seems to be more a matter of imposition of lifestyle and spiritual practices than an evoking of personal growth."²

A second model of spiritual direction as interpersonal relationship has a strong basis in Scripture and church history.³ We have noted that Paul admonished the believers to "carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."⁴ The reformers also strongly emphasized the concept of

¹Salmon, pp. 5-6 (emphasis supplied).

²Fleming, pp. 352-53.

³See Chapter 2.

⁴Gal 6:2.

mutual spiritual direction. This model is a natural outgrowth of the Biblical teaching regarding the priesthood of all believers. Spiritual direction as interpersonal relationship also flourished in Pietism and Methodism. Spiritual direction under this model takes the form of friendly sharing and loving support. It occurs in the context of personal relationship. Under this model, direction attempts to focus equally upon the interpersonal relationship of the two friends--the director and the directee, and the growth of a life response to God. In harmony with the concept of mutual spiritual direction, the two people involved often exchange roles with each other so that direction becomes a mutual involvement. This model draws its strength from the fact that it is based upon love, care, and concern. The words of Aelred of Rievaulx, in his classic work on direction entitled Spiritual Friendship, emphasize the merit of spiritual direction as interpersonal relationship:

"Woe to him that is alone, for when he falls, he has none to lift him up." Ec 4:10 He is entirely alone who is without a friend.

But what happiness, what security, what joy to have someone to whom you dare to speak on terms of equality as to another self; one to whom you need have no fear to confess your failings; one to whom you can unblushingly make known what progress you have made in the spiritual life; one to whom you can entrust all the secrets of your heart and before whom you can place all your plans! What, therefore, is more pleasant than so to unite to oneself the spirit of another and of two to form one, that no boasting is thereafter to be feared, no suspicion to be dreaded, no

correction of one by the other to cause pain, no praise on the part of one to bring a charge of adulation from the other.¹

Although this model of spiritual direction has great strengths, there are also some inherent weaknesses.

Fleming makes this valid observation:

Even though in one sense friends can speak up honestly and forthrightly to each other, in another sense their lack of distance may blind each other to the very areas which need attention. Sometimes even the best friends find that they are frozen in speaking about one or other area because of the delicacy of the love relationship between them.²

Another weakness with this model, according to Elizabeth O'Connor, is that the element of authority is lacking:

Ordinarily spiritual direction is not a mutual relationship, though each person acting as a Spiritual Director should have direction. When the relationship becomes mutual it becomes one of spiritual companionship. While this is good, the element of authority in spiritual direction is lacking.³

A third model of spiritual direction finds its root in the spiritual gift of diakrisis--spiritual discernment; that is, spiritual direction as charismatic. Under this model, the spiritual director is seen as one who has received a special gift of the Holy Spirit which has equipped him or her for the ministry of spiritual direction. This model places great emphasis upon the

¹Aelred of Rievaulx, Spiritual Friendship, trans. Mary Eugenia Laker (Washington, DC: Cistercian Publications Consortium Press, 1974), 3:11, p. 72.

²Fleming, p. 353.

³Elizabeth O'Connor, Call to Commitment (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 201.

dynamism of grace. Spiritual direction is defined more in terms of insight or infused intuition from God. Many of the desert fathers were viewed in this light, as charismatic spiritual directors. Note the words of Saint Francis de Sales, in his book Introduction to the Devout Life:

The spiritual guide should always be an Angel in your eyes, i.e., when you have found him, do not see him merely as a human person, nor confide in him as such, nor in his human knowledge only, but in God, who will bless you and communicate to you through this man, placing into his mind and on his lips those ideas necessary for your happiness, so that you should listen to him as to an Angel, who comes down from heaven to lead you back to heaven with him.¹

A strength of this model is that it lifts the process of spiritual direction above the level of human technique and human response. But a weakness is that it tends to place spiritual direction in the realm of the extraordinary.

The model of spiritual direction as sacramental has its roots in the confessor-penitent relationship in the sacrament of penance. Concerning this model, Fleming comments:

The words which the priest speaks, then, have greater importance than mere human opinion or advice because they are spoken by God's human representative. More particularly, within the sacrament of penance, the priest confessor often has words of advice or counsel. This context becomes the only true setting of spiritual

¹Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, cited by Jerome M. Neufelder and Mary C. Coelho, eds., Writings on Spiritual Direction by Great Christian Masters (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), p.25.

direction because of certain ex opere operato effect of words spoken within the sacramental encounter.¹

This model certainly has a strong tradition in the life of the Christian church. But Shaun McCarty suggests that it is not helpful to see spiritual direction as co-terminus with the sacrament of penance:

It has been the close connection between the two in the past that has been at least partly responsible for identifying the ministry of spiritual direction fairly exclusively with the priesthood. And I think this has led to some dysfunctional telescoping of two important means of growth, one sacramental and the other non-sacramental.²

A fifth model is spiritual direction as incarnational. The emphasis is an ontological one, focusing upon the fleshing out of God's will in history and the continued activity of God in the world. The director cooperates with God in helping others to clarify and objectify God's will for their lives. This model maintains a sure emphasis on the humanness of the director/directee relationship, while still placing importance upon the presence and power of God. This model also emphasizes the importance of God's will being fleshed out in the life of the director. Note the counsel of John Cardinal Bona, an Italian Cistercian abbot, 1609-74, in his book Guide to Heaven:

¹Fleming, p. 354.

²Shaun McCarty, "On Entering Spiritual Direction," Review for Religious 35 (1976):858.

You should seek a faithful friend and wise man who has the inclination and personal capacity to lead you along on the way to holiness. A man whom you greatly respect rather than fear; one who does not castigate the transgressor but rather leads them to repentance; and whose life is validated by his actions rather than by mere words. He is a poor guide who gives excellent counsel but does not follow it himself.¹

Fleming emphasizes that under this model of spiritual direction as incarnational "no aspect of a person's life is left apart from the direction context, since man as a whole--physically, psychologically, and spiritually--must grow in his response to God's unique call to him."²

As we mentioned earlier, no one model of spiritual direction stands alone because none is completely adequate to express the richness of religious experience which forms the content of spiritual direction. My own experience, during the twelve-month case study, was a blending of the incarnational and interpersonal relationship models. Elements of both one-way and mutual direction were present, with an emphasis on the former. Edwards sees value in this balance:

All direction in some sense is mutual. The director can be opened to his or her own cooperation and resistance in grace in listening with another.

However, I believe that most relationships need a primary focus on one person or the other, lest they become a give-and-take of spiritual conversation that, though perhaps valuable, loses

¹John Cardinal Bona, Guide to Heaven, cited by Neufelder and Coelho, pp. 24-25.

²Fleming, p. 355.

the intensity and depth of focus needed in full spiritual direction.¹

This blending of both one-way and mutual direction emphasized both the fleshing out of God's will in history, and in my life in particular, and also the practical benefits of mutual support, direction, and encouragement.²

Selection of a Spiritual Friend³

In her book, Call to Commitment, Elizabeth O'Connor gives two practical suggestions for the selection of a spiritual director:

¹Edwards, p. 106.

²In our debriefing interview on November 4, 1986, I asked my spiritual friend to share with me his emphasis in spiritual direction, and how it had been in our own experience. His response clearly leans towards the incarnational model, though as you read through the journal, elements of the interpersonal relationship model are also clearly present:

My image of spiritual direction is simply cooperating with God, cooperating with God and enabling the person to come into that relationship. A person is already in that relationship. The Lord is always calling us. Particularly people that I meet with here are intentionally seeking out that relationship. The role of the director is to cooperate with the process that is already there. It becomes a process of listening to where that person is and where it appears as though the Lord is inviting him in the growth process in that relationship--then enabling the person to move through that. It is something that touches on the mystery of the universe, the mystery of God moving in us and experiencing the grace that comes from God (appendix B).

³The learnings in the second half of this study are clearly subjective and personal. They are presented as a testimony and are not claimed as the norm for every Christian pilgrim.

1. Pray fifteen minutes a day, asking that God give you the name of that person or the names of those persons who can act as your Spiritual Director.
2. Having been given the name of a person, ask him or her to pray about assuming this responsibility. The person you choose must want to know and guide your spiritual life as you would have it known and guided.¹

As I began my prayerful search for a spiritual friend, I came across the significant work by Tilden Edwards, Spiritual Friend. There, for the first time, I caught a glimpse of the real value of spiritual direction as a means of nurturing spiritual life. I was deeply impressed by his concluding remarks regarding spiritual direction:

It is a time of experimentation and reawakening in the classic art and ministry of spiritual direction. . . .

As I have reiterated again and again, spiritual direction or any other discipline cannot guarantee spiritual sight. However, I believe it can provide an important environment for slowly letting the scales fall from our eyes, to the extent grace is given. As this happens, we hopefully will be less prone to miss, to distort or be so frightened by the wondrous ways of the Holy One in our midst.²

In the final chapter of this book, Edwards refers to a spiritual direction training program at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Washington, D.C.³

¹O'Connor, p. 202.

²Edwards, p. 231.

³Ibid., pp. 194-231. The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation began its experiment with long-term group spiritual direction in the fall of 1973. Its spiritual direction training program commenced in the fall of 1978. Another such program began at the same time at Wainwright House in Rye, New York, under the

I sensed the conviction that this was the place to begin my search for a spiritual friend.

On August 6, 1985, while still working on my proposal for my Doctor of Ministry project, I called Shalem.¹ Later that same day, Dr. Gerald May, M.D., returned my call.² I shared with him that I was a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, and that I was interested in the process of spiritual direction. His response was very positive. He shared with me that this was the first time that Shalem had worked with a Seventh-day Adventist. He offered to send me a list of several individuals in eastern Pennsylvania who had completed or who were presently enrolled in the Spiritual Guidance Program. He suggested that I select a spiritual friend that I could easily relate to, and that I seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the process.

Guild for Spiritual Direction. The two most intensive Roman Catholic training programs offering graduate degrees in spiritual direction are run by the Jesuits of Weston, MA, and by the Dusquesne Institute of Formative Spirituality in Pittsburgh, PA. The only non-Roman Catholic graduate program in spiritual direction is offered by the Center for Christian Spirituality at the General Theological Seminary (Episcopal) in New York.

¹Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Mount St. Alban, Washington, D.C. 20016. (202) 966-7050.

²Dr. Gerald May, M.D., is the Director for Spiritual Guidance at Shalem. May is a psychiatrist who directed Shalem's two-year research study on spiritual development that resulted in Pilgrimage Home. He is the author of several other related books including Simply Sane, The Open Way, and Care of Mind/Care of Spirit. He is a Protestant lay-person whose private practice and leadership of groups frequently has focused on the relation of psychological and spiritual development.

On August 16, 1985, I received the correspondence from Dr. May. Enclosed was a list of nine graduates or participants in Shalem's Spiritual Guidance Program.¹ As I read through the letter, countless feelings surfaced. I was embarrassed, anxious, afraid. This whole experience was a journey into the unknown. But I found comfort in the counsel of Elizabeth O'Connor, reiterated by Dr. May. I prayed, "O Lord, I know that you're leading in this process. Please give me the courage to follow you." I glanced at the list of names once more, and my attention was drawn to Barry and Louise Young, a couple from the neighboring town of Bethlehem, PA. In the quietness of that moment, I sensed that my search for a spiritual friend was over, but I was not yet ready to call.

The Telephone Call and Get-Acquainted Visit

Almost three weeks passed from the time I received the correspondence from Dr. May until I made the initial contact with Barry and Louise Young. I was experiencing a high level of resistance. I was to learn later that such resistance is common, not only in the context of

¹Fr. Vincent Grimalia, Freeland, PA., (717)-675-2131, (R.C.); Sr. Joan McCabe, Dallas, PA., (717)-675-6534, (R.C.); Steven Hecksher, Rosemont, PA., (215)-353-5587, (Episcopal); Mary Louise O'Day, Clark's Summit, PA., (717)-587-3640, (Episcopal); Alan Wenrich, Steelton, PA., (717)-939-4998, (Lutheran); Barry and Louise Young, Bethlehem, PA., (215)-865-2384, (Methodist); Nancy Ann Johnston, Reading, PA., (215)-376-3260, (UCC); Emma Lou Benignus, King of Prussia, PA., (215)-768-2395, (Episcopal).

developing a relationship with a spiritual friend but also in the context of developing one's relationship with God. In their book The Practice of Spiritual Direction, Barry and Connolly spend an entire chapter exploring this common response of resistance. The following comment demonstrates keen insight:

Relationships do not develop smoothly. There is something in us that resists change and development, that wants wives or husbands, friends, companions to be the same tomorrow as they are today. At the same time, there is something in us that wants to know more about the other and is bored by sameness. These two desires clash in us and produce conflict and resistance. Resistance is a critical element in the development of every interpersonal relationship. It does, therefore, play a part in the development of a relationship with God.¹

Finally, on September 5, 1985, after twenty days of resistance, I called Louise Young. I shared with her my spiritual journey and my desire to explore the process of spiritual direction. We set up an appointment for me to meet with them at their house the following week for a get-acquainted visit.

On September 10, 1985, at 8:30 p.m., I presented myself at their door. I was experiencing a high level of anxiety. But the Christian love that I sensed in their presence made me feel at ease in a matter of minutes. I discovered that Barry was a pharmacist and operated his own business in the city of Bethlehem, PA. Louise was taking classwork for her Master of Arts in Pastoral

¹Barry and Connolly, pp. 80-81.

Counselling from Moravian College, also located in Bethlehem, PA. I sensed in both of them a strong commitment to Christ and a deep experiential knowledge of God. I shared with them my conviction that the Lord was leading me to experience a more intimate relationship with Him and that I felt led to get involved in the process of spiritual direction. During the visit, I sensed that Barry was listening very intently. At the end of our get-acquainted session, Louise shared with me that she would not be able to take on another assignment. Barry shared with me that he was also very busy, but he agreed to pray about my request. Before I left, I promised that I would call him the following Tuesday.

The week passed, and I never called back. I am ashamed to admit it, but it is true. Once again, I was experiencing a high level of resistance. I found myself developing rationalizations for my behavior: I was too busy; there was sickness in the family; I did not want to impose on anyone. But, as I review my response in retrospect, I see that I was afraid. Afraid that Barry might say no; and perhaps even more afraid that he might say yes.

Finally, Barry called me, and that really impressed me. He was under absolutely no obligation to me. He was a busy professional, already involved in a considerable amount of spiritual direction, and yet he took the time to call me. Barry shared with me that he was deeply

impressed with my genuine desire to experience a more intimate relationship with the Lord and he sensed the Lord's invitation to minister to me through the process of spiritual direction. In that act of Christian love, God spoke to my heart. We made an appointment for October 3, 1985. My experience with spiritual direction was soon to begin.

The Initial Session and Covenant

On October 3, 1985, at 8:30 p.m., I had my first visit with my spiritual friend, Barry Young. It is a visit that I will never forget. I noticed that my level of resistance was greatly reduced as a result of our get-acquainted visit. I kicked off my shoes and found a comfortable chair in his living room. After a brief introduction, he said to me, "Tell me, Derek, how's it going between you and the Lord?" His question cut through all that was trivial and superficial. It was a question that I really wanted him to ask, and yet, at the same time, I was hoping that he would not! No-one had ever asked me that question before--not in college, not during my internship, not in the Seminary, not even at the time of my ordination. Did I have the courage to be honest with him? Again, I sensed an increased level of resistance. Such honesty in regards to my spiritual journey was totally new to me. Even though I recognized that such a change was for the better, I found myself resisting it. As Barry and Connolly point out:

But there is also an inertial tendency in every personality pattern that resists change. Since these patterns organize experience, change means--or seems to mean--the disorganization of experience. We fear chaos.¹

Somehow, by the grace of God, I had the courage to take off my ministerial mask and be painfully honest. I shared with Barry that my relationship with God was very superficial and that I deeply desired a more intimate walk with Him. In that moment of honesty, with the Lord, with my spiritual friend, and with myself, I experienced tremendous freedom. Elizabeth O'Connor identifies this openness and honesty as an important element in the direction process:

It is an open relationship where your fear, feelings of rebellion, critical attitudes, misgivings, etc., are confessed. . . .Your spiritual director is one to whom you want to reveal your hidden self.²

I shared very openly about my personal history and my family relationships, and I was impressed with Barry's ability to listen and to reflect upon what he heard. During our visit, we talked together about learning to be open to God's initiatives and how we respond to them. Barry also shared with me an article by William J. Connolly, entitled "Noticing Key Interior Facts in the Early Stages of Spiritual Direction."³

¹Ibid, pp. 85-86.

²O'Connor, p. 201.

³William J. Connolly, "Noticing Key Interior Facts in the Early Stages of Spiritual Direction," Review for Religious 35(1976):112-121.

At the close of our session, Barry and I discussed the length and frequency of our meetings.¹ Edwards refers to this agreement as a covenant and suggests that it "helps to keep the relationship on track, and provides a basis for evaluation."² It was decided that we would meet together for one-hour sessions on a bi-weekly basis. Shaun McCarty, in an article entitled "On Entering Spiritual Direction", emphasizes the importance of setting regular times to meet:

There should be some kind of mutual commitment in terms of definite periods wherein direction will find the space and time to happen. There is a good reason for setting regular times. When the reason we get together is not the result of a problem situation that has arisen, creating its own urgency, it is more likely that growth process can be helped.³

Barry and I made a "covenant" for the duration of the twelve-month case study, with the understanding that we could renegotiate expectations at that time.

As I left that initial session, I sensed that the Lord was inviting me to embark on a spiritual pilgrimage that would change my life. When I arrived home, I read the article by Connolly that Barry had given to me. The opening statement seemed to be a prophetic word about the spiritual journey that lay ahead:

¹Barry Young generally meets with directees on a monthly basis. It is interesting to note that approximately 70% of his directees are involved in some form of ministry.

²Edwards, p. 122.

³McCarty, p. 865.

Christian life is reception of and response to God's initiatives. It is participation in a dialogue, not only of words, but also of lives, that has been begun by God. This dialogue shifts ground and situation, and tends to change the lives of the men and women who engage in it.¹

Learnings about the Process of Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Commitment of Spiritual Friend

Edwards suggests that the most important qualification of a spiritual friend is "a personal spiritual commitment, experience, knowledge, and humility, and an active discipline of prayer/meditation."² McCarty agrees with this assertion: "Everyone called to be spiritual director need not be a living saint, but I would think there would be in himself or herself a deep desire to grow in the Lord."³ As I mentioned in the previous section, I was deeply impressed at our get-acquainted visit by Barry's spiritual commitment. I noted in the first entry of my journal:

¹Connolly, p. 112.

²Edwards, p. 126. Edwards arrived at this conclusion after interviewing 29 spiritual leaders, most of them experienced directors. The second basic quality was the capacity to be caring, sensitive, open, and flexible with another person, not projecting one's own needs or fostering a long-term dependency. For further information on this study: Gerald May, Pilgrimage Home (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p. 158.

³McCarty, p. 864. During the twelve-month case study, my spiritual friend experienced his own time of desolation. On one occasion he shared with me that he was going through a dark night of the soul. (1/10/86) Through it all, he manifested a deep desire to grow in the Lord and to wait patiently on Him. It was a growing experience to witness Barry's own struggles and to listen to his honest testimony.

"In my introductory meeting with Barry, I was impressed with his personal relationship with God. I am thankful that he is willing to make the personal sacrifice of time and energy to help me along my spiritual journey."¹ He gave testimony of an experiential knowledge of God both in word and action. In this way he earned my confidence and gained that credibility necessary for effective spiritual direction.

Good Listening Skills

A second learning from the process of spiritual direction is the importance of good listening skills. I made the following journal entry after my first session with Barry: "I was really impressed with his ability to listen and to observe."² In discussing the importance of good listening skills, McCarty notes:

This is perhaps the most important skill (or art) needed: reverential listening to the unfolding mystery of another person's story--not just with ears, but with the heart; not just to words, but to melody. Listening can do more to help a person clarify who God is and what God is asking of him or her than any other activity (or passivity) I know.³

An important aspect of this listening skill was my spiritual friend's ability to provide clarification and bring my religious experience to the level of reflective awareness. This is a real benefit of spiritual direction

¹Appendix A: 10/3/85.

²Appendix A: 10/4/85.

³McCarty, p. 859.

that I became keenly aware of early in the direction process:

I met with my spiritual friend yesterday morning. I was looking forward to our meeting because I wanted to process what had been happening in my life. Here I see one of the real values of a spiritual friend. In the past, I have not had anyone with whom I can discuss my spiritual life. Barry has helped me to look beneath the surface. He says very little, but helps me to become aware of God's activity in my life. He encouraged me to be very attentive to my affective responses as well as my thoughts.¹

In other words, he encouraged me to listen, not only with my head, but also with my heart; and he modelled that reverential listening during the direction experience.

Loving Confrontation

A third learning that I gleaned from the experience of spiritual direction is the need for loving confrontation. By that I mean confrontation in the context of loving concern and gentleness. Approximately five weeks into the direction process, Barry confronted me with my resistant attitude. The following journal entry details my response to that loving confrontation:

This morning I met with my spiritual friend. We explored what's going on in my life right now. I have not been spending specific time in meditation and prayer for several days. It is difficult to admit my own spiritual poverty. And yet the yearning I sense within my heart is God's invitation to experience a more intimate relationship with Him. Why have I been resisting such a relationship? Perhaps I am afraid of where it will lead. I am afraid that I will have to let go of my pride and selfishness. In order

¹Appendix A: 10/16/85 (emphasis supplied).

to truly live to God, I must die to self. And dying is always painful.¹

When I came to the session, I was painfully aware of my own spiritual poverty and my high level of resistance. I experienced a genuine catharsis when Barry confronted me, because I knew that my resistance was a real obstacle to growth. As McCarty points out: "A good director will help uncover areas of 'unfreedom' and lead a person to an appropriate ascesis."² His honesty with me in the context of the direction process encouraged me to be honest with myself.

Another example of loving confrontation occurred nine months into the direction process. My last journal entry prior to our session revealed that I had fallen into the trap of "praying on the run" again and my head was filled with mindless chatter.³ In the context of our session, Barry confronted me:

I shared with him how stretched out I feel. My mind is always racing, and it is very difficult to still the mindless chatter. It makes it very hard to pray. My mind gets off onto tangents very easily. Barry asked me to explore in my prayers why I have a tendency to set myself up like this. Why do I accept such an intense program?⁴

¹Appendix A: 11/12/85 (emphasis supplied).

²McCarty, p. 860. Asceticism is the act of self-denial, which frees us from bondage to self. It is the root of asceticism.

³Appendix A: 6/2/86.

⁴Ibid., 6/5/86.

As I reflected on the experience, I realized how the angel of darkness often appears under the guise of an angel of light. At the very beginning of the direction process, I got in touch with the fact that I am often driven to do things in order to be accepted.¹ This was simply another manifestation of that character flaw. Such loving confrontation is a means of unmasking illusions which are often subtly deceptive.

Value of Accountability

A fourth very important learning from the process of spiritual direction is the value of accountability. Barry and I met together for twenty-three sessions during the twelve-month case study, including a three-day prayer retreat. I have found these times to be important opportunities for reflection and self-examination. When a car owner prepares to get his car inspected, he generally checks to see if it is in good mechanical order because he is held accountable for the condition of his vehicle. Similarly, I found that as my direction session approached, it naturally caused me to reflect upon how I was responding to the Lord's invitations in my life.

Spiritual Counsel

A fifth learning from the process of spiritual direction was the value of having a spiritual friend who could offer counsel regarding my spiritual journey. I

¹Ibid., 10/4/85.

refer here not to problem-centered counsel but growth-centered counsel. For example, on one occasion I realized that I had become locked into a focused meditation upon nature. This form of kataphatic meditation had been a great blessing to me, but I felt stifled and stagnant. The following journal entry records my reflections on that important session:

Yesterday morning I had a very significant meeting with my spiritual friend. I shared with Barry that I feel like I have reached a plateau spiritually. We reflected upon the fact that in sitting on my tree stump and watching the sun rise I need to beware of worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. It is amazing how easily we fall into idolatry. Meditation on nature must always be a means of getting in touch with the Creator, and not an end in itself.¹

Barry also offered invaluable counsel at times of periodic evaluation. Early in my direction experience I spent a significant amount of time getting in touch with my self and in silent meditation. But I came to the place where I felt God's invitation to experience His presence more completely. I shared this burden with Barry at one of our sessions:

As Barry and I reflected on the past three months, we recognized several important learnings: I am paying closer attention to my own feelings; I am endeavouring to notice God's actions and my responses to them; and I am coming to grips with my own spiritual poverty. But, as Barry put it, "I'm getting tired of looking at my own navel!"

Following that session, I began to experience great blessings through a kataphatic meditation on

¹Ibid., 1/10/86.

Scripture. When we met together two weeks later I was full of enthusiasm, wanting to share with him about the happenings in my spiritual pilgrimage since our last meeting. Barry listened carefully, but he also offered some spiritual counsel:

I should not expect that everyone is ready for this form of communion with God. Nor must I draw attention to myself because of it. I must always be aware of the fact that the angel of darkness is not far away. The gracious invitation of God to share in this very meaningful prayer experience is all His work, not mine. I cannot control it. I cannot turn it on or off. It is all of grace. All I can do is surrender and come with a heart that is open.¹

Following my visit to Andrews University, Barry and I had another such time of reflection and evaluation. It had been almost six weeks since our last meeting, and I really appreciated the two hours that we were able to spend together, debriefing my spiritual journey. I had noticed a definite shift in the focus of my communion time since returning from Michigan. I was spending most of my time in contemplative reading of Scripture, and very little time in focused meditation. As we reflected together Barry suggested that "this was a time of recuperation for me, and a time of integration."² The Lord had blessed me with some powerful experiences, especially in a focused meditation on Scripture, but now was a time to rest. He counselled me not to become

¹Ibid., 1/22/86.

²Ibid., 3/17/86.

enamored with the feelings associated with these dramatic spiritual encounters. Otherwise I would be in great danger of seeking the experience for its own sake rather than to commune with God. This was timely counsel. Following this experience, God would lead me through a dark night of the senses, with a marked absence of dramatic spiritual experiences in order to teach me not to depend upon them.

Prayer and Direction

A final learning from the process of spiritual direction is the value of prayer in the context of the relationship. This element was missing from my experience with spiritual direction, though I felt a recurring desire for prayer to be a part of our time together. On one occasion, approximately fourteen weeks into the case study, I asked my spiritual friend why we did not pray together at our sessions. I recorded his response in my journal the following morning:

I shared with Barry how much I appreciated his guidance. He is truly a trusted friend. I did ask him why we did not pray together. He said that he didn't want to make any statements about what prayer was or was not. He did not want to limit my thinking or cause me to want to pray as he prays.¹

At the time, his answer seemed to satisfy me, but in

¹Ibid., 1/10/86.

retrospect I feel that his reticence to pray was symptomatic of a struggle in his own spiritual journey.¹

McCarty, in his article entitled "On Entering Spiritual Direction," emphasizes the importance of praying with and for the directee:

The dynamics of grace are so much more at work than mere skills in direction. Often the mysterious workings of the Lord's presence are not susceptible to ordinary means of penetration. It is most appropriate to pray with the person for the Lord's own guidance and help, especially at such times. It is also appropriate to begin and/or end each session with some explicit prayer which invites the Lord to be involved in the process and to send his Spirit to enlighten and inspire, and later to thank him for his help—though this should not become a mere ritual.²

Two months after the conclusion of the twelve-month case study, I experienced the truth of McCarty's words. I was able to spend some significant time in prayer with Barry at the close of a three-day prayer retreat.³ This proved to be a time of great spiritual refreshing and sweet Christian fellowship. That experience strengthened my conviction that prayer time should be considered an important component of the direction process.

My learnings about the process of spiritual

¹Barry shared with me at that same session that he was experiencing a dark night of the soul.

²McCarty, pp. 862-63.

³This three-day guided prayer retreat was held at a Spiritual Retreat Center in Wernersville, PA, 11/20/86-12/2/86.

direction continue,¹ but we turn our attention now to the potential of spiritual direction as a dynamic for nurturing the pastor's spiritual discipline of prayer.²

¹Barry and I have covenanted to continue to meet together on a monthly basis for another year.

²Undoubtedly, the potential of spiritual direction for nurturing the spiritual discipline of prayer is not solely for the pastor, but we have chosen that limitation for this project.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPACT OF THE PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION UPON MY SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

Developing a Contemplative Attitude

One of the most significant affects of the spiritual direction process upon my spiritual discipline of prayer has been the developing of a contemplative attitude. We have defined contemplation as finding freedom from one's own preoccupations and paying attention to another, namely God.¹ My spiritual friend did not explicitly reveal his intention to help me develop a contemplative attitude, but, in retrospect, I see that this was an important objective.² He wanted me "to pay attention to God as he reveals himself,"³ and

¹Alan Jones defines contemplation as "paying loving attention to God" (p. 106). He asserts that "there is a fantastic sense of liberty when we are so attentive as to find ourselves in a center outside ourselves" (ibid).

²Barry and Connolly assert that helping the directee to develop a contemplative attitude is a fundamental task in the work of spiritual direction (p. 46).

³Ibid.

help me to recognize my reactions and decide on my responses to God.¹

At our first session, he gave me a copy of an article by William J. Connolly entitled "Noticing Key Interior Facts in the Early Stages of Spiritual Direction."² In the article, Connolly emphasizes the importance of developing a contemplative attitude. Having asserted that Christian life is reception of and response to God's initiatives, Connolly continues:

If Christian life is reception and response, conscious growth in Christian life will depend on noticing God's actions and one's own response. So a spiritual direction that sets out to assist this conscious growth will regard as crucial the task of helping a person notice these movements.³

Learning to "notice," then, is a fundamental starting point.⁴ Henri Nouwen describes this as a movement from

¹Ibid. Barry and Connolly note that "contemplation leads to, or rather is an experience of, transcendence--that is, of forgetfulness of self and of everyone and everything except the contemplated object" (p. 49).

²He suggested that I read it carefully before our next session.

³Connolly, p. 112 (emphasis supplied). He notes that "noticing is thus so fundamental and influential an operation that any careful study of spiritual life and spiritual direction must reckon with it" (p. 113).

⁴Connolly emphasizes: "In the experience of spiritual direction, a director soon becomes aware that genuine personal response always begins with noticing: the person notices something happening to him" (ibid).

absurdity to obedience.¹ He makes the following comment on absurd living:

The word "absurd" includes the word surdus which means "deaf." Absurd living is a way of life in which we remain deaf to the voice which speaks to us in our silence. The many activities in which we are involved, the many concerns which keep us preoccupied and the many sounds which surround us, make it very hard for us to hear the small voice through which God makes his presence known.²

In contrast to absurdity, or a deaf way of living, is obedience. Nouwen observes that the word obedience includes the word audire which means "listening." He asserts that "living a spiritually mature life is living a life in which we listen to the voice of God's Spirit within and among us and in which we try to respond to that voice every moment of our lives."³ His comment on the obedient, or listening, way of life is worthy of note:

The great news of God's revelation is not simply that God exists but that he is actively present in our lives at all times and at all places....To be obedient means to be constantly attentive to this active presence of God and to allow him, who is only love, to be the source as well as the goal of all we think, say, and do.⁴

However, as Nouwen points out, it is not easy to live a life of listening: "we find it very hard to create

¹Henri J. M. Nouwen, "Spiritual Direction," Worship 55 (1981):399-404.

²Ibid., p. 399.

³Ibid., p. 400.

⁴Ibid (emphasis supplied).

some empty space in our lives and to give up our occupations and preoccupations, even for a while."¹ One reason for this resistance is that we are afraid of empty space. We fear silence. Second, we fear the cost. We fear where this contemplative attitude might lead us. We fear the cost of true discipleship. But if our prayer is to be meaningful at all, we must first listen. We must come with no agenda, no preoccupation.

Arnaud Nigro suggests that it is in the context of this contemplative attitude that we truly learn to pray. For "prayer is a personal response to God's presence."² If we accept this premise, then we have nothing to pray about until we have first become aware of the presence of God. Until we have developed a contemplative attitude, we simply demonstrate our absurdity and our "prayers" are little more than the "sacrifice of fools."³

The fostering of a contemplative attitude, has been the focus of all the sessions with my spiritual friend. During our first session, my spiritual friend encouraged me to share about my life experience, and to articulate my deep feelings and attitudes. He also was interested in my reasons for deciding to engage in

¹Ibid.

²Arnaud M. Nigro, Prayer: A Personal Response to God's Presence (Wernersville, PA: Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth, 1979), p. 1.

³See Eccl 5:1-3.

spiritual direction.¹ He was encouraging me to become more observant, to notice more carefully. At our second session, Barry once again encouraged me to pay close attention to my affective responses as well as my thoughts.² I noted in my journal following our visit that "Barry has helped me to look beneath the surface....to become aware of God's activity in my life."³

A careful reading of my spiritual journal shows a growing awareness of what it means to live this obedient life. And the process continues. Learning to notice. Learning to be still, and know experientially the Person of God.

Sensing My Spiritual Poverty

Another important effect of the spiritual direction process on my spiritual discipline of prayer was to help me to get in touch with my own spiritual poverty. While I was willing to admit in my first journal entry that "at present, my prayer life is quite sporadic,"⁴ my main motivation for entering the process

¹Connolly notes that "the development of the ability to notice and to express what he notices can begin, then, with the person's first description of his life-experience and his reasons for deciding to engage in spiritual direction" (p. 116).

²Appendix A: 10/16/85.

³Ibid.

⁴Appendix A: 10/3/85.

was to accomplish a task and fulfill an academic requirement. I noted that "my goal is to nurture the spiritual discipline of prayer in my life."¹

Following my first session with my spiritual friend, I realized that such a selfish motivation was unacceptable. I took one step closer towards a recognition of my spiritual poverty:

My motivation for seeking a closer fellowship with God needs to be simply because I love Him and not because I might be more fully accepted. God will love me no more and no less. I settled right there and then as I was driving home that I will set off on this journey God-ward because I love Him and because I rejoice in His salvation.²

Even though I had recognized that I could not enter on this spiritual journey in order to earn God's favor, still the focus was upon me. The motivation was my love for God. I had still not come to grips with my own spiritual poverty.

An important step forward came following my second session with my spiritual friend. I had been "praying on the run" for the past two weeks, and justifying it because of the intensity of my schedule. On the morning of October 16, 1985, I made the following entry in my journal:

I have been impressed at how shallow my love for God really is. Perhaps that is an inevitable result of doing all the talking. In an early entry I noted that I must seek a deeper fellowship with God because I love Him. But as I

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

consider the feebleness of my love, I realize that actually the true motivation is because He loves me. I am simply responding to His unfathomable love, His amazing grace.¹

My spiritual friend encouraged me to pay close attention to God's initiatives and my response to them. He also suggested that I spend focused time in meditation on Psalms 103 and 104. As I began to look honestly at my self, and focus upon the glory of the Lord, I became even more painfully aware of my spiritual poverty. The following entry records my struggle:

My strength is so limited. My love is so limited. I have two options. I can either despair, or I can look to the Lord and be saved-- saved not only from sin and its penalty, but saved also from the tyranny of a self-centered life.²

As I met with Barry for our third session, I shared with him that I was coming face to face with my own spiritual poverty.³ I sensed that my spiritual friend had an experiential knowledge of what I was going through, and in that I found comfort. He offered me a book by Johannes Metz entitled Poverty of Spirit.⁴ Metz notes that "we are all beggars....Our needs are always

¹Ibid., 10/16/85.

²Ibid., 10/25/85.

³In retrospect, I see that sensing my own spiritual poverty was an important part of my spiritual journey and an early contribution of the direction process.

⁴Johannes Baptist Metz, Poverty of Spirit, trans. John Drury (New York: Paulist Press, 1968).

beyond our capacities, and we only find ourselves when we lose ourselves."¹ He emphasizes that:

Only through poverty of spirit do men draw near to God; only through it does God draw near to man. Poverty of spirit is the meeting place of heaven and earth, the mysterious place where God and man encounter each other, the point where infinite mystery meets concrete existence.²

At my fourth session with my spiritual friend, he confronted me in a loving way. Barry sensed my resistant attitude. I sensed a real relief even in his confrontation. I knew that I needed to be accountable. The following entry, made later that same afternoon, records my struggle:

It is difficult for me to admit my own spiritual poverty. Yet the yearning I sense within my heart is God's invitation to experience a more intimate relationship with Him. Why have I been resisting such a relationship? Perhaps I am afraid of where it will lead. I am afraid that I will have to let go of my pride and selfishness. In order to truly live to God, I must die to self. And dying is always painful.³

This fourth session was definitely a turning point in my spiritual journey. I realized that it is out of my poverty of spirit that I pray.⁴ It must always be that way, as I reaffirm in my final journal entry: " I am painfully aware of my own spiritual poverty. It is only

¹Ibid., p. 27.

²Ibid., p. 26.

³Appendix A: 11/12/85.

⁴Johannes Metz asserts that "in prayer we drink the dregs of our poverty, professing the richness and grandeur of someone else: God" (p. 52).

God's love and graciousness that draws me."¹ Finally, I am beginning to understand experientially the great truth of which Metz speaks in the conclusion to his book: "Prayer is the ultimate realization of man. Surrendering everything, even his poverty, he becomes truly rich: 'For when I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Cor 12:10)."²

Moving into Solitude and Silence

Having come to grips with my own spiritual poverty, I sensed the Lord inviting me to move into silence that I might experience communion with Him. But silence was not easily found. Up to this point, my sporadic prayer time was verbal. I would spend twenty to thirty minutes in prayer, but "I was talking all the time."³ Now my words seemed very inadequate and so affected. What does it mean to "Be still and know that I am God?"⁴ Richard Foster, in his book Celebration of Discipline, suggests that "the purpose of silence and solitude is to be able to see and hear."⁵ But he cautions that "simply to refrain from talking, without a

¹Appendix A: 10/2/86.

²Metz, p. 53.

³Appendix A: 10/23/85.

⁴Ps 46:10.

⁵Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 86. In this book, Foster gives a helpful introduction to classical spiritual disciplines.

heart listening to God, is not silence."¹ In order to move into silence, I found myself moving into solitude.² At my fourth session with my spiritual friend, when he confronted me with my resistant attitude, he suggested that I spend twenty minutes in some form of meditation and prayer. So I decided to spend twenty minutes each day in solitude, out in nature. Most of the time I spent in silence, though I would also recite the Psalms of praise. The following entry illustrates the joy of intimacy with the Lord as I spent time in solitude and silence:

It is so quiet out in the woods and I sense God's presence near....On the way back from my walk, I witnessed the most beautiful sunrise and I burst out in a spontaneous expression of praise: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name!" There is far more joy in my prayer time when I approach it as a special time of fellowship with God, and not simply to talk, or as a religious duty.³

After two weeks of spending time in solitude and silence, the Lord manifested his presence to me in a special way. I was feeling particularly stressed on the morning of December 3, 1985. Like Martha, I was "all

¹Ibid.

²Foster suggests that solitude and silence are inseparable. He notes that Thomas A Kempis has a section in his classic work The Imitation of Christ, entitled "On the Love of Solitude and Silence." For an excellent discussion of solitude and silence see Life Together, trans. John W. Doberstein (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1954). Bonhoeffer suggests that "the mark of solitude is silence, as speech is the mark of community" (p. 78).

³Appendix A: 11/18/85.

stretched out."¹ I found it very difficult to center myself, and to still the ceaseless chatter in my mind.² After a few restless moments of sitting on my tree stump, I stood up to leave. At that moment, the Lord encountered me:

As I stood up to leave, I heard a voice in my mind saying "Stay." I sensed God's invitation to enjoy a deeper awareness of His presence. I looked up in the clear blue sky and saw a solitary bird flying in the face of a blustery wind. Then the Lord spoke to me. No, it was not an audible voice, but it was as clear as if He was standing right next to me. He said, "Derek, maybe sometimes you feel like you're flying all alone; but remember, you're in the midst of my heavens." I sensed a deep inner joy, and in the stillness of the morning I praised God for His presence.³

Dietrich Bonhoeffer asserts that "silence is nothing else but waiting for God's Word."⁴ As the Living Word encountered me in my time of solitude and silence, I knew the truth of those words, not only cognitively but experientially.

On numerous other occasions, the Lord has encountered me in times of solitude and silence. Often it is as I meditate upon nature that the God of all nature catches my attention. I recount here one other

¹The account of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 vividly illustrates the consequences of "praying on the run."

²We discuss the importance of "centering" in the following section on focused meditation on Scripture.

³Appendix A: 12/3/85.

⁴Bonhoeffer, p. 79.

occasion by way of illustration. The journal entry is recorded on February 5, 1986. It is the account of my feverish attempt to recapture my runaway dogs! Note the intensity of the situation, and how God breaks through:

By this time I was very frustrated and quite angry. I was not noticing God at all. When I was about two thirds of the way there, the Lord whispered in my ear: "Look up, Derek, look up!" As I looked up, I was startled by a scene of astronomical wonder. The heavens were alive with the handiwork of God. Thousands of stars glittered in a cloudless sky. "You're so angry, so caught up in your own thoughts that you don't even notice me," the Lord said.¹

Once again, in a time of solitude and silence, in the midst of His creation, the Creator God encountered me.

For almost two months the bulk of my prayer time was spent in solitude and silence, meditating on nature, and allowing God to be present to me. At my seventh session with my spiritual friend, I shared with him that I had reached a plateau in my spiritual journey and that I sensed the Lord inviting me to a deeper fellowship with Him. I recorded my thoughts the following morning in my journal:

We reflected upon the fact that in sitting on my tree stump and watching the sun rise, I need to beware of worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. It is amazing how easily we fall into idolatry. Meditation on nature must always be a means of getting in touch with the Creator, and not an end in itself.²

¹Appendix A: 2/5/86.

²Ibid., 1/10/86.

This time of reflection was very helpful. I realized again that one of the great blessings of spiritual direction is having someone with whom you can debrief your spiritual journey, someone who can help you to pay close attention to God's invitations and how you are responding to them. My spiritual friend alerted me to a danger against which Bonhoeffer also cautions:

It is all too easy to go astray at this point. We could probably cite many a bad experience that has come from silence. Silence can be a dreadful ordeal with all its desolation and terrors. It can also be a false paradise of self-deception; the latter is no better than the former.¹

Fortunately, my spiritual friend alerted me to the danger of being lulled into a false paradise of self-deception. While he did not tell me how to move ahead in my spiritual journey, he encouraged me to pay close attention to God's invitation. The breakthrough came five days later when I sensed the Lord's invitation to explore a focused meditation on Scripture.²

¹Bonhoeffer, p. 80. Bonhoeffer asserts: "let none expect from silence anything but a direct encounter with the Word of God, for the sake of which he has entered into silence" (pp. 80-81).

²I do not want to imply that in sensing the Lord's invitation to explore a focused meditation on Scripture that I was to renounce my former experiences. I have continued to be greatly blessed by moving into solitude and silence. The Lord meets me in different ways, at different times. As I noted in my journal: "I learned that He does not always meet me in the same way. I do not control the how and when. I must simply be open and responsive, ready to notice His actions and His gracious invitation" (2/5/86).

Healing of the Imagination¹

One of the most significant happenings during my twelve-month case study was a growing appreciation of the use of imagination in meditation and prayer.² Ellen White, in her commentary on the Beatitudes, makes this suggestion regarding the use of imagination: "Let us in imagination go back to that scene, and, as we sit with the disciples on the mountainside, enter into the thoughts and feelings that filled their hearts."³ The following comment is equally thought-provoking: "It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it

¹Use of the imagination in meditation and prayer is distinguished from psychological illusion in that focused meditation is rooted in the reality of Scripture and the reality of the Living Christ. Such meditation must also be tested by the Scripture. What are the fruits of the experience? For a concise article on the use of imagination see: William M. Shea, "Imagination and Prayer: Outline of the Theory," Review for Religious 39 (1980):739-748.

²A note of caution is in order to all who would explore focused meditation on Scripture. The angel of darkness is always seeking to masquerade as the angel of light. Hunt and McMahon, in their book Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1985), express valid concern about the infiltration of pagan and occult ideas into Christian meditation. Their book is worthy of careful consideration. However, while there is a real need to discern between the true and the false, we must not be driven to the extreme of rejecting both.

³Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1956), p. 1 (emphasis supplied). This work contains numerous references to the use of the imagination in focused meditation on nature and Scripture.

point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones."¹

The breakthrough in my own spiritual journey came five days after my seventh session with my spiritual friend. I was listening to a cassette tape of a sermon that I had preached the previous week.² I sensed the Lord inviting me to spend time in focused meditation upon the love of God as revealed in the life of Christ. So later that same week, I spent time in focused meditation upon Rev 3:20.³ The following journal entry is an attempt to record my deep spiritual experience: "When I invited Jesus into my house, I could find no words to say. My head was spinning. Finally I blurted out, "I love you," and fell into His arms."⁴ Richard Foster describes the beauty of such a personal meeting with the Lord in his discussion on the discipline of meditation:

As you enter the story, not as a passive observer, but as an active participant, remember that since Jesus lives in the Eternal Now and is not bound by time, this event in the past is a

¹Idem., The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), p. 83 (emphasis supplied). A careful study of the writings of Ellen White reveals that her definition of contemplation very closely parallels the one used in this project.

²Appendix A: 1/15/86.

³The meditatio Scripturarum is considered by all the spiritual masters to be the normal foundation for the inner life. As Foster points out, "the meditation of Scripture becomes the central reference point by which all other meditations are kept in proper perspective" (p. 26).

⁴Appendix A: 1/20/86.

living present-tense experience for Him. Hence, you can actually encounter the living Christ in the event, be addressed by His voice and be touched by His healing power. It can be more than an exercise of the imagination; it can be a genuine confrontation. Jesus will actually come to you.¹

The following day I shared a focused meditation on Scripture with a group of about forty people at the close of an afternoon seminar. This was also a deeply moving experience. I noted in my journal that through this form of meditation "Jesus is becoming more real to me. I am not listening out into space, but listening within the context of a personal encounter."²

Needless to say, when I met with my spiritual friend for my eighth session, I was anxious to share with him the happenings in my spiritual journey since our last meeting. Barry listened with his head and with his heart. He rejoiced with me that the Lord was graciously inviting me to another form of communion with Him. But, while affirming my enthusiasm and exuberance, he also offered a word of caution:

I must always be aware of the fact that the angel of darkness is not far away. The gracious invitation of God to share in this very meaningful prayer experience is all His work, not

¹Foster, p. 26. Hunt and McMahon are strongly critical of the view that "we can visualize into existence with the power of our imagination even God and Christ" (p. 161). But I suggest that Foster is not making this claim. Focused meditation does not "visualize God into existence." Rather, when by faith we open our minds to His divine presence, God graciously stoops down to meet with us.

²Appendix A: 1/20/86.

mine. I cannot control it. I cannot turn it on or off. It is all of grace. All I can do is surrender and come with a heart that is open.¹

Barry also encouraged me to test such experiences to insure that they are from the Lord. He suggested two Biblical tests. First, does it lead to freedom? Second, what are the virtues? Does it produce love, peace, self-control?

The following morning I experienced another powerful encounter with the Lord during a focused meditation on Matt 11:28. At first I was easily distracted, and then Jesus spoke to me:

"Do you see," Jesus said, "how easily you accept your own burdens and try to carry them yourself? Come to me. Let me carry your burdens and give you rest." I began to cry. "Yes, Lord, that is what I want. I surrender to you." Then, in my focused meditation, the Lord laid His hand upon my head and said, "Receive the power of the Holy Spirit." I could actually sense a surge of power in my body. It lasted for several seconds. This is a new experience, where physical sensation is involved.²

From that time forward, focused meditation on Scripture has been an important part of my spiritual experience. During those times of communion, the Lord and I engage in prayerful dialogue, a dialogue not only of words but of lives.

On several occasions, I have sensed the Lord's invitation to spend time in focused meditation on specific passages of Scripture. One morning He invited

¹Ibid., 1/22/86.

²Ibid., 1/22/86.

me to spend time in focused meditation on the attempted seduction of Joseph by Potipher's wife.¹ I made this entry in my journal just a few minutes after the meditation was over:

The scene came vividly before me, and the seduction was very strong. For a moment I hesitated, and I sensed that I was in great danger. Then I remembered Joseph, and I said quickly, "How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?" And I fled. Once I was out of the room, the intensity of the temptation left me. I saw the Lord standing by my side and encouraging me. I sensed freedom and peace. The Lord affirmed my response, and told me that in this way victory would always be mine as I trusted in Him. I praise the Lord for ministering to me in this regard.²

I have found the centering process; which Foster refers to in his book Celebration of Discipline, to be very helpful as a preparation for focused meditation on Scripture.³ Foster suggests that it is "a time to become still, to enter into the recreating silence, to allow the

¹See Appendix A: 3/3/86 and 3/4/86 for a complete account. Due to certain experiences in my youth, I had struggled with feelings of weakness and uncertainty in this area of my life.

²Ibid., 3/4/86. On another occasion, the Lord invited me to a focused meditation on the call of God to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (3/6/86).

³There is an important distinction between the centering process and centering prayer, or apophatic meditation. Through the centering process, one seeks to be still in order to focus upon God through nature and Scripture. This is quite different from apophatic meditation where all images and symbols are rejected as radically inadequate and one empties the mind in order to somehow experience mystical union with the Divine.

fragmentation of our minds to become centered."¹ It helps me to still the ceaseless chatter that is all too often present. I began to use the centering process about five months into the case study, while attending an intensive course on "Spirituality for Ministry" at Andrews University. I noted the experience in my journal:

I began this morning with an exercise to center down, using a combination of the palms down/palms up exercise and the breathing exercise. As I turned my palms up and began to breathe in God's joy and peace and love, a tremendous sense of well-being came over me. When I became aware of it, I unconsciously broke out into a smile and I even began to laugh! I could not contain the joy. I realize that God's presence is always near, but it was as if, though this centering process, the curtain was drawn back, and I became fully aware of it.²

These times of focused meditation on Scripture were filled with tremendous spiritual blessings. I sensed the nearness of God's presence as never before. The Living Word encountered me in the written Word.

Upon my return home from Andrews University at the beginning of March 1986, I noticed a definite shift in my spiritual journey which I made note of in my journal.³ There was a clear movement away from kataphatic meditation and a focusing rather upon a

¹Foster, p. 24. See Foster, pp. 24-25 for a detailed explanation of two brief exercises that are useful for centering. The contemplatives of the Middle Ages referred to it as "re-collection."

²Appendix A: 2/17/86.

³Ibid., 3/14/86.

contemplative reading of Scripture. I found myself really looking forward to my up-coming session with my spiritual friend. We had not met for almost six weeks and I was anxious to share the many happenings since our last meeting. At our session, we spent two hours debriefing the experiences of the past few weeks, and especially reflecting upon the shift away from kataphatic meditation. The following morning, I made this entry in my journal:

As we reflected on this shift, Barry suggested that this is a time of recuperation for me, and a time of integration. The Lord has blessed me with some powerful experiences, especially in a focused meditation on Scripture, but now is a time to rest.¹

He also cautioned me that it was possible to become enamored with the powerful experiences found in focused meditation on Scripture and to seek them for the wrong reason.² He also encouraged me not to slavishly seek one form of communion, because that would bring me into bondage; rather, I should find freedom in always being open to the Lord's new invitations.

A focused meditation on Scripture has continued to be a very fruitful part of my communion experience with God. In that setting, prayer is not a monologue but a dialogue, not only of words but also of lives.

¹Ibid., 3/17/86.

²Barry likened this to being in love with being in love; in other words, being in love with the feeling rather than with the person.

Contemplative Reading of Scripture

Another important effect of the spiritual direction process on my spiritual discipline of prayer was learning how to respond to God through contemplative reading of Scripture. Barry and Connolly note that "one must have a contemplative attitude toward Scripture, let the Scriptures be themselves, listen to them, and ask that the Lord reveal himself while we are listening."¹ I realized how often I have come to the Scriptures with my own agenda, my own perspective, my own thoughts. I have come to prepare sermons, to develop seminars, to defend positions. But, as Barry and Connolly point out, when one comes with a contemplative attitude, "the desire is not to know the Scripture text better. Rather, it is to know Jesus better."²

Scripture, then, becomes a privileged place to meet the Lord. When approached in a contemplative attitude, it is a place of prayer. Shortly before returning to Pennsylvania, after attending the Doctor of Ministry Intensive on "Spirituality for Ministry," I felt deeply impressed to make a contemplative reading of Scripture a more central part of my communion experience.

¹Barry and Connolly, p. 55.

²Ibid., p. 57. The authors note that this contemplative experience "is neither ethereal nor "extraordinary." It is as earthy as muddy boots, and as much involved with life" (p. 63).

With this is mind, I purchased a new Bible. The following evening, I made this note in my journal:

The new Bible is a sign for me, a symbol. It represents an important waymark on my spiritual journey. I am reading the Scripture, not to learn doctrine or to prepare sermons, but that in the written Word I might commune with the Living Word.¹

Fostering a contemplative attitude in my reading of Scripture was not without its difficulties, but after several weeks of perseverance, I noticed a positive turn.² The following journal entry illustrates the way in which contemplative reading of Scripture becomes an appropriate setting for prayer:

I was greatly blessed by my contemplative reading of Scripture this morning. Particularly in Num 9, I was impressed by the way in which Moses spoke with God....I humbly ask the Lord to be such a presence in my life today, and every day. May I notice when the cloud moves and when it stays still.³

My response was right brain/affective and not simply left brain/cognitive. I experienced an encounter with the Lord in the midst of His Word. In my next journal entry I noted that "I am learning to love the Bible. Every time I read it, I sense the Lord's

¹Appendix A: 3/7/86.

²In retrospect, I am convinced that I experienced what John of the Cross refers to as "a dark night of the soul" following my return to Pennsylvania. The experience during the Doctor of Ministry intensive had been such a spiritual high, and for almost seven weeks afterwards I felt a fearful aridity in my spiritual experience.

³Appendix A: 4/22/86.

invitation to a deeper relationship with Him."¹ Nigro refers to this experience as "praying with Scripture," and he notes:

Praying with Scripture this way is to listen to God. You need not make applications or search for profound meanings or implications or conclusions or resolutions. Be content to listen, simply, attentively and openly as a child who climbs into its Papa's lap and listens to a story.²

Many times, as I would read, the Lord would help me to see myself in the Scripture, and it was most natural for me to respond in prayer. The following entry illustrates this point:

In my contemplative reading of Scripture this morning, I marvelled at the patience of God with the children of Israel. They were so slow in following His leading. I sense my own spiritual poverty in this regard too. I am so prone to wander. "Please, Lord, open my eyes today and let me see your leading. Open my ears, and let me hear your voice. Open my heart, and let me sense the joy of your presence."³

More than any other form of communion, I have sensed in my contemplative reading of Scripture God's gracious invitation to open my life to His healing presence and to enter into personal prayer communication with Him.

¹Ibid., 5/2/86. George Mueller, that great man of prayer, noted that "the frequent reading of the Scriptures creates a delight in them, so that the more we read them, the more we desire to do so" (Andrew Murray, The Believer's School of Prayer (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1982), p. 191).

²Nigro, p. 10.

³Appendix A: 5/5/86.

Summary

We have sought to review in this chapter the major effects of the process of spiritual direction upon my spiritual discipline of prayer.¹ We have noted the importance of developing a contemplative attitude. This is fundamental. Also important is an awareness of one's own spiritual poverty, because it is out of poverty that true prayer is born. In addition, we have noted the contributions of silence, focused meditation, and a contemplative reading of Scripture. Obviously, there is no right place to begin such a spiritual pilgrimage nor is there any place of arrival. In fact, we are always at a place of beginning as we move into the presence of the Holy. As Thomas Merton points out, "We do not want to be beginners. But let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners all our life."²

¹Clearly, there is much left to learn about prayer. I sense a clear invitation from the Lord to explore the whole experience of intercessory prayer.

²Thomas Merton, Contemplative Prayer (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1971), p. 37.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Thomas Merton, in his book Contemplative Prayer, asserts that spiritual direction is a "moral necessity for anyone who is trying to deepen his life of prayer."¹ In this project report, we have examined the validity of that statement, particularly as it relates to the spiritual discipline of prayer in the pastor. In our introduction, we noted the potential of spiritual direction as a means of increasing readiness for ministry in a Seminary setting. This project report has explored the potential of spiritual direction in a pastoral setting, as a dynamic for nurturing the pastor's spiritual discipline of prayer. Because the nature of this study is not quantitative, we can arrive at no normative conclusions. It is presented in the form of a testimony. However, I would offer some personal reflections and recommendations for further study.

Personal Reflections

When I began this project, almost two years ago, I was told by a professor that it would change my life.

¹Merton, p. 41.

That proved to be a prophetic word. Entering into the process of spiritual direction has greatly affected my attitude toward my own person. I am learning to be honest and open with myself. This is not without pain, because it brings me face to face with my own spiritual poverty. I am also learning to be honest and open with others. This openness is particularly manifest in my relationship with my spiritual friend. I can speak freely about my spiritual journey, and how I am responding to the Lord's invitations in my life.

This spiritual pilgrimage has also affected my relationship with my family. There has been significant healing of broken relationships and a growth in love. I have learned that when my heart is open to God, it is also open to those around me.

It has also affected my relationship with my church family. I am finding freedom from the tyranny of the urgent, and sensing the call to spiritual leadership. I praise God that this has resulted in spiritual renewal within my congregation.¹ The first elder made this observation: "There is a new spirit and a oneness that has not been present for a number of years. An excitement prevails which I feel is directly related to Derek's close walk with God. . . ."2

¹See Appendix C for reflections of two church elders at the Allentown Seventh-day Adventist Church.

²See Appendix C: "Reflections of Ray E. Crissey."

This spiritual pilgrimage has also been a factor in bringing spiritual renewal to my wife, Bodil. Her reflections in Appendix C give testimony to her own spiritual journey and her discovery of an experiential knowledge of God.¹ I rejoice to see the way in which spiritual friendship has also blessed her life.

Most of all, this pilgrimage has affected my relationship with God. Through the dynamic of spiritual direction, I have been blessed with a deeper awareness of the Holy. I am learning that "He is not far from each one of us."² I have moved beyond knowing about God, to knowing Him experientially. I am beginning to "taste and see that the Lord is good."³ It is my prayer for all who read this study, and for myself, that the words of the Psalmist might also be our song of experience:

You have made known to me the path of life;
 You will fill me with joy in your presence,
 With eternal pleasures at your right hand.⁴

Recommendations for Further Study

In the twelve-month case study associated with this project, we have focused upon the potential of personal spiritual direction as a dynamic for nurturing spirituality in ministry. But, in the course of our

¹See Appendix C: "Reflections of Bodil Morris."

²Acts 17:27.

³Ps 34:8.

⁴Ps 16:11.

research, we have also noticed the tremendous potential of group spiritual direction.¹ This form of spiritual direction was prominent in early Adventism in the form of the Social meeting. We discovered that this gathering for mutual edification and spiritual guidance finds its roots in the class meeting of Methodism. Despite strong encouragement from Ellen White, this Social meeting concept has fallen by the wayside. A careful examination of this form of group spiritual direction which could then be field-tested in a parish setting would be a helpful contribution to the ongoing discussion of spiritual direction.

Another area of study which needs careful consideration relates to spiritual direction in the Seminary setting. Foster Freeman's monograph, Readiness for Ministry Through Spiritual Direction, clearly asserts that spiritual direction would greatly increase readiness for ministry among seminarians. Edwards suggests that "no long-term process of spiritual formation can be assumed in the background of entering students, and perhaps a number of faculty as well."² And so he makes this strong assertion:

Spiritual formation cannot be left to chance. . .
 . Development of one's spiritual life requires

¹McCarty, pp. 854-867.

²Tilden Edwards, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Schools: Ferment and Challenge," Theological Education 17 (1980): 21.

intelligence, instruction, and the discipline of practice.

Spiritual formation must have a chair at the administrative, planning, budgeting and admissions table.¹

If we accept the conclusions of Freeman and Edwards, then there needs to be careful study as to how spiritual formation through spiritual direction can be implemented in Seventh-day Adventist Seminaries and College ministerial training programs.

¹Ibid., p. 37.

APPENDIX A

SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

10/3/85 6:00am

Today I am beginning a journey into the unknown. This evening I will have my first session with my spiritual friend, Barry Young. My goal is to nurture the spiritual discipline of prayer in my life. At present, my prayer life is quite sporadic. For several weeks I was spending significant time in prayer and meditation each morning but recently it has been inconsistent.

As I reflect upon the way God has led me to Barry as my spiritual friend, my heart is glad. Barry is a pharmacist from Bethlehem, PA, who has received training through the Shalem Institute in spiritual direction. He is currently receiving spiritual direction and training at a Spiritual retreat center in Wernersville, PA. In my introductory meeting with Barry I was impressed with his personal relationship with God. I am thankful that he is willing to make the personal sacrifice of time and energy to help me along my spiritual journey.

10/4/85 8:45am

Last night I had my first meeting with my spiritual friend, Barry Young. I was impressed with his ability to listen and to observe. We talked about my family and especially my relationship with my father. I got in touch with the fact that I am often driven to do things in order to be accepted. Barry suggested that I make that a focus of my prayers and see what the Lord has to say. He gave me an article by William J Connolly, entitled "Noticing key interior facts in the early stages of spiritual direction." On my way home in the car, the Lord revealed to me an important insight. It related to my conversation with Barry about acceptance. My motivation for seeking a closer fellowship with God needs to be simply because I love Him and not because I might be more fully accepted. God will love me no more and no less. I settled right then and there as I was driving home that I will set off on this journey God-ward because I love Him and because I rejoice in His salvation.

It is almost 9:00am. I was not able to find any quiet time this morning. My two boys got up at 5:30am and it has been hectic ever since. They are playing right now by I find it difficult to pray and meditate with so much activity. Barry told me to accept such happenings as part of life. I will not despair. Rather,

I will consciously seek mini-Sabbaths during the day when I can come into God's presence. I sense that much time is wasted or filled with useless noise. I will intentionally seek to use time wisely. This is an important lesson from the Lord.

10/6/85 5:50am

It's early Sunday morning. My heart is filled with thanks to God this morning for the joy of His presence in my life. I sense the joy of being a channel of His love and grace. This morning I spent some time in prayer, specifically in regards to my relationship with my father. As I prayed, the Lord impressed me to write to my father and to express both my love for him and my appreciation for his love and friendship. My father has only written to me one time in my life that I can remember, and I have not written to him personally many more times. When the conviction came to me to write, my first reaction was to say "I'll do it some time this week." But I know that plan wouldn't work. So I stopped and wrote a letter right away. I found joy in expressing the message of my love.

The day ahead will be a busy one. I am finishing some work at our new home so we can move in next Sunday. But even though it will be hectic, I pray that I will be conscious of the real presence of God in my life, and that I will bring joy to His heart and glory to His name.

10/7/85 5:55pm

I enjoyed a refreshing mini-Sabbath this morning. I was on my way to an appointment and I reached over to turn on my car radio. All at once I sensed an inner desire to reject the noise and seek some silence. It was a joyful time of fellowship and I have found myself singing songs of praise all day. I desire to become sensitive to God's invitations that come to me during the day. My life is very stressed right now. We will be moving into our new home on Sunday. But I am enjoying a deep inner peace and joy in trusting the Lord. My experience this morning has opened my eyes to the time I have wasted in the past. Too much precious silence has been filled with useless noise. A special focus of my prayers needs to be that the Holy Spirit will make me aware of mini-Sabbaths during the day, and that I will cherish every opportunity to commune with God.

10/8/85 10:45pm

A very busy day is finally over! As I look back there are many things for which I can give thanks. I began my day at around 5:50am by consciously seeking God's presence. When I awoke I heard the song in my mind, "You've got to love everybody if you want to see Jesus." I often hear songs first thing in the morning when I wake up. I'm learning to listen carefully to the

words of the songs. When I first decided to set off on this spiritual journey, I awoke with the words of this hymn ringing in my ears: "Lord, in the morning Thou shalt hear my voice ascending high; to Thee will I direct my prayer, to Thee lift up mine eye." Could these songs be a way in which God is offering to communicate with me, as with visions and dreams? I notice that I am becoming more receptive to God's movings in my prayers and I am talking less.

10/9/85 9:45pm

Today has been a very stressful day and I have handled my stress very poorly. I have been impatient and short-tempered. I am painfully aware of my own sinfulness. As I come into God's presence, His grace seems even more wonderful and His forgiveness even more precious. As I look back on the day, there were times when God beckoned me to listen to His voice. While I was eating lunch, I was singing the song, "Speak Lord in the stillness while I wait on Thee," and as I sang the second half of the verse it struck me with such force that I knew God was speaking to me--"teach my heart to listen in expectancy." Early this morning, I had taken time to read the article by Connolly which spoke of becoming aware of God's initiatives. It reinforced the importance of listening and noticing. And this hymn-writer seems to have been in touch with such an attitude. I desire to have such an attitude when I pray. At those times when I felt overloaded today, God was there ready to help. But alas, I was not listening. I did not have an expectant attitude. I sense that becoming aware of that fact is an important learning. I have made my peace with God and with my family; and I go to sleep rejoicing in the assurance of God's unfailing love.

10/16/85 5:58am

Much has happened in the past week since I last wrote in my journal. On Sunday we finally moved into our new home. It's so peaceful out here in the country, and we're all so relieved that we don't have to live out of suitcases any more. A top priority for me now is to establish a regular schedule so I can spend a set time in fellowship with God. In the past week I have had to settle for mini-Sabbaths during the day. They come upon me at the most unexpected times! I may be sitting at a traffic light or eating my lunch--and the Lord invites me to become conscious of the joy of His presence.

There are several important truths that have made a deep impression upon my mind. First, the importance of listening to God. I know that I have talked too much and listened too little. When I sense that the Holy Spirit is communicating with me I need to pay attention. I need to notice my thoughts and my feelings. Second, I have been impressed at how shallow my love for God really is.

Perhaps that is an inevitable result of doing all the talking. In an early entry, I noted that I must seek a deeper fellowship with God because I love Him. But as I consider the feebleness of my love, I realize that actually the true motivation is because He loves me. I am simply responding to His unfathomable love, His amazing grace. Surely this is what the Psalmist means when he says, "In Thy presence is fullness of joy!"

I met with my spiritual friend yesterday morning. I was looking forward to our meeting because I wanted to process what has been happening in my life. Here I see one of the real values of a spiritual friend. In the past, I have not had anyone with whom I can discuss my spiritual life. Barry has helped me to look beneath the surface. He says very little, but helps me to become aware of God's activity in my life. He encourages me to be very attentive to my affective responses as well as my thoughts. He has given me an assignment to spend time in prayer and meditation on Psalms 103 and 104.

As I write this morning I am aware of the joy that is within my heart because God loves me. He loves me with an everlasting love, an unconditional love. Praise His holy name. My heart is filled with thanks. May my life today bring joy to the One who loves me so.

10/19/85 7:35pm

Today I experienced a time of desolation. My sermon today lacked good structure and was delivered with little enthusiasm. As I drove home, I felt depressed. Barry told me to pay close attention during these times of desolation, especially to my feelings. I sensed feelings of hurt and embarrassment. It dawned on me that my depression was brought on by my own selfishness. I should rather rejoice that the Holy Spirit can both teach me valuable lessons from the experience and also minister to the congregation through my faltering words. Bodil was a great help to me in debriefing the whole experience. She helped me to unpack my feelings. We read Psalms 103 together and spent some time in meditation. I sensed a joy because I have a Lord who forgives my sins and heals my diseases. In this time of meditation, I experienced consolation and I have learned a great deal about myself from the whole experience. God is active during the difficult times as well as during the easy times and I need to pay close attention to His actions during both types of experience.

10/23/85 6:10am

I arose early this morning consciously seeking some quiet time for meditation and prayer. I have been meditating each day on Psalms 103 and 104, and have been deeply impressed by the glory and majesty of God. My life and my prayers need to be filled with adoration and praise! How I rejoice in His love and His saving grace.

Many times when I am driving in my car, I will just burst out in praise, repeating the words of David: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name." As I have spent more time focusing upon God's glory and majesty, the words of David in Psalms 104:34 are being fulfilled in my life: "my meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."

As I reflect back on the beginning of this spiritual pilgrimage, the end of July 1985, when I first was convicted to focus on the spiritual discipline of prayer, the emphasis was very much on me and my needs. I would spend 20-30 minutes in prayer but the bulk of that time was spent in petition. I was talking all the time. That only lasted for about 5 weeks. I rationalized that it became difficult to keep up those early morning times of prayer because my wife and children returned from Europe. Their schedule was all mixed up and the boys were getting up at 4:00am. But as I look back on it, that was not the real reason why I stopped those times of prayer. Rather, it was because my basic motivation was selfish, and my focus was self-centered. Such an approach is lifeless and legalistic. The focus of meditation and prayer must be upon God and His glory. That does not mean that I will no longer come with petitions. David says, "Forget not all His benefits." But the focus of my prayers will be praise.

Today I am going to ask the Lord to show me a glimpse of His glory and majesty. I am also going to ask Him whether I should seek a specific time each morning to arise for meditation and prayer. At present, I am seeking mini-Sabbaths at various times during the day. My schedule is full today. I am glad that I have sought fellowship with God before the rush.

10/24/85 5:45am

I woke up this morning with a song running through my mind: "Greater is He that is in me than He that is in the world." I want to pay close attention to the words. I have not sung that song recently, but apparently my sub-conscious has been processing the message which resulted in its being pushed into my conscious mind. I sensed joy in my heart as I listened to the words and felt like it was a word of assurance from the Lord. I will praise God today for the victorious life that is mine through His wonderful grace.

Yesterday morning I asked God to reveal His glory to me. I was just beginning my meditation and prayer when my son Christopher came downstairs. My first thought was, "Oh no! There goes my quiet time." But I rejected that negative thought as from the Devil and took a positive approach. I invited Christopher to sit quietly while I prayed. As I began to pray, the Lord broke through to me and impressed me to share the joy of His presence with my son. So I stopped, opened my eyes,

and invited Christopher to join me for prayer. He gladly scooted over by my side. I said to him, "Christopher, let's just have an open prayer. You say something, I'll say something, and so on. O.K.?" He replied, "O.K. Daddy, I'll start." And in his prayer the glory of God was revealed to me. He prayed, "Dear God in heaven, We love you Lord." Then I said, "Yes Lord, we do love you. And we thank you and praise you that You love us today!" "Yes, Lord," Christopher added. I continued, "And thank you for the beauty of your creation--we really enjoy living out here in the country." Then Christopher said, "Yes, Lord, it's really great out here. We love nature, but we love you most of all."

I listened carefully to my son's prayer, and it was full of expressions of love to God. The Bible text flashed into my mind: "Unless you receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, you shall not enter therein." Christopher senses God's wonderful love for him and his prayer overflowed with expressions of love to God. My heart was blessed! After the prayer, I said to Christopher, "Thank you, son. I asked God this morning to reveal to me His majesty and glory, and He revealed His glory to me through you." Christopher looked at me, surprised. I continued, "When you shared with God how much you loved Him, I caught a glimpse of how glorious He is."

I wanted to record that experience in my journal because it was a time of consolation. I shared the experience with my wife and also with several people at church and they too were blessed. I sense a positive and joyful spirit in my life right now. The power of God is very evident in my life. I long to be a channel of His love and grace today. It is now 6:10am. I will seek a time of meditation and prayer before the rush!

10/25/85 5:35am

My life is so overloaded right now, but I praise God that He is my Rock and my Strength. It is so human to look at oneself and trust in one's own resources. But it doesn't work. My strength is so limited. My love is so limited. I have two options. I can either despair, or I can look to the Lord and be saved--saved not only from sin and its penalty, but saved also from the tyranny of a self-centered life.

Bodil and I had a good time of sharing last night. We feel very inadequate as parents. This is an opportunity for the Lord to reveal His grace to us. We will seek the Lord together on this issue. I cannot keep the joy of God's presence to myself.

10/27/85 5:30am

Yesterday was a wonderful time of spiritual refreshing. How true it is that the joy of the Lord is my strength. I sense a deeper joy and peace in my life because I have turned my attention away from myself and toward God. A meditation upon Psalms 103 and 104 has been a real blessing to my life. I sense that there is a direct relationship between the amount of praise I give to God and the amount of joy and peace in my heart. The experience of joy and peace is a grace which I am open to receive as I stand in God's presence.

There are many times that I will just shout out, "Praise the Lord" in a spontaneous expression of adoration. It's hard to express my feelings at such a time. It's as if I were smiling on the inside, and I am unable to contain myself!

10/28/85 6:00am

Last night a man telephoned our house who had previously made a threat on my life. We don't know how he got our new phone number. Bodil was very troubled and anxious. I decided to just praise the Lord, and rejoice that He is Lord of all. Later that evening, he called again and I answered the phone. He began to scream and shout, and I sensed that the devil was using him to seek to bring fear and turmoil to our family. There was no stopping his onslaught. I tried to listen to him and reason with him but to no avail. Then I sensed an anger welling up in my heart. My first impression was to repress it, but as I noticed what was happening inside, I sensed that it was a righteous anger from the Lord. I rebuked the man in the name of the Lord Jesus and hung up the phone. About half an hour later he called again. He was very subdued and he apologized for his behavior. He promised never to call my home again. I was freed by the Lord to tell him that I cared about his spiritual well-being and that God loved him.

I just praise the Lord for giving me the courage to let go of my burden and allow Him to carry it. And I also praise Him for teaching me to listen in the midst of the crisis.

10/29/85 6:20am

This morning I will meet again with my spiritual friend. I am looking forward to debriefing my experience of the past two weeks. Barry will help me to take careful notice of what is happening and how I am responding to God's actions. I also have another appointment for tomorrow at 4:00pm with a man who is a former Seventh-day Adventist. He is a vibrant Christian who speaks in tongues. He stresses that to work on the discipline of prayer is lifeless. Prayer must be spontaneous and Spirit-led. I want to listen to his perspective.

There is joy and peace in my heart this morning as I begin a new day. I praise the Lord for His love and for the precious gift of salvation. I long to be a channel of His grace to others. The words of the song are so appropriate: "I will serve Thee because I love Thee."

10/31/85 6:10am

On Tuesday morning I met again with my spiritual friend. I shared with him my spiritual journey in the past two weeks. He helped me to uncover certain aspects of my person that were previously unnoticed. For example, I struggle with an elitist spirit. This is not of the Lord. God's love is not conditional. I will take this before the Lord in prayer. Barry has shared with me a book entitled Poverty of Spirit by Johannes B. Metz. A recognition of my own poverty will destroy that spirit of elitism. May God enable me by His grace to discover that "when I am weak, then I am strong."

Yesterday was a joyful day. I really sense the presence of the Lord as I praise Him. I met with two fellow Christians in the afternoon. They are filled with praise to God and I was blessed by our fellowship together. They are not Seventh-day Adventists but they are undoubtedly my brother and sister in the Lord. We are pilgrims together. I rejoice that my elitist attitude is dying. I will ask the Lord for His unconditional love to fill my life today, to bring glory to His name.

11/5/85 6:35am

I awoke this morning with the following song running through my mind: "All that thrills my soul is Jesus, He is more than life to me." I want to pay close attention to the words. This past weekend I preached about the joy that is ours when we accept God's unconditional love for us! It was a thrill to see faces light up in response to this good news. I am noticing a change in my own life. There is an effervescent joy in my life. Does this relate to the words of Jesus, when He said, "Whoever drinks the water that I shall give him will never thirst any more. The water that I shall give him will be an inner spring always welling up for eternal life." I need to meditate on this passage. I certainly feel that having received the love and grace of God, my life is overflowing with love and joy, peace and praise.

My schedule is very hectic right now. But I will not allow that to destroy my peace. I have peace in the midst of the storm. My life is in the Lord's hand and there is nothing that we cannot face.

11/8/85 6:10am

Several things have been happening to me which I want to pay close attention to. Yesterday, my son

Christopher and I were deer spotting on the edge of our woods. We saw a doe and her fawn out in the field. Then, all of a sudden, we saw a large buck behind us in the woods. I was impressed with his grandeur. As I watched, the Lord brought a lesson to my mind. If I had been noisy, I would have missed that magnificent experience. Similarly, I need to be still in God's presence in order to experience His glory and majesty.

I am becoming painfully aware of my own spiritual poverty. I sense the desire to hunger and thirst after God. I long for my life to be filled with His presence.

I met with Willi yesterday. He is a former Seventh-day Adventist who is now a charismatic Christian. God has led me to him as part of my spiritual journey. He is a genuine Christian brother. We spend time in prayer and fellowship together. His love for Jesus and his burden for souls is so powerful that it startles me. I have so much to learn! But sensing my own spiritual poverty is an important part of my journey. I will praise the Lord for His wonderful love today. My life is filled with joy and peace. I am so glad that Jesus loves me!

11/12/85 4:05pm

This morning I met with my spiritual friend. We explored what's going on in my life right now. I have not been spending specific time in meditation and prayer for several days. It is difficult for me to admit my own spiritual poverty. And yet the yearning I sense within my heart is God's invitation to experience a more intimate relationship with Him. Why have I been resisting such a relationship? Perhaps I am afraid of where it will lead. I am afraid that I will have to let go of my pride and selfishness. In order to truly live to God, I must die to self. And dying is always painful.

Barry has suggested that I spend 20 minutes each day in meditation and prayer. If I have problems with my thoughts wandering, he suggested that I repeat the "Jesus prayer." The words of this prayer are "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy of me a sinner."

11/16/85 4:45pm

It's Sabbath evening. I am rejoicing in God's love and His providence. I experimented with the Jesus prayer and also another version used by John Hus - "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy of me." However, I was convicted that such a practice is for me a vain repetition. On one occasion I sensed the Lord saying to me, "Why are you talking to me like this?" And I responded by sharing with the Lord in a very open and natural way. It is still not easy for me to discipline myself. I struggle with the tyranny of the urgent. But God is so loving and patient, and He gently invites me to draw closer to Him.

Last night, when Bodil and I were praying, I sensed a special fellowship. And afterwards Bodil shared with me that she sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit near. I felt happy that we could experience the joy of God's presence together.

11/18/85 8:25am

I have been spending time each morning in prayer when I take my dogs for a walk. It is so quiet out in the woods and I sense God's presence near. This morning God graced my life with His presence in a very special way. I became aware of how irritable I have been in the past few days. It is a side effect of a drug that I am taking to correct an intestinal disorder. I asked the Lord to forgive me. As I shared my need, the Lord impressed me that I need to reform my lifestyle, especially my eating habits. I will be more open to His presence and more productive in my work if my system is clean and my mind is clear. On the way back from my walk I witnessed the most beautiful sunrise and I burst out in a spontaneous expression of praise: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name!" There is far more joy in my prayer time when I approach it as a special time of fellowship with God, and not simply to talk, or as a religious duty.

11/20/85 6:30am

I'm getting ready to take my walk with the Lord. I really look forward to this time. In fact, it goes by too quickly. It seems that out in the quiet of nature my mind is clear for the Lord to reach me. I have been doing some reading on intercessory prayer. The prophet Samuel considered it a sin not to intercede for his people. The essence of intercessory prayer seems to be that God's will might be accomplished in people's lives. It differs from petition, which involves a request for things. Intercession involves people. The Lord has placed on my heart the name of one inactive member. I will begin to intercede for her on a daily basis. As the Lord directs, I will intercede for others and will watch for God's movings in their lives.

12/3/85 12:50pm

Almost two weeks have past since my last journal entry. I'm wondering why. It has not been a dry time for me spiritually. I have been taking time to seek fellowship with the Lord, particularly in the morning when I walk my dogs. Last week, when I met with my spiritual friend, Barry, we discussed my experience with the "Jesus prayer." He suggested that my experience recorded on 11/16/85 was a validation of this form of prayer. It enabled me to "center myself" so that I could hear God's invitation to enjoy a deeper level of fellowship with Him. So, in his opinion, it is not an

either/or situation, but a both/and. He has given me a book on apophatic meditation by Eknath Easwaran entitled Meditation.

This morning I was spending some time in meditation while I was on my walk. I was sitting quietly on a tree stump. As I stood up to leave, I heard a voice in my mind saying "Stay." I sensed God's invitation to enjoy a deeper awareness of His presence. I looked up in the clear blue sky and saw a solitary bird flying in the face of a blustery wind. And then the Lord spoke to me. No, it was not an audible voice, but it was as clear as if He was standing right next to me. He said, "Derek, maybe sometimes you feel like you're flying all alone, but remember, you're in the midst of my heavens." I sensed a deep inner joy and in the stillness of the morning I praised God for His presence.

12/17/85 10:50am

There are several important insights that I need to record in my journal. First, I need to reflect on my sporadic entries in my journal. This is a clear indication of my hectic schedule. But I rejoice that I have been taking time with the Lord in personal communion. The special focus has been on my morning walks and while sitting on my tree stump.

I experience a deep peace and joy in God's presence and I long to stay there for a greater amount of time. It's frustrating to constantly have to move on. But that's life! I still sense God is inviting me to a deeper fellowship. My time of fellowship is, at the present time, mainly silent. I often repeat Scripture, particularly Psalm 103:1-4, and sing songs of praise. I feel very free out in the woods to express my praise to God and to worship Him.

I preached a sermon two weeks ago on Mary and Martha. It was painful to admit that I have all too often acted like Martha. I have been burdened down by many things and missed the "one thing that is needful." It was a refreshing experience to share my testimony with my church family and to challenge them to put first things first. Many were able to relate to my own spiritual journey and the Word of God spoke to our hearts.

I still struggle with some feelings of anger and a selfish spirit. I need to experience the healing presence of God in these areas of my life. I have not yet come to the place of Bethel, where I am ready to wrestle with the Lord and say, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." I need to explore that persevering attitude and ask the Lord how that relates to my present spiritual journey.

12/25/85 6:40am

I awoke this morning with Christmas carols running through my mind. Old traditions die hard! There is little emphasis on Christmas in our family. But I do enjoy the opportunity to gather with my loved ones. It is a personal joy to see both our parents together, and relating well. Praise the Lord! God has been gracious in rebuilding a relationship between me and my father. I will seek an opportunity to fellowship with him on a one-to-one basis today and pray with him. I will bring my father before the Lord in prayer this morning, and seek God's guidance and wisdom.

I have observed an important lesson during my stay here in Maryland--the importance of a set routine. What I mean by that is this--at home I run the dogs each morning. It is at this time that I go to my tree stump and seek fellowship with the Lord. It feels awkward being away from that routine. That obviously doesn't mean that I can't commune with God. But it definitely is a handicap to me right now. I learn from this experience the value of spiritual discipline. Having a set routine facilitates the process of nurturing an on-going fellowship with God.

12/26/85 6:45am

I awoke this morning shortly before 6:00am, and there was such a temptation to just start running! I'm in the middle of writing a paper and there's so much to do. But, by the grace of God, I paused to seek God's presence. I found a Bible and began to meditate upon Psalm 103. My attention was especially drawn to the phrase "who healeth all they diseases." I turned back to Psalm 40 and relived the experience of my conversion back in 1972. Then I began to pray. And as I began to pray, the Lord brought to my attention the woman with the issue of blood who touched the hem of Jesus' garment. And the Lord impressed me with this truth: people are still healed as they come by faith into the presence of Jesus! I sensed in my heart that this was a definite invitation from the Lord. And I gladly respond to His gracious invitation. He is the Lord who heals me! Bless the Lord, O my soul!

12/31/85 5:50pm

The end of a year is always an appropriate time for reflection. It is a time to take stock of my life and the direction that I'm heading. The second part of the issue is easier to address. I'm firmly convinced that I'm moving in a positive direction spiritually. These past few months of spiritual direction have been very fruitful. The greatest realization has been a recognition of my own spiritual poverty. My relationship with the Lord has, all too often, been superficial and sporadic. My spiritual friend has helped me to explore

my relationship with God. And yet, even in my times of desolation, in my times of rude awakening, I have heard God's invitation to a deeper fellowship with Him. I recognize now that there is nothing that I have to offer to God. Even my love for Him is tainted by selfishness and pride. I come simply because He beckons me, because He loves me. And in His presence I find fullness of joy!

There is still a tremendous pressure to put other things first. I sense a real need to develop spiritual discipline. But I praise God that He accepts me and loves me just where I am. And He gently leads me along the path of life. "Thankyou, Lord, for your love, your mercy, and your patience. I love you. May my life bring glory to your name."

1/10/86 6:00am

Yesterday morning I had a very significant meeting with my spiritual friend. I shared with Barry that I feel like I have reached a plateau spiritually. We reflected upon the fact that in sitting on my tree stump and watching the sun rise I need to beware of worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. It is amazing how easily we fall into idolatry. Meditation on nature must always be a means of getting in touch with the Creator, and not an end in itself.

As Barry and I reflected on the past three months, we recognized several important learnings: I am paying closer attention to my own feelings; I am endeavouring to notice God's actions and my responses to them; and I am coming to grips with my own spiritual poverty. But, as Barry put it, "I'm getting tired of looking at my own navel!" And yet this has been an important preparation for my continuing spiritual growth.

I shared with Barry that my study of the Scripture reveals that an important aspect of spiritual friendship is modelling. This finds its expression most clearly in the incarnational model. I expressed to Barry my desire to learn from him, and not simply to learn about myself. He shared with me that he is going through a dark night of the soul right now. He is holding on and waiting on the Lord. He mentioned that St. Theresa of Avila waited for 17 years through such a desert experience.

It was a building experience to listen to Barry's story. He has also given me some directed reading, including a trilogy by Thomas H. Green. Our meeting lasted for 2 hours yesterday. I shared with Barry how much I appreciated his guidance. He is truly a trusted friend. I did ask him why we did not pray together. He said that he didn't want to make any statements about what prayer was or was not. He did not want to limit my thinking or cause me to want to pray as he prays. That was helpful, because the question has been with me for

some time. I feel a deeper desire than ever to explore the spiritual realm. "Lord, teach me to pray."

1/15/86 6:35am

Yesterday afternoon I was listening to a tape of a sermon I had preached the previous Sabbath. One point in the practical application dealt with meditating upon the love of God as revealed in the life of Jesus. I sensed God's invitation to spend a set time each day. There is only one reason why I am not doing this presently--lack of discipline. There is so much that clamors for first place! It is a question of priorities. I feel ready for such spiritual discipline. I no longer view it as a religious work as I did 4 months ago.

I had a meaningful experience with two of my young elders last night after board meeting. Following some discussion, we knelt for prayer. We spent what seemed like a long time in silent meditation. It was probably no more than a minute, or two at the most. I realized how unaccustomed I am to silence in group prayer, and yet how spiritually refreshing it was. There is a bonding that occurs between people when they spend time in prayer.

In terms of my meditation, I would like to spend one hour in meditation and prayer, but I feel this is a goal toward which I must aim. I will begin with 15 minutes each day. It will take discipline to carry out this intention, but the same Lord who invites me will enable me.

1/20/86 2:10pm

Since my last entry, some significant developments have occurred in my spiritual journey. I have been spending time in focused meditation on Scripture. My meditation has focused particularly on Jesus' encounter with Bartimaeus. For some reason, I felt drawn to that scene. Perhaps it is because some years ago I wrote a ballad entitled "Blind Bartimaeus." I long for the healing that he experienced. This time of meditation has been very fruitful. I sense a peace as I focus my thoughts. I relive the experience as a blind beggar. I have noticed that I cannot meditate when I am tired because I tend to become so relaxed that I fall asleep. I shared this meditation, which is a form of visual imagery prayer, with my wife and a friend. We meditated this past Friday evening on the Scripture found in Rev 3:20. It was a beautiful experience. When I invited Jesus into my house, I could find no words to say. My head was spinning. Finally I blurted out, "I love you," and fell into His arms.

I also shared this form of prayer with a group of around 40 people at the conclusion of an afternoon seminar this past Sabbath. With just a few words I guided the group in a focused meditation on Matt 11:28.

This was also a deeply moving experience. Through visual imagery prayer, Jesus is becoming more real to me. I am not listening out into space, but listening within the context of a personal encounter. I praise the Lord for His continued leading in my life!

1/22/86 6:15am

Yesterday I enjoyed another very significant visit with my spiritual friend. I shared with him the happenings of my spiritual journey in the past two weeks. He told me that the Lord was graciously inviting me to another form of communion with Him. Ignatius of Loyola speaks of meditation, where one thinks about a scene, and contemplation where one actually experiences the scene. I have experienced both. Sometimes my focused meditation on Scripture is like watching it on a television screen. But even as I watch, I sense the Lord's invitation to actually participate in the scene.

Barry gave me a word of caution. I should not expect that everyone is ready for this form of communion with God. Nor must I draw attention to myself because of it. I must always be aware of the fact that the angel of darkness is not far away. The gracious invitation of God to share in this very meaningful prayer experience is all His work, not mine. I cannot control it. I cannot turn in on or off. It is all of grace. All I can do is surrender and come with a heart that is open.

I was excited this morning when Bodil shared with me about her own meditation on Mt 11:28. She truly sensed the presence of the Lord and His invitation to trust Him. I praise God for His leading in her life! As I spent time in meditation this morning, I too focused on Mt 11:28. I noticed carefully that, during my meeting with the Lord, my thoughts often wandered. As I focused my attention once again on Him, I sensed my own spiritual poverty. Even while He was graciously meeting with me, I wandered away from Him. I was distracted by thoughts of work. "Do you see," said Jesus, "how easily you accept your own burdens and try to carry them yourself? Come to Me. Let Me carry your burdens and give you rest." I began to cry. "Yes Lord, that is what I want. I surrender to you." Then, in my focused meditation, the Lord laid His hand upon my head and said, "Receive the power of the Holy Spirit." I could actually sense a surge of power in my body. It lasted for several seconds. This is a new experience, where physical sensation is involved. Is this of the Lord? Barry reminded me of certain Biblical tests to check out such an experience. First, does it lead to freedom. And second, what are the virtues? Does it produce love, peace, self-control? I will notice carefully today to see the flourishing of this encounter in my life.

1/23/86 8:45pm

I felt excited this morning when Christopher told me of a focused meditation on Scripture that he had shared with his mommy based on Rev 3:20. In his meditation he saw Jesus. He described Jesus to me as shining like the sun in the middle of the day! Jesus told Christopher that He had a place for him in heaven. I said to Christopher, "Did you say anything to Jesus?" "Yes," he replied, "I said thank you!" It was so beautiful to hear his testimony of a very meaningful spiritual experience.

1/28/86 10:15am

I am reflecting upon a very fulfilling weekend. I took about 50 young people on a ski-retreat. It proved to be a real spiritual experience. The young people are very open, in spite of their apparent indifference. I led them in a focused meditation on Scripture and many were very responsive. I noticed something very significant during the meditation. It was very difficult for me to enter into the experience. Perhaps I was too busy leading the group. I also recognized that God decides how and when He will meet me. All I can do is wait upon Him. And yet, I was richly blessed by the testimonies of others.

2/5/86 6:30am

My meeting with my spiritual friend yesterday was a very fruitful one. As I shared with Barry about my ongoing spiritual journey, we discovered some valuable learning experiences. I have found it difficult to enter into focused meditation on Scripture recently. My schedule is so full and I feel very pressured. I interpreted that as a reversion backwards. But as I talked with Barry, I realized that we do not choose how God meets us. We simply make ourselves available, as we are. Whatever meeting occurs is the result of His grace. As I reflected, I noticed that God has been revealing His presence to me in other ways. On Friday evening as I left to conduct a seminar at the church, I noticed that our large Yugoslavian Herder was missing. O no! I thought. He must have run down to our neighbor's farm to play with his new friend, Shadow. So late that night, around 10:00pm, I stopped at our neighbor's farm to investigate! Sure enough, there was Yugo, as large as life. What is more, he had gone back to our house, let our Sheltie named Heidi out of the dog run and took her with him down to the farm. Yugo and Heidi decided that it would be fun to play games with me! They would let me get close enough to think that I might catch them, but then run off. That seemed humorous to me for about 20 seconds, but after 20 minutes it was getting a little old! Finally, I gave up, drove up to my house, changed into some warm clothes, and, flashlight in hand, I began

to walk across the large snow-covered field to our neighbor's farmhouse. By this time I was very frustrated and quite angry. I was not noticing God at all. When I was about two thirds of the way there, the Lord whispered in my ear: "Look up, Derek, look up!" As I looked up, I was startled by a scene of astronomical wonder. The heavens were alive with the handiwork of God. Thousands of stars glittered in a cloudless sky. "You're so angry, so caught up in your own thoughts that you don't even notice me," the Lord said. "You didn't even pray." At that instant, I came face to face again with my own spiritual poverty and I was ashamed. "I'm sorry, Lord; please forgive me. Please bring my dogs back." As soon as I lowered my eyes, I caught sight of two dogs running across the snow-covered field to meet me, their tails wagging. I could hardly believe my eyes. "Thank you, Lord," I said, "not just for bringing the dogs back but for helping me to notice you. I was still very much in touch with my own anger. I wanted to grab them and drag them up the hill. But the Lord gently rebuked me. "That's not how I treat you," He said. So I turned and walked slowly up the hill. "Come on Yugo, come on Heidi; let's go home." The two dogs followed meekly in my steps.

After I had secured them in the dog run, I went back out to gaze at the starry heavens. "Thank you, Lord, for helping me to notice you." I found myself gazing intently at the nebula of Orion. It seemed to pulsate with hues of red and blue. In the stillness of that moment, I meditated upon the glory of God and the thrill of Christ's return. Yes, the Lord met me that night and it was an unforgettable meeting. I learned that He does not always meet me in the same way. And I do not control the how and when. I must simply be open and responsive, ready to notice His actions and His gracious invitation. Here, in a focused meditation upon nature, I experienced an encounter with the Creator.

2/10/86 4:00pm

This past Saturday evening at 11:00pm I experienced a life changing event. At first glance it may appear to have little to do with prayer, and yet it is an integral part of my own spiritual journey. It touches the essence of who I am and how God is working in my life. What was this life-changing event? I called my brother in New Zealand. My brother left to go to Australia 17 years ago and since that time we have been a half a world apart in more ways than one.

My parents are currently on a trip to New Zealand, and I asked them to arrange so that my brother Stuart could be at a certain location at a pre-arranged time. My brother and his wife live out in the country, without a telephone, and so they drove 45 minutes to her parents to take the call. All kinds of thoughts and

feelings rushed through my mind when he picked up the phone. It had been 11 years since we had talked. I didn't recognize his voice--he had a strong New Zealand accent. Who is this man on the phone? It is my brother, my own flesh and blood. He was dead, but now he is alive again. We talked for maybe ten minutes. When I hung up the phone, I burst into tears. Seventeen years of filial love were breaking through. "O God, why did I wait so long?" I always remembered him as my big brother--two years my elder. But now I realize that he's a young man in his prime--just like me. And for that brief moment, our lives touched and a new life was born. Love flowed freely, and healing was the result.

I have relived that phone call many times since Saturday night, trying to recall that voice, which already seems so distant. "O Lord, let me learn from this experience. Let me notice what you are trying to say. Love is not love unless it is expressed. And relationships die unless there is communion. But where there is meeting, there is love and joy and healing and peace. Lord, teach me what this means about my relationship with you. And thank you for what happened on Saturday night. You are worthy of all praise. I love you, and appreciate your presence in my life.

2/17/86 6:40am

This is my first morning here in Michigan for my winter Doctor of Ministry intensive. The flight went well yesterday, though I did experience some existential anxiety. It is at those times that I reaffirm that peace is found only in a complete trust in God. I am excited about this opportunity to focus in a more intense way on spiritual life. The class on Spirituality in Ministry, taught by Dr. Holmes, seems very practical, and my Independent Study on prayer with Dr. Johnston will also be very fruitful.

I was reading again last night the book by Richard Foster, entitled Celebration of Discipline. The insights on meditation and prayer were very stimulating, as was the chapter on fasting. I began this morning with an exercise to center down, using a combination of the palms down/palms up exercise and the breathing exercise. As I turned my palms up and began to breathe in God's joy and peace and love, a tremendous sense of well-being came over me. It was as if the light of God's glory was shining into my mind. When I became aware of it, I unconsciously broke out in a smile and I even began to laugh! I could not contain the joy. I realize that God's presence is always near, but it was as if, through this centering process, the curtain was drawn back, and I became fully aware of it. It was most natural for me, following this experience, to continue to prayer. I sought in my imagination to meet with the Lord. I went to a snow-covered path at my home, but I could not find

Him there. I became conscious of the fact that I cannot choose where to meet Him, but only make myself open. "Lord, where do you want to meet me?" In my mind, I saw a picture of my two sons and my wife, back at home, gathered for family worship. I noticed two angels standing at either end of the sofa. My heart was filled with joy! "Thank you, Lord, for that revelation." Then I saw Jesus standing in the room. "Ah, Lord, now I see you. You want to meet me right there with my family." I saw His face clearly, but at first I had difficulty drawing closer. My mind seemed to resist the effort of zooming in on the face of Jesus. Finally I gave up the struggle and fell into His loving arms. What peace and assurance I find there! What strength and courage for the conflict.

"Lord, I could have just rushed off this morning." You know I've done it so many times before. But you arrested me. You caught me. Thank you, Lord. Thank you for your grace and your unconditional love. I love you and I praise you. Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee."

2/18/86 6:50am

I praise God for a new day. It has been a joy to spend time in meditation and prayer. The Lord is very near and there is joy in His presence. There were several important insights that the Lord revealed to me during our time together. The first was that He wants me to write a series of articles on prayer and a second on spiritual direction once my project is completed. That will be an exciting challenge. The Lord also revealed to me an important decision regarding my class on Spirituality which begins today. Each of us must select a spiritual learning partner for the duration of the class. My natural tendency is to take the initiative and choose the person that I feel would be best. But the Lord has shown me that I must do nothing to select a partner. I must simply wait quietly and submit to His will. He will lead someone to me. When He revealed this to me this morning, I sensed a great joy and relief. I want to live in His presence and be led in all aspects of my life.

My partial fast, which I began yesterday, is a blessing. I am learning that I need so much less than I usually consume. I humbly ask the Lord to heal my body of all that would hinder my ready response to His leading in my life.

I enjoyed an excellent meeting with my project chairman, Dr. Johnston, yesterday morning. We sensed a warm spiritual fellowship together. I shared with him in summary form that the Lord has graciously performed in my life since last August. His reflection and attentiveness were an encouragement to me. In the course of our conversation, I shared with him a dream that I recalled

from the previous night. It seemed significant to me and I could remember it vividly. He suggested that I record it for further reflection. Here is the dream, as clearly as I can recall it: I was travelling in the front passenger seat of a van. One of my church members was driving, and the van was full of other church members, including my wife Bodil, and our youngest son Jonathan. We were travelling down a steep snow-covered road. All of a sudden, I saw that we were going to slide off the edge of an embankment. As the van slid over the embankment. I opened the passenger door and jumped out. I turned to see the van rolling down the hill. Immediately, I fell on my knees and began to repeat the prayer, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." It seemed as if I was invoking the presence of God. The Lord miraculously spared the lives of all in the van. While I was still repeating this prayer, one of my church members came over to where I was praying and said, "What on earth are you doing?" I sensed that she did not understand or accept this form of prayer.

I'm wondering if this dream reveals a certain anxiety about how others view my spiritual journey. I'm also wondering what this dream tells me about this form of prayer. I reflected to Dr. Johnston that this prayer is not a call of uncertainty, but a call of confidence and assurance. It represents my healing by the Jericho road and my personal walk with the Savior. I will ask the Lord to open to my mind the message of this dream in terms of His plan for my life.

2/19/86 6:20am

I have just spent 30 minutes in meditation and prayer. The Lord spoke to me of some day to day issues that are important. I am learning that every time of fellowship with Him does not have to be earth-shattering. As I reflect on yesterday, I can truly praise God for His leading. The Lord gave me the opportunity to be a channel of His love and concern to a fellow student who is under great stress. I only regret that we did not take time to pray together. I also became painfully aware of the fact that often I use too many words. I need to consider the discipline of silence.

Just before my class was to begin, I was shocked to see a certain administrator walk into the room. This man was involved in a very difficult situation involving my father. As soon as I saw him, I began to shake inside. I got in touch with a pile of negative feelings of anger and resentment which I had repressed. In fact, I believe that I have more negative feelings for this man than anyone else on earth. I thank the Lord for revealing this to me. I brought it before Him in prayer this morning. I humbly ask that He will provide the opportunity for personal and spiritual healing. I rejoice in the Lord's leading in this regard.

I was tempted to take things into my own hands in terms of choosing a spiritual friend for the course. But, by the grace of God, I sat quietly, and submitted to His leading. The one who came to me was the one I would have asked. But I sensed a tremendous peace in letting go and submitting to God's leading.

I have been on a partial fast for 3 days. I am very much in tune with my lack of self-control. At times, my desire for food is very strong, and yet I realize that it is not true hunger. My stomach is like a spoiled brat! My diet is basically fruits and some bread. At times I crave certain foods. But even now, the thought of soda and candy bars is repulsive to me. I have clearly abused my body and for this I repent. Whenever I go off this fast, I cannot go back to the old ways. This is a great lesson from the discipline of fasting.

2/20/86 7:00am

I praise the Lord for a new day. I sensed His presence in my life yesterday in a powerful way. It was as if my spiritual eyes were opened. Events took on new significance. What appeared from the outside to be casual meetings were shown to me as the direct providence of God. I took several occasions to pray with people, and sensed myself as a channel of God's grace. I am humbled to be more in tune with the Spirit. It is an experience that I have not known, It is very liberating, because I am no longer the one in charge.

The class is proving to be a very enriching experience. I have already made an appointment to meet the administrator of whom I wrote yesterday. That was a decision which brought freedom and I really look forward to our meeting. In my meditation this morning, the Lord reaffirmed my need to practice the discipline of silence or solitude. I tend to talk too much, particularly in class. I will practice that discipline today. having checked with the professor so that he does not misunderstand my actions. It is difficult to be still when there is so much to share of what the Lord has done.

Yesterday, the Lord led someone to me who is seeking a spiritual friend. He is very earnest. I feel very inadequate, but I will share with him from my experience. I will especially pray for the wisdom and power of God to be manifested during that meeting.

I met again with the student whose wife is sick. I shared with him that in my meditation we had gathered and laid hands on her and the Lord had healed her. He is going to pray about the situation. I too will pray. We did pray together yesterday, and I sensed the joy of fellowship and completion.

2/20/86 11:15am

I have just had a profound experience of spiritual blessing. I met at 7:30am and 8:30 am with two spiritual friends for focused conversation and prayer; and I just completed an unplanned meeting with Dr. Holmes. As I left to walk over to the library, the presence of God was so real and so near to me that it seemed I could hardly bear it. I was arrested on the front steps of the library and I began to cry. I sense a feeling of being overwhelmed by His glorious presence. He is so active in my life right now. This is so new to me and I feel bewildered. But I lean upon His goodness and His mercy to sustain me.

2/21/86 12:05pm

I have just spent the past five hours in focused conversation and prayer with my two spiritual friends. It was a time of real fellowship and spiritual refreshing. I realize that the setting here is unique. Obviously, it is unlikely that I will be able to spend five hours on a regular basis. But this time of special focus is a real blessing. I sense the nearness of God in a very special way, and my heart is glad, I got in touch with my own personal loneliness, being away from my wife and children. But I also found great consolation in praying the Scripture of Psalm 23:1 and experiencing the Lord as my Shepherd! There is real freedom in being open to Him.

2/23/86 7:00am

Yesterday was truly a blessed Sabbath. I especially want to share a revelation during my morning meditation which is a real evidence of God's grace. During my meditation, I saw a picture of my church family gathered for worship. The young elder who was to preach was in the pulpit. As I looked, I rejoiced to see Jesus standing alongside him. Jesus was standing on his left, with His right arm around the elder. As I looked upon the congregation, I saw heavenly angels walking from worshipper to worshipper. They seemed to be encouraging and exhorting. My heart was greatly encouraged by this scene, and I was filled with peace. I also noticed that sitting on the right of the pulpit was my first elder. The whole scene was very vivid in my mind. After my time of meditation and prayer, I was impressed of the Lord to call this young elder and encourage him with this revelation. It was 7:50am and he was due to preach at 11:00am. He was greatly encouraged and I prayed with him and for him. During my conversation, I realized the significance of Jesus standing on the left of the elder. He was supporting him with His right hand, thus fulfilling His promise in Scripture found in Isa 41:10.

I called my wife later on that Sabbath and shared with her the meditation. I was humbled to hear that my

first elder was on the platform for the service, sitting in the exact place where I had seen him in the time of meditation. The elder preached on Christian hope, based on who God is. Surely, God revealed Himself in this meditation, manifesting His loving concern for His children. I praise the Lord for His gracious invitation to a life in the Spirit,

2/24/86 7:00am

My soul has been refreshed this morning by my time of meditation and prayer. I have sensed the Lord's presence near and He has ministered to me. As I listened to His voice, He offered me important guidance concerning my day and my spiritual journey. I am enjoying a deep and fulfilling relationship with my spiritual friend, Adam. We spent time in focused conversation and prayer yesterday, including a very meaningful focused meditation on the Good Shepherd image of Jn 10. Adam shared with me that the Lord has given him similar revelations to the one I received on Sabbath. As I shared my experience with him, he felt free to share more of his own spiritual journey.

I spent time in prayer for the Philippines today. The situation there is extremely volatile. I realize that the Lord calls me to care for my world and to pray for my brother and sisters. I open my life to the Lord today, and rejoice in the privilege of a life in the Spirit.

2/24/86 11:30am

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. I have been healed! This morning I met with the administrator that I previously referred to, and experienced a wonderful time of healing. The Lord was truly present and both of us rejoiced. I cannot find the words to express my joy. The burden of my heart rolled away. I have a new love for this brother in the Lord and I praise God for His presence. What joy it is to live a life in the Spirit! What a joy to be taught of God and to become sensitive to His leading. May my heart always praise God for His loving kindness and tender mercies.

2/25/86 10:30am

I am a little sluggish and groggy today. I sense that my impaired health has an impact on my spiritual awareness. No wonder the Lord counsels us to take care of our bodies. I have been struggling with the Lord concerning a meditation which I experienced last Wednesday. It related to a Seminary student's wife, who is sick. I shared my struggle with Dr. Holmes, and he gave wise counsel. I must maintain a discipline of submission and humility. All God calls me to do is to be sensitive to His presence and to respond to His direction

I cannot be responsible for the outcome. I have much maturing to do.

I rejoice to see God's leading in Bruce's life. I see a growing awareness of God's presence, and he is noticing his affective responses to God. Every experience is teaching me so much about the Lord, and how He chooses to meet me on my spiritual journey. I will joyfully respond to the Lord's invitation today, and praise His holy name. "Lord, I am available to you. Make me a channel of Your love and grace."

2/26/86 11:30am

I am impressed to record an important spiritual learning process that occurred this morning. Due to a late night of reading until midnight, I was a little sluggish this morning! As I sat for worship and meditation, I sensed a lack of vitality. I rushed through my centering process and found myself at a loss and easily distracted during my time of quiet meditation. Having just read Barry and Connolly on Spiritual Direction, I noticed carefully what was occurring. I sensed that my own fatigue was a contributing factor. But there was more to it. I "just didn't feel like praying." I have become aware of the fact that emotions can function as a block in prayer. So I stopped my meditation and began to look more carefully at my inner self. I got in touch with a strong feeling that I was ignoring. I am lonely. I miss my wife and children. I had so rushed the centering process that I had totally missed a very present need.

Rather, than continue, I paused for breakfast. After the meal, I felt impressed to call my family. My wife was already on her way to Philadelphia, but I knew my mother-in-law would be there with my two sons. So I called. When my mother-in-law answered the phone, I said, "Can I please talk to Christopher?" She called to him: "Christopher, telephone." "Who is it?" Christopher replied. "It's someone for you," she said. So Christopher came to the phone: "Hello, who am I speaking to, please?" "It's daddy," I said. "Daddy!" Christopher exclaimed, and he let out a squeal of delight! In those few moments, the Lord ministered to me through my two sons. This was indeed my meditation on His love. He filled my life with love and joy and contentment in a way that no hours of effort could have accomplished. He fulfilled to me His promise in Psalm 23: "He restoreth my soul."

Even in that experience I sensed God's gracious invitation to a deep abiding relationship of love and joy. I saw it modelled in the response of my sons. As I processed this experience with my spiritual friends, Adam and Bruce, I realized how often in the past I have ignored my blocking feelings. This experience of working things through, of sticking with it and allowing the Lord

to minister to me was an experience of freedom. The Lord is so gracious! "Lord, give me eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a heart that is open to your impressions."

2/27/86 11:50am

This has been a most joyful morning. I have spent the past five hours in prayer, meditation, focused conversation and corporate worship. Of special blessing was my meeting with Dr. Dederen at 9:30am. I am drawn to him as a man of spirituality and wisdom. Our meeting together was very fruitful. He shared with me his own spiritual journey and gave me sound counsel as I related my spiritual journey. I sense real value in such sharing with a spiritual leader of his stature.

The presence of the Lord is deeply evident in my life. I feel a fullness of joy and peace. The Lord that I knew so well in a cognitive way, I am now experiencing with my whole being. Both my left and my right hemispheres are involved. The Lord is giving me many opportunities to give words of encouragement and to pray with others. And it happens in a spontaneous way. I am free to let the Lord use me. There is no sense of it being my work or my task. I am simply a channel of His grace and love.

2/28/86 1:25pm

I am thankful to the Lord for His comfort and mercy. This has not been an easy morning for me. But I had been refreshed by the time spent in focused conversation and prayer. It is in giving that we receive, and in the time of offering direction, my own soul was blessed. The spiritual pilgrimage is not a painless way, but even in the times of suffering, there is a sense of freedom and inner peace that words cannot express. May I always remember that when I am weak, then I am strong."

3/1/86 8:00pm

This has been a most joyful Sabbath. I have noticed the presence of the Lord in a powerful and intimate way. Early this morning in my time of quiet meditation, I was lifting up before the Lord my first elder, Ray Crissey. He was scheduled to preach this morning. As I prayed, the Lord gave me a word of encouragement for him from Jer 1:9. I called Ray to share this with him and he was greatly refreshed. My heart was glad to be used as a channel of God's grace to bless his life.

The Lord gave me the privilege of giving a witness for Him at a church in St. Joseph, MI, today. I opened my life to His leading, and hearts were blessed. I praise Him for His mercy and grace. My heart also rejoices over an experience this evening. On the morning of 2/19/86, the Lord spoke to me in a special way during

a time of meditation. I saw a young seminarian and myself kneeling in prayer, laying our hands upon his wife, who was sick. I saw the Lord lay His hands upon our hands and heal her. I received the joyful assurance that she was healed. I shared this experience with her husband on that day, and asked him to pray concerning its meaning. The Lord counselled me to wait patiently and to exercise the discipline of submission. Last night, the seminarian called and invited me to join them for supper tonight. When I arrived, we talked together about the Lord's leading, and how He invited us to an intimate relationship with Him. After supper, we gathered for prayer. We spent several minutes in silent meditation, focusing on the message of Psalm 103:1-3. Following the meditation, I asked his wife if she was open to the Lord manifesting His healing presence in her life. She said that she was. She wanted to be open to God and allow Him to fulfill His promise and heal her in whatever way He chose. I sensed the nearness of God's presence and her genuine openness. The three of us knelt in prayer. We each prayed for the Lord to forgive us of our sins and to heal her in accordance with His will. Then her husband laid his hands on her head, and I laid my hands on his hands. In meditation, we imagined the Lord laying His hands on our hands and the healing power of the Lord flowing into her body. It was a deeply moving experience. As we meditated in silence, she began to pray: "Thank you, Lord, that you have healed me!" I, too, responded, for I had also experienced healing, and her husband also responded with thanks. After our session of prayer, she said, "That was real. I sensed a third pair of hands, the hands of the Lord, on my head." The Lord was so near. And the meditation of ten days before had come to pass. I shook their hands and left, giving them opportunity to meditate and rejoice as a family. I praise God for the wonderful privilege of sharing in this time of spiritual and physical healing. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who healeth all thy diseases."

3/3/86 10:50am

The events of this morning have been a great blessing to me. I finally dealt with an issue that has troubled me for many years. It relates to my own sexuality. I recognized that, being raised in a public school setting, my moral values were gradually whittled away. I thought little of the consequences of sexual misconduct, and material to feed such a carnal way of life was readily available. This clearly affected my relationships with girls and even my courtship and relationship with my wife. This morning I got in touch with this struggle, and with my feelings of guilt. So I brought them before the Lord. He invited me to a focused meditation on the attempted seduction of Joseph

by Potipher's wife. I was not able to be in Joseph's place, but I observed the scene. It was extremely vivid. Her seduction was so powerful and I did not know how Joseph could resist. His natural affections were drawn to respond. But he called out to God and fled the scene. I was impressed by his decisiveness. He did not hesitate, or else he would have fallen. He allowed his left hemisphere to override his right hemisphere. I sensed that Joseph had real sexual desires, but he did not express them in an inappropriate way. I sensed a real comfort as I meditated and read the Scriptural account. I believe that the Lord is inviting me back to that scene to stand in Joseph's place and by His grace to deal with that situation.

This meditation gave me courage to go to Dr. Holmes this morning and share with him my struggle. I really appreciate his willingness to listen. We experienced the blessing of confession. His counsel to me was honest and compassionate. I sense a real freedom as a result of the meeting. "Lord, thank you that you are concerned about every aspect of my life. Thank you that I can be open and honest. Thank you for your healing in my life today."

3/4/86 6:55am

I praise the Lord for the privilege of this time of communion with Him. It is still a challenge to be still, and yet there is such freedom and joy waiting for me. I sensed the Lord inviting me to meditate again on the episode concerning Potipher's wife. This time the Lord invited me not to simply observe Joseph's victory, but to take Joseph's place. The scene came vividly before me and the seduction was very strong. For a moment I hesitated, and I sensed that I was in great danger. Then I remembered Joseph, and I said quickly, "How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?" And I fled. Once I was out of the room, the intensity of the temptation left me. I saw the Lord standing by my side, encouraging me. I sensed a freedom and peace. The Lord affirmed my response and told me that in this way victory would always be mine as I trusted in Him. I praise the Lord for ministering to me in this regard.

Also during my general meditation, the Lord impressed me to write thank you notes to various people in my class, and professors who have ministered to me during my stay. He also impressed me to write to my brother. I will listen carefully and respond to His invitation.

3/6/86 6:55am

The last day of my class has arrived. This evening I write an exam and then fly home tomorrow morning. I have left these final challenges in the Lord's hands and I have inner peace. Last night I talked

to my wife and she told me that I had received a phone call from another Conference administrator. That call troubled me, and I found myself losing my inner peace. This morning in my meditation, I brought it before the Lord. In my centering process, I consciously submitted to the Lord and I sensed a tremendous relief. The Lord invited me to meditate upon Abraham's call to slay his son Isaac, putting myself and my oldest son Christopher in the story. It was too much for me. My head began to spin. I could not obey the word of the Lord. This meditation helped me to see my resistance to submission. I brought this need before the Lord in verbal prayer. Tomorrow I will observe Abraham and Isaac and learn first from their experience. Then I will go back in person.

I responded to the Lord's invitation to buy thank you cards for those who have touched my life during this visit. I sensed inner joy and freedom as I carried out the Lord's bidding. This morning the Lord gave me specific direction regarding visitation ministry at my local church. I will pay close attention to this word. I humbly submit my life to be led by the Spirit.

3/7/86 9:25pm

I'm home! What joy fills my heart. How I love my family. I praise the Lord for such a precious gift to my life. Yesterday, I bought myself a new NIV Bible. I plan to use it for my contemplative reading of Scripture. Several day ago, the Lord invited me to make Scripture a more important part of my communion with Him. He wants me to bathe myself in the written Word. Already, I have found great joy in this experience. I even experienced a mini-Sabbath at the airport while I was waiting for my plane. The new Bible is a sign for me, a symbol. It represents an important waymark on my spiritual journey. I am reading the Scripture, not to learn doctrine or to prepare sermons but that in the written Word I might commune with the Living Word.

As I look back on my visit to Andrews, I can truly praise the Lord. It was a tremendous spiritual blessing. I sensed the nearness of God's presence in a way I had not experienced it before. Why? I have asked myself that question: Perhaps because I was spending many hours each day in spiritual direction, meditation and prayer; or perhaps it was because, being away from the pressures of the parish, I had more time to be still in the presence of God.

On my way home I had the privilege of sharing with a corporate executive. I shared with him that a personal relationship with God is the only answer to the existential anxieties of life. We talked about nature and catching a glimpse of the transcendent. It was a joy to see his heart respond. We all seek inner peace. As I shared with him, I was aware that I was being led of the Holy Spirit. I was being used as a channel of God's

grace and love. What a privilege! There is no greater joy.

3/10/86 8:45pm

In some ways I was prepared for the increased pressure when I came home, but I think I underestimated it! For example, today Jonathan woke up at 5:00am. He never went back to sleep. When I got to the office at 10:00am I had every intention of setting aside an hour. But there were 18 messages on the answering machine--countless phone calls and a pile of mail needing my attention. Before I can count to three, it's almost 9:00pm. What happened to my day! And there is still a world of work waiting. But it's time to shout, "stop," and take time for my contemplative reading of Scripture, meditation, and prayer. I have spent some time in prayer today, but it has been very rushed. Yes, I've been praying on the run. How easy it is to be driven by the tyranny of the urgent.

Tomorrow looks just as threatening. If I'm going to find any quiet time it has to be before 6:00am. But I'm also going to be driving for 3 hours. I won't be able to meditate during that time, but I can pray Scripture and experience the beauty of silent communion with God. I will not turn on the radio for the whole trip. Perhaps I can listen to one Bible tape, but silence seems the most inviting and appropriate. I definitely need to be still.

3/14/86 10:45am

I am really enjoying my contemplative reading of Scripture. I have just finished reading Genesis this morning. Christopher has been sick for the past three days and it has been very taxing. I have not slept well for several days. The opportunity to stay home and read Scripture for an hour this morning was much needed and very refreshing. I had the privilege of meeting with our new ministerial secretary this past Tuesday. He impressed me as one who is concerned with spiritual life. I hope that a relationship of mutual spiritual friendship can develop.

I will be meeting with my spiritual friend on Monday. I am looking forward to debriefing my visit to Andrews. In some ways, that spiritual high seems a little distant from the hustle and bustle of the work place. And yet, it was a time of spiritual refreshing and growth. I sense a need for such times to get away. I am looking forward to my silent prayer retreat in May for the same reason.

As I reflect on the past few weeks, I notice a definite shift from a focus on kataphatic meditation on Scripture to a contemplative reading of Scripture. I will explore this shift with Barry and learn from it.

One thing is certain: a spiritual journey is an ongoing process.

3/17/86 10:30am

Last evening, I had the privilege of meeting with my spiritual friend. It has been almost 6 weeks since our last meeting, due to my trip to Michigan. I really appreciated the 2 hours that we were able to spend debriefing my experience in the past few weeks. I have noticed a definite shift in my focus in the past week. I am spending most of my time in contemplative reading of Scripture. As we reflected on this shift, Barry suggested that this is a time of recuperation for me, and a time of integration. The Lord has blessed me with some powerful experiences, especially in a focused meditation on Scripture, but now is a time to rest.

Barry asked me where I sensed the Lord inviting me at this stage of my spiritual journey. I shared with him that Brother Lawrence's book Practice of the Presence of God has greatly affected me. I sense the Lord's invitation to live in constant awareness of His presence. But at this point, I am uncertain as to how this will happen. I can only wait patiently and be open.

3/22/86 4:30am

I have been sick with a virus all week. In fact, I'm still sick! It's early Sabbath morning. I will be staying home today. Last evening, I read an article in Ministry Magazine, Jan 86, by William Loveless, entitled "Christian Meditation. It was very stimulating, and I noticed the Lord speaking to me out of the article. The meditation of which Loveless speaks is rooted in Scripture. In fact, to use his definition, Christian meditation is "the art of personalizing Scripture." Loveless also suggests use of a journal. But while my spiritual journal is recording a process in my spiritual journey, the journaling that he recommends simply records his responses to the Scripture during the time of focused meditation.

I was encouraged to hear the testimony of another pilgrim. And I was impressed with the need for greater discipline in my own life. This week has been sporadic. Of course, I could rationalize that I've been sick. I have spent time each day reading Scripture, but my time of contemplation does not seem to have been very creative.

I praise God for the ongoing challenge and for the testimony of this article. Today I will read several other excellent articles in the same issue on the devotional life.

I was able to write a significant letter to my brother yesterday. It took 17 days since the Lord impressed me to write. I feel a sense of completeness in that regard. The letter itself took at least an hour to

write and I sensed the Holy Spirit's presence as I wrote. I really desire a quality relationship with my brother and I sense the Lord's invitation to healing.

3/22/86 11:00am

I found myself moved to tears this morning by an article in the January 86 issue of Ministry Magazine. The article was entitled "Secrets of Great Preachers." I noticed carefully my response and sensed the Lord inviting me to a deeper communion with Him. Nothing in the article itself stirred up emotion. It spoke of the spiritual disciplines of some of the great Christian preachers. And within my heart I long to be such a man of God. The article reinforced the importance of Scripture, a theme that the Lord has been bringing to my attention repeatedly in the past few weeks. A charge that the grandfather of HMS Richards Sr gave him really impressed me: "If you are a minister, you've got to be a spiritual man." "Dear Lord, touch my mind, my heart, my lips; put a fire within my bones. Make me such a man for you, I pray."

3/31/86 3:10pm

I sense a certain restlessness in my life right now. I am still recovering from my sickness. This has left me quite lethargic and I tire very easily. But my restlessness stems mainly from a phone call I received last Friday from another Conference. My name is on a short list for a church in Maryland. I don't want to move, and yet I have been quite concerned about the process. In my meditation today, I was impressed by the text, "Take no anxious thought for tomorrow. Sufficient for today is the evil thereof." I need to exercise the discipline of submission. Right now God has called me to do a certain work. I must not sap my strength and immobilize myself worrying about tomorrow.

I have also learned that I need to give constant attention to my spiritual journey. It is very easy to slip into a lethargic state. I'm sure that my physical condition has greatly affected my spiritual awareness, which is a strong validation of the relationship between physical well-being and spiritual vitality.

4/6/86 6:20am

I praise the Lord for the time of meditation and prayer that I was able to spend this morning. It is not easy to admit, but I have not spent such time with the Lord for many days. My devotional time had become shallow, rushed, or non-existent. What happened to me? I asked this question of the Lord in my meditation and He told me that I have been too concerned with the cares of this life. I have been thinking too much of material things. That is so true. I can see a real conflict between preoccupation with material possessions and

spiritual life. No wonder Jesus told the rich young ruler to forsake all and follow Him.

I was privileged on Thursday evening to meet with two fine spiritual leaders. Dr. Will Eva, ministerial director for the Columbia Union will be holding an evangelistic series here in October. I am deeply impressed by his level of spirituality and I am greatly blessed by his friendship. I am certain that working together will be a great blessing to both of our lives. I also met with Jerry Page, our new ministerial director for Pennsylvania. Jerry also impressed me as a spiritual leader and I am blessed by his presence and friendship. He has expressed the desire to nurture a spiritual friendship with me and I feel drawn to such a relationship of mutual spiritual direction.

I am painfully aware of how prone I am to wander. There is within me that rebellious nature that is at enmity with God, that shrinks back from intimacy with Him. It is only by a daily disciplined commitment that my relationship with the Lord flourishes and grows.

4/8/86 6:45am

I thank the Lord for a time of meditation and prayer this morning. I was very aware of how helpful it is to center my thoughts and focus my attention upon God. Yesterday I was able to make some pastoral visits that were very fruitful. I sensed the presence of the Lord with me during those 4 hours. I can really see how the Lord is answering my prayers so I can give increased attention to pastoral visitation. It is definitely in a one-to-one setting that much effective ministry takes place.

4/11/86 8:50pm

This morning I had a very helpful meeting with my spiritual friend. We processed some of the things that are happening in my life right now. I sense the Lord inviting me to share the joy of my relationship with Him on a horizontal level with others. I have experienced several meaningful pastoral visits in the past week where I have been able to share with first-hand language the joy of a personal intimate relationship with the Lord.

As Barry and I visited together, I became aware that he was burdened, and I gave him the opportunity to open up and share with me. He shared his own personal struggles and burdens right now and I sensed a real concern for him. I sensed a desire to be there for him just as he is there for me. In so doing, I caught a glimpse of the beauty of mutual spiritual direction where the process is two-way. I thank God for such a spiritual friend who takes the time to guide me along my spiritual journey.

4/17/86 6:40am

This morning as I walked outside, I heard the call of male ring-neck pheasant. In that simple sound of nature, the God of all creation spoke to my heart. Just a few days ago, my son Christopher and I saw a beautiful pheasant by the side of the road. We stopped the car and looked at him for several minutes. He was so colorful, with dashes of emerald green and white and crimson. I recalled that scene this morning as I heard the call of this other pheasant. And there in the silence, the Lord impressed me with an important spiritual lesson. Sometimes I have the joy of a profound encounter with God, a mountaintop experience. At other times, I only hear His call, but His presence is no less real, and no less meaningful. In fact, the call of the pheasant has now become a sign to me. It represents the nearness of God's presence. Every time I hear the call, I smile on the inside and rejoice that He is not far from me.

Bodil and I have begun to spend time together in personal meditation. We have been worshipping together as a family, and praying together as a couple. But this focused spiritual activity is a new development. I want to be a channel of God's grace and love to my wife.

4/21/86 5:00am

As I woke up this morning, the words of the song "Speak, Lord, in the stillness" were running through my mind. I sensed in them the Lord's invitation to rise early and spend some special time in communion with Him. The birds outside are already beginning to sing the dawn chorus, but inside all is still. Hopefully the children will sleep for at least another hour.

I have spent the past few minutes just reflecting on the direction of my life right now. I feel I have slipped into an undisciplined attitude. I have not been intentionally setting aside a block of time each morning for contemplative reading of Scripture, meditation, and prayer. I believe that this is holding me back from further progress in my spiritual journey. I also sense that my eating habits are out of control. I seem to eat compulsively, perhaps to deal with stress or tension. I feel impressed to go on a fruit and water partial fast, starting today. I need to flush out my system and exercise the spiritual discipline of fasting. I will carefully observe what effect this has on my spiritual sensitivity.

I got bogged down in Numbers in my contemplative reading of Scripture! But I really want to listen to the whole Word. So I am going to keep on reading. Perhaps the fasting will clear my mind and make me more aware of the Lord's invitation as I read His Word.

I have just been reading from the book of Numbers. A passage in Num 7:89 impressed me. It says that the Lord spoke with Moses from between the two

cherubim, and Moses spoke with Him. What a joy to be able to speak with the Lord and listen to Him in such open communion! I have the boldness to believe that this is what the Lord invites us to. This time of meditation and prayer has been very refreshing. In my meditation I began to repeat the phrase "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." I knelt down and humbly waited until I sensed the Lord's presence. Then, in my imagination, I saw His face and He laid His hand upon me. I asked especially for healing for my undisciplined spirit. I rejoiced in the healing that He offered me this morning! Praise His holy name. Then I fell into His arms and experienced a wonderful sense of peace and inner joy which I desire to carry through the whole day. I will now spend some time in verbal prayer.

4/22/86 5:55am

I knew that I would have to rise early to find some quiet time. So the Lord woke me up at 5:30am with the words of the song "Speak, Lord, in the stillness," running through my mind. There is a sense of inner wholeness when I intentionally take this time. I was greatly blessed by my contemplative reading of Scripture this morning. Particularly in Num 9, I was impressed by the way in which Moses spoke with God. When he had a problem, he did not act without seeking the counsel of God. I was also impressed with the leading of God through the pillar of cloud and fire. I humbly ask the Lord to be such a presence in my life today and every day. May I notice when the cloud moves and when it stays still.

This is the second day of my partial fast. I am eating only fruit. I really got in touch with my undisciplined spirit. The fast is also a constant reminder of my intention to seek the presence of the Lord. In my verbal prayer this morning, I want to especially take time to pray for the two families that I visited last night. I want to seek counsel from the Lord on how to minister to them and also to invoke the Lord's blessing on them. I desire my whole life to be led in a direct way by God.

5/2/86 10:50am

Several important things have happened since my last entry. I completed a paper on my spiritual journey for the course "Spirituality in Ministry." It was very helpful to reflect upon my own spiritual journey. I marvel at how patient the Lord is with me! I received the invitation this past week to hold the Week of Spiritual Emphasis at the SDA Theological Seminary in January 1987. I consider this a great privilege. At first, I was tempted to feel proud. But this morning, as I meditated upon the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, I recognized that authority and responsibility is

a gift from God. There is no room for pride. Rather, I should be humbled and lean upon the Lord even more.

I am learning to love the Bible. Every time I read it, I sense the Lord's invitation to a deeper relationship with Him. My time of meditation and prayer was particularly refreshing today.

5/3/86 7:50am

I rejoice in the presence of the Lord this morning. As I read from the book of Numbers, the following phrase arrested my attention: "I have given you the priesthood as a gift, for service." Num 18:7. This text reinforces the growing awareness of the past few days that God's call to me is a gift. Whatever He offers to me is for His glory and not mine.

5/5/86 8:15am

In my contemplative reading of Scripture this morning, I marvelled at the patience of God with the children of Israel. They were so slow in following His leading. I sense my own spiritual poverty in this regard, too. I am so prone to wander. "Please, Lord, open my eyes today and let me see your leading, Open my ears, and let me hear your voice. Open my heart, and let me sense the joy of your presence." I long today for my life to be a channel of God's love and grace.

5/6/86 6:15am

I have spent the past 45 minutes in contemplative reading of Scripture and prayer. I found it very difficult to enter into kataphatic meditation of Scripture. I feel quite tired, and my mind wanders easily. I will take that to the Lord in prayer. I do sense an inner joy in getting my life centered before the rush of the day. I want to focus my attention in the right place, and then my life will move in the right direction. I am on my way to Williamsburg, VA, with Bodil. We are taking a 2-day break. Barry recommended that I get away with Bodil for a couple of days. He said to me, "I don't very often tell you to do things, but this time I'm going to make an exception! Take a few days off, and go somewhere with your wife!" I'm so happy that I listened to his counsel.

I had the opportunity to visit with the principal of Blue Mountain Academy yesterday. It was a privilege to speak of our spiritual concerns and to pray together. I sense a joy in serving as a priest, and not simply as a prophet. The priestly function of representing the presence of God is very important.

5/8/86 6:25am

I am just completing a 2-day retreat with Bodil. We have enjoyed ourselves immensely. It is wonderful to have special time just to be together and to share with

each other. We had time to read Scripture and pray together which was very special. This whole retreat was a foretaste of my 3-day silent retreat next week. A retreat provides the setting where one can focus on a relationship in a special way and center one's thoughts.

As I reflect upon my spiritual journey at the present time, I sense the clear leading of the Lord. The feeling of being out of control is gone, and I sense an inner peace and wholeness. That is not to say that I have arrived, but I do sense that my life is moving Godward.

5/10/86 5:45am

Yesterday morning I sensed the presence of the Lord in my life in a special way. Nine months ago, the Lord spoke to me of a situation in my church, involving adultery, and invited me to talk with the man involved. But I resisted that invitation. I was afraid that I would not handle the situation correctly. In reality, it was my own pride and self-trust that acted as obstacles to the outworking of God's purpose through my life. The Lord brought the same conviction to me about 8 weeks ago. At that time I said, "Lord, you show me; you give me the opportunity to speak." Well, the Lord clearly gave me that opportunity yesterday morning. And I sensed the presence of God with us. I experienced no fear, and my heart was filled with peace and joy. Brother B. was very receptive. In fact, he had prayed that very morning that the Lord would direct him in resolving his situation. He saw our visit together as a direct answer to his prayer. I, too, rejoiced in this confirmation of God's leading. In our prayer together, I humbled myself before the Lord, and asked for forgiveness for being so slow in responding to the Lord's invitation. Now I sense a real burden is lifted. In this particular situation, I am no longer a man on a boat to Tarshish. I want to continue to notice God's invitations to me in ministry and respond quickly to His direction.

5/13/86 5:45am

Today I leave for my 3-day silent retreat. My head is spinning as I think about all the work that I need to do before I leave, and about all the work that is waiting for me when I return. I pray that I can unload all of my work burdens. I also have about 40 hours of reading to complete for my Independent Study on Prayer. I hope to do some of that reading on this retreat, though I don't want it to consume all of my time. I am afraid that the pressure of completing all of this work will inhibit my time of spiritual refreshing. So I will take my burden to the Lord this morning. He alone can lift it from me. I rejoice in the sense of the Lord's presence in my life and I long to be a channel of His love and grace. I lay my life at His feet and wait in expectancy.

5/13/86 3:45pm

I have just arrived at the Spiritual Retreat Center in Wernersville, PA. I will be here for a 3-day silent retreat. I am not participating in a program here at the Center, but Barry will be meeting with me 3 times during my stay here. As I approached the Center, I was impressed by the magnificent architecture and the beautiful pastoral setting. My room is very simple, with a single bed, table, and chair. I met with Barry this noon, prior to my journey here, and Barry encouraged me to be open to God's presence. He encouraged me to take time for meditation and prayer, and we will meet together for spiritual direction tomorrow morning at 9:00am. I will be taking a long walk on the grounds now. There is something about this tranquil setting that is very inviting.

5/13/86 9:15pm

As I sat in the dining hall this evening, I sensed a deep desire for the Lord to fill my heart with love for those around me. I sensed that they too were on a journey God-ward and, as such, we were pilgrims together. There was an elderly nun sitting at the same table, and I found myself looking at her in deep respect. "Forgive me, Lord, for the way I have been so selective in who I love. That's not an accurate representation of who You are. "Thank you for helping me to notice your unconditional love, which you extend to me as a gift."

As I knelt in the chapel just a few minutes ago, my heart was full of praise to God. Praise for His love. Praise for His goodness. Praise for His blessings. "Please, Lord, help me to be less concerned about the affairs of this life, and may I seek every opportunity to praise You."

5/14/86 6:05am

The dawn chorus was beautiful this morning. My heart is filled with thanks to God for a good night's sleep. As I waited for the shower, the Lord impressed me that I need to make a more complete surrender to Him. I am still very much influenced by my own selfish desires. I do want to fully yield my life to God, and I will do that this morning. I sense that this is a daily commitment, to die to self and live for God. I will go to the chapel before breakfast, and I know that our gracious Father will meet me there.

5/14/86 6:40am

I was deeply convicted again this morning concerning my own attachment to the world and material things. My eye is not single. I praise God that He has accepted my life surrender and I rejoice that I can live this day to His praise and glory. I was also impressed,

during my contemplative reading of Scripture this morning, that I should not participate in the liturgy. I read in Deut 12:4, "You must not worship the Lord your God in their way." While I rejoice that my brothers and sisters in Christ seek to worship the Lord in harmony with their convictions, I do not feel that I can participate with them. I will pray for God's richest blessings upon them as God's precious children, and as my brothers and sisters in the Lord.

5/14/86 11:15am

I have spent more time thinking about the liturgy this morning. Is it my elitist spirit that prevents me from sharing in this Christian celebration? Must it be the way that I am accustomed in order to be acceptable? This is a challenging question. I will go to the service and join in a worship of God, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide me. It is my life's desire to "praise, reverence and serve God."

I met with Barry at 9:00am this morning. We reflected on my stay thus far. He asked me to spend the next day meditating on the thought that "man is created to praise, reverence and serve God." I will meet with him tomorrow afternoon.

5/14/86 12:20pm

I just had the privilege of sharing in the liturgy with my brothers and sisters in Christ. My heart was lifted up in praise to Jesus. It is a real blessing to be a part of this worshipping community, if only for a few days. I shared with Barry after the service that I really appreciate his gift of love to me. He told me that God has also spoken to him through my life, and for this I praise God. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" God is giving me a deep love for all my brothers and sisters. He is healing my sickness and taking away my elitist spirit. While I did not participate in all of the liturgy, I did rejoice in the privilege of worshipping the Lord with my Christian brothers and sisters.

5/15/86 6:25am

I woke up this morning around 5:00am, and, as I lay in bed, my mind began to focus upon being sexually intimate with my wife. I decided that the best response was to get up and focus my attention in another direction. So I got up and began my contemplative reading of Scripture. I am almost at the end of Deuteronomy. I am amazed at the patience of God with such a stubborn, stiff-necked people. And how I see myself there! Surely I can rejoice in His grace today! I have been meditating on the thought that "man is created to praise, reverence and serve God." Ignatius suggests that all other things on earth are created to

aid man in attaining this goal. Thus, man should take that which helps him and shun that which hinders him.

I called my wife last night. I love her very much, and my heart was glad to be with her. Unfortunately, we began to talk about a piece of furniture that we liked. Should we purchase it or not? I sensed a real frustration in my own heart because I already felt burdened by a preoccupation with material things. I want to de-accumulate, not accumulate even more! My wife had been given the counsel, "If you like it, buy it!" But is that always a sound principle?

As a result of our discussion, I realized that the real world out there is far more pressured and hectic than life in the Retreat Center. All I have here is a simple bed, desk, and chair. I realize that I can't stay here forever—that would be escapism; but I am very thankful that I can spend a few days in quiet reflection on my own spiritual journey and in contemplation on the wonder and majesty of God. "O may my whole being praise, reverence and serve You this day, my Lord and King. I humbly surrender my frail life to you, to be the instrument of Your will and the channel of Your grace." I was deeply impressed by this simple prayer of Thomas A Kempis that I read yesterday: "O Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, I offer myself unto Thee this day, in humble submission, for a sacrifice of perpetual praise, and to be Thy servant forever."

5/17/86 5:45am

It is Sabbath morning. Outside, the birds are singing and the woods are alive! It's a beautiful day to praise the Lord! I want to reflect upon the events of the past two days. On Thursday morning, during the third day of my silent prayer retreat, the Lord blessed me with His presence in a special way. I went to the Chapel mid-morning, and I sensed the invitation to kneel and pour out my heart in praise and supplication to God. As I prayed, it seemed as if the Spirit was praying through me. There was a spontaneity and freedom to my prayer that I have seldom experienced. All the while, I was keenly aware of the presence of the Lord.

After this time of praise and supplication, I went down to the auditorium to attend the liturgy. I had the unique experience of being asked to help in the liturgy by offering the cup. But I declined, although I thanked the person for the gracious invitation. To offer fermented wine as an act of worship would not be an accurate representation of who I am. But the liturgy was very uplifting. I was probably one of the few non-Catholics there. And yet, I sensed a real love for my brothers and sisters in Christ as we praised and worshipped God together.

As I left the Spiritual Retreat Center on Thursday, it was with a deep sense of gratitude and inner

peace in my heart. I reflected upon the people that I had met. No word was ever spoken, and yet, by the looks of kindness and caring body language, the love of Christ was conveyed.

I had the privilege of meeting with Barry at 4:00pm on Thursday to debrief the retreat. He rejoiced with me at my time of spiritual refreshing. He was especially interested in my prayer experience of Thursday morning. We reviewed it in detail. He asked me to focus on that experience and relive it. We noted that it took until the last day for me to reach that point of spiritual openness, where the Lord could reveal His presence in me in a special way.

Yesterday I read a book by Andrew Murray entitled The Ministry of Intercessory Prayer. Murray was a man who had a real burden for restoring prayer in the lives of fellow Christians, particularly ministers. He emphasized that prayer is their primary duty. Last night, as I was getting ready for bed, I heard some thunder in the distance and saw some lightning. I prayed a prayer of intercession for our farmers, because their crops really need rain. I prayed that the rain showers would not pass by, but would refresh our earth. For almost 30 minutes I listened and watched and prayed. I heard a deer running in the woods. I saw the lightning light up the sky. I noticed how the wind picked up, and finally I heard the sound of a few raindrops on the dry ground. My heart was filled with gratitude and praise to God. I felt very much in touch with nature after that time of silence, and also very much in touch with the Creator God. "Thank you, Father, that you meet us in so many ways! Give us eyes to see you, and ears to hear you, and hearts that are sensitive to your gracious invitation.

5/21/86 6:45am

It took about 20 minutes this morning to silence the mindless chatter in my head. I realize that in a sense even the mindless chatter is a form of prayer. It reinforces my own spiritual poverty and reminds me that I do not know how to pray as I ought. The Holy Spirit must intercede for me with "groanings that cannot be uttered." After this time of silence, when I listened to the wind and rain outside, I found myself more centered and open to the healing presence of the Lord. I became especially aware this morning of the tremendous work of intercession that the Lord invites me to. The apostles saw this as one of their primary tasks.

This past week has been especially hectic. I have been completing a major reading assignment. I have been pushing myself so hard that I made myself sick. I know that God doesn't want me to live like that. I have asked for forgiveness, and I rejoice that even now his healing presence is being manifested in my life. I

praise the Lord that I can notice my own poverty and hear His gracious invitation.

5/23/86 8:20am

Yesterday evening, I experienced one of the most special prayer times in my life. I was spending time with Nate, preparing for his baptism and talking prayerfully of his future. At the conclusion of our meeting, we knelt together under the starry heavens and poured out our hearts in praise and petitions to God. It was as if the heavens were opened and the Lord Himself filled our lives with the joy of His presence. My heart was full of praise to God--a similar experience to that at the Chapel of the Retreat Center.

I drove all night to arrive here at Rochester, NY. Today we will be visiting Niagara Falls. I pray that my heart will be open to the Lord's presence as I enjoy the beauty of nature.

5/25/86 5:10am

I am enjoying a wonderful vacation. Our visit to Niagara Falls on Friday was tremendous. As I stood by the edge of the falls, I got in touch with the tremendous power of nature. That, in turn, helped me to sense in a deeper way the tremendous power of nature's God. It was an experience that I will never forget.

Yesterday, we went to church in Rochester. I was very disappointed by the attitude of the speaker toward the sermon time. He was an educational leader for the Conference, and he did not convey the sacred importance of the ministry of the Word. It was almost as if he was passing the time with a few thoughts until it was time to sit down. I sensed that my own contemplative reading of Scripture has deepened my appreciation for God's Word. I sense, in a new way, its power as a channel of God's grace, wisdom, and love. After the service, I stayed in the church for a few minutes and spent time in contemplative reading. The Lord was gracious to me, and my heart was refreshed. I pray that God would help me to be more and more sensitive to my sacred responsibility as a minister of the Word.

Yesterday afternoon we went on a tour of some significant religious sights in up-state New York. First, we visited Hydesville and the location of the Fox sisters' cottage. Outside was a stone monument which spoke of their experience on March 31, 1848. The inscription concluded with these words: "There is no death. There are no dead." I sensed the intensity of the conflict between Christ and Satan for the minds of men as I stood on that site. And I got in touch with my righteous anger at what the Devil is doing in the world today.

We drove to Port Gibson and the location of Hiram Edson's vision regarding Christ's ministry in the Most

Holy Place in the Heavenly Sanctuary. That cornfield is still farmed, and though there is no monument to commemorate the scene, I sensed that I was walking on hallowed ground.

From there, we drove to Palmyra, NY, and the birthplace of Mormonism. They have a beautiful visitors' center and the grounds are well kept. The elder who showed us around was obviously very committed to his cause. I did not sense his spirituality. He spoke little of his love and devotion to Jesus and much of the truth of the gold plates.

As I reviewed the whole day, later that evening, I saw the great controversy being fought right in this area. In one afternoon, I had witnessed the birthplace of spiritualism, which is a bold attack on the whole Christian faith, and also the birthplace of Mormonism, which is a subtle counterfeit of God's last-day church. I sensed a deeper commitment to my own mission as a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and as a watchman on the wall.

I will be spending time now in contemplative reading of Scripture, and prayer. It is still early, and everyone else is still sleeping. I thank God for this quiet time to be in His presence.

6/2/86 6:45am

I have been spending time in quiet reflection and prayer since 6:00am. I sense that I have been praying on the run again. When I woke up this morning, the song "Speak, Lord, in the stillness" was running through my mind, but it was so difficult to listen to the Lord's invitation. It is such a temptation to hit the ground running. Work issues immediately came to mind; things to do here at the house; the mindless chatter began. Even as I sat to meditate and pray, it was very difficult to center my thoughts. I spent time in meditation upon Heb 4:14-16, and noticed that privilege of free access into the very presence of God. And yet, somehow, in the middle of my meditation, I found myself thinking about an old television program that I watched 5 years ago. I couldn't believe it. It really reminded me of my spiritual poverty. And even the meditation was restricted. I did not feel truly centered. What a challenge it is to be still, to take time to silence the mindless chatter and experience the healing presence of the Lord. My family is just waking up; a new day is here. "Lord, may I walk with a deep awareness of Your presence today, and may my life be a channel of Your love and grace.

6/5/86 6:25am

I enjoyed a profitable meeting with my spiritual director yesterday morning. I shared with him how stretched out I feel. My mind is always racing, and it

is very difficult to still the mindless chatter. It makes it very hard to pray. My mind gets off onto tangents very easily. Barry asked me to explore in my prayers why I have the tendency to set myself up like this. Why do I accept such an intense program. This morning I have spent some quiet time in meditation and prayer. I read the book of Ruth as part of my ongoing contemplative reading of Scripture. What a picture of genuine love! I sense that my love is so selfish. "Forgive me, Lord. Please help me to love without counting the cost, to love unconditionally." This is a dry time for me spiritually, but I am leaning on the Lord. My heart is full of love for Him, and I will follow Him through this dark night of the soul.

6/10/86 7:10am

Christopher and I just spent a special time together reading the Bible and praying. I really sensed a deep desire to put first things first this morning. And rather than bemoan the fact that my son got up early, I decided to invite him to share with me in my meditation time. He is so open and so responsive. I learn so much about God from my children. An incident happened on Sunday which I want to record. I was taking my two boys to the store and they went riding on a toy horse outside the store. A young man was sitting on a bench outside the store with his radio blaring. The song caught my attention, and I listened to it carefully. It seemed almost intoxicating. For the past two days, that song has been going through my mind. I have had to make a determined effort to override it. I have become very aware of the importance of putting your attention in the right place. Whatever gets your attention, gets you. Today, I want to focus my attention on my Lord Jesus and walk in the joy of His presence. I do sense a freedom in ministry right now, and the power of the Holy Spirit is very evident. I notice that I have a greater boldness for God than in times past.

Last Sabbath was a high and holy day. I sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit in my ministry in a special way. Two young adults were baptized in the afternoon at an outdoor service. I'm sure that day will be remembered as a special moment in my ministry. I long to experience such freedom in my ministry on a daily basis where the Holy Spirit has full control. Yesterday, I made a visit to a family. They were having a neighborhood picnic. One of the neighbor's came up to me and told me of her husband's sickness. Spontaneously, I offered to pray with her, right then and there. We bowed our heads at the crowded gathering and I lifted up her needs before God. I was told later that others standing by had also bowed their heads in prayer and were deeply impressed. I just sensed a freedom in being open to the

Lord's invitation and responding to it with an open heart.

6/11/86 6:10am

As I arose this morning, I heard the Lord's invitation to come into His presence. I want to listen to His voice. The busier I get, the more I need this time of solitude, to center my thoughts on Him and consciously open my life to His enabling presence. I read this morning Samuel's farewell speech to the children of Israel. The message of 1 Sam 12:23 spoke to my heart: "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you." What a clear emphasis on the importance of prayer in the life of a spiritual leader. Samuel considered it a sin not to intercede in prayer for his people.

6/14/86 6:00am

It's Sabbath morning. All is quiet and still out here at our country estate. Once I have spent time in Bible reading, meditation, and prayer, I want to go for a walk. But I know that I need to be still in God's presence first, otherwise the day will get away from me. As I woke up, I heard the song "Speak, Lord, in the stillness" running through my mind. It was the Lord's loving invitation for me to come into His presence and be refreshed.

I have been reading from 1 Samuel about Saul. What a tragedy to see a man who was once full of the Spirit of God turn to his own wisdom and strength and utterly fail. How often I have done that! The Lord has been very patient with me. I need to remember my spiritual poverty at all times. Without the Lord, I am nothing. May this awareness of my great need always keep me depending fully upon Him in my daily spiritual journey.

6/17/86 6:20am

I have just spent a very peaceful time in Bible reading and prayer. I notice that I am spending more time in intercessory prayer. The 80 minutes that I have been here has passed very quickly. There are so many people to lift up before the Lord, and so much wisdom needed to minister to them. My contemplative reading of Scripture this morning was in the book of 1 Kings. It records the experience of King Solomon and his request of God for wisdom. As I meditated upon that passage, I sensed a real desire to seek the same gift from the Lord. The responsibilities of ministry are so great and I long to be filled with the wisdom of God in order to minister effectively. I have a very busy day ahead, but I'm thankful that I could spend this time to center my life on God and consciously invite His presence to be with me during the day.

6/19/86 5:45am

I met with my spiritual friend yesterday morning. We discussed the developments of my spiritual journey in recent weeks. Nothing spectacular is happening right now. And yet I sense a deep inner peace. I am hearing the Lord's invitation on a daily basis to spend time in a contemplative reading of Scripture, meditation, and prayer. I also notice that this inner peace is affecting my work and my interpersonal relationships. As I look back on my spiritual journey this Spring, I sense that I may have run into the danger of becoming intoxicated with the dramatic. Barry described that trap as "being in love with being in love. In other words, I ran the risk of being enamored with the experiences rather than growing in a deeper love for God. I don't think that actually happened, but there was certainly a danger. Since that time the Lord has led me through a settling process. That does not mean that those early experiences were bad. They were very enriching. And I may well be there again, if the Lord's wills it and invites me there. But I cannot stay there. That would be like Peter's request to build tents on the Mount of Transfiguration. My spiritual journey is never static. It is a daily movement either toward God or away from Him. God has led me through a dark night of the senses to teach me not to depend on my feelings.

I also notice a transition in my verbal prayer. I am spending more time in intercession. The Lord spoke to me through the words of Samuel on 6/11/86. The only problem is one of time. Intercessory prayer could extend my morning devotional time from one to two hours. One alternative is to pray for certain people in the morning and then to take advantage of any free moments during the day for intercessory prayer. This may be while I'm driving a car, waiting for an appointment, taking a walk. I will experiment with that approach and see if such a process is of the Lord.

6/24/86 6:00am

I'm on vacation right now, and I'm building a deck onto the back of the house. I've really enjoyed the hard physical labor. It's true that "the sleep of the laboring man is sweet!" I need to keep myself in good physical condition because when I feel strong and healthy, my whole day goes better. This past Sabbath I preached a sermon on Lk 12:22-34. The sermon outlined 3 reasons why we should not worry, as taught by Jesus. It's amazing what an impact that sermon has had upon my life and that of many in my congregation. There is great joy in being worry-free and accepting the Lord's gift of rest and peace.

This morning I was really tempted to hit the ground running. But the Lord arrested me. "Lord of my

life, first thing I do, help me to take the time to talk with you." It's true that I have lots to do, but this is priority number 1. And I come, not because I have to but, because I want to. I want to confess my love for the Lord, to praise Him, and to open my life to His healing presence. For "in Thy presence is fullness of joy. At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

7/1/86 5:25am

I am sensing a real inner peace in my life right now. On Sunday morning, I got up early and took the dogs for a run. Then I went and picked a quart of black raspberries. I just talked to the Lord and listened to Him in the beauty of His creation. The morning air was so fresh, and the plentiful berries reminded me of His generous provisions for me. At the wedding on Sunday afternoon, there was a real pressure to get tense and uptight. But a deep inner peace prevailed, and I really believe that my attitude had an impact upon those around me. I sensed that deep inner peace again yesterday. There were times when I needed to discipline my children, and the Lord blessed me with a peaceful spirit. I know that in times past I would have become frustrated and impatient. But it doesn't do any good. I want to trust the Lord and live a life of peace and rest.

My folks are coming to visit us today. I'm really looking forward to their visit. I want to take every opportunity to express my love to them. Love is only real when it is expressed. My father has a high level of existential anxiety right now because of his poor health. I want to support him and encourage him. I praise the Lord for the continued healing that he offers to my family.

7/10/86 6:30am

Campmeeting begins today. We have been getting everything ready. Bill Liverstage gave an excellent presentation yesterday morning about intellectual objective religion versus subjective emotional. He stressed the need for balance and that the Holy Spirit never by-passes the Word in spiritual growth. There is a real danger of swinging over to the subjective/emotional extreme on the continuum and trusting simply "in what God says to me." I see that I was in danger of such a pitfall some months ago. It is possible to get so caught up in the experience itself that we even miss God. My spiritual growth needs to be rooted in Scripture.

7/11/86 6:10am

Last night Dave Sanner had an excellent presentation for the earliteens at campmeeting. His text was Jer 29:11-13: "For I know the plans I have for you,

declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." I was impressed with the message of that word from the Lord. I sense in it God's invitation to be open to His plan for my life.

7/22/86 7:15am

I just got back from Campmeeting. It has been a very intense time working with the earliteens. I feel physically exhausted. And yet there have also been great blessings. I conducted a series of morning meetings on how to listen to God. The focus of the presentations was on kataphatic meditation. Each morning, I led approximately 40 young people in a focused meditation on Scripture. I was greatly encouraged to see how responsive they were. I remember one young lady who came up to me and expressed deep appreciation for the meditation of the morning. She had not shared anything with the group during the sharing time by apparently God had spoken to her, and that meeting left a deep impression on her life.

One area of my life which has been taking a lot of energy is dealing with my dog, Yugo. He is a large mountain dog, and he is a constant concern. For a long time, the problem was his running away. He would jump over the fence of his 6 foot pen or break his chain. I talked with a specialist in animal behavior and now he is left loose. We have solved the problem of his running away, but now he is digging and chewing things up. He has already done considerable damage to property. I feel myself getting very angry with him, to the point of gritting my teeth. I see in the whole situation a tremendous illustration of God's patience with me. But I don't know how much more I can take. Bodil is very frustrated by his behavior. I feel guilty about giving him away or having him put to sleep because I feel that I am responsible for him.

My life is very hectic right now. I am really making an effort to take time for meditation and prayer. It seems that there is a constant tension, so much competing for my limited time. Bodil and I spent some special time together yesterday after our family worship, meditating on Scripture and praying together. I sensed a real peace and wholeness in my life as a result of that devotional time. Tomorrow I meet with my spiritual friend. I look forward to debriefing my experiences with him.

7/29/86 5:40am

What's happening to me! I'm getting caught in the rush. My schedule is so hectic that I'm taking very little time for focused meditation and prayer. I sense

peace in my life, but I know that I'm running on reserve. I need to meet the problem head on and slow down.

Barry and I had an excellent meeting last week. I really appreciate the time we can spend together. We talked about the interior freedom that I experienced while at campmeeting. I know that the Lord is inviting me to that kind of experience. Often I allow my schedule to infringe on that freedom. Why do I allow that to happen? I have to be willing to let go of the compulsion to be busy. There is nothing more important than time alone with God. That must come first. This morning is a typical example of the temptation to be busy. I got up at 5:00am to prepare of Vacation Bible School. I was tempted to hit the ground running. But, praise the Lord, I heard His gracious invitation to come apart and rest awhile. How thankful I am for His love and patience and mercy! I praise HIM for His wonderful love and tender mercy. May my life bring joy to His heart and may I love Him most of all.

8/7/86 5:40am

The sporadic entries in my journal are an indication of the intensity of my life right now. We are in the middle of a Vacation Bible School and we have just started a Revelation Seminar. The result? I'm tired. By the time I wake up in the morning, it's time to run. This makes it difficult for me to spend extended time in meditation and prayer first thing in the morning. I find myself seeking other opportunities during the day for mini-Sabbaths. The Lord is giving me discernment so that I can maintain that deep inner peace, which is a gift of grace, in the midst of the busy schedule.

Yesterday afternoon I had an interesting experience. A friend was visiting our house. She was a member of our congregation until a year ago but has since moved to another state. She shared with us about a special ministry to which the Lord is inviting her. While she was visiting with us, I sensed the Lord's invitation to pray for her and lay hands on her, setting her apart for her ministry. I suggested this to her and she was very open. So my wife and I knelt with her in prayer and after a season of prayer we laid our hands on her. I sensed a deep consolation during the whole experience. Following the prayer time, we just knelt in silence. Then she said to us, "That was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. I sensed an inner joy at being open to the Lord's invitation in that situation.

We began a prayer service at the church on Tuesday evening, August 5. It was a wonderful time of meditation on Scripture and learning how to listen to God. We only had a group of 12, and yet revivals have begun with smaller groups than that. We shared together the meaning of prayer and it was interesting how the definition shifted from simply "talking to God to "being

with God in a deep fellowship." I am really excited about meeting together from week to week and I know the Lord will bless our fellowship.

8/8/86 5:45am

I was reading this morning from 2 Chr 10 concerning the rebellion against Rehoboam. I was deeply impressed with the foolishness of getting counsel from the wrong place. I am asking the Lord for the gift of discernment to know which way to go. There are so many important decisions to make, and if I were to worry about them, I would become incapacitated. I need discernment as a gift of grace to be able to make wise decisions which are in harmony with the will of God.

8/18/86 10:40am

I have just spent the past hour in Bible reading, meditation, and prayer. I notice that there is very little "excitement" in my spiritual journey right now. I wonder if this is the dark night of the soul that St John of the Cross spoke of. In my prayers, I have not found it easy to experience focused meditation on Scripture. Mainly, I am waiting in silence, opening my life to the Lord. Many times I say, "Lord, I'm just here to be with you."

I will be meeting with my spiritual friend this week. We missed our appointment 2 weeks ago because of Vacation Bible School. I'm feeling some concern about my spiritual friend right now. In some ways, I feel I am outgrowing him. I don't mean that in an arrogant way. I just sense that his own spiritual life is somewhat "on hold." He is very busy at work and is still searching for clear direction in his own spiritual life. I need to pray about this. Even though my case study ends at the end of September, I plan to continue the direction process in the months ahead.

I have become aware of a tremendous amount of hostility in my life. It has surfaced in the way I relate to our dog Yugo. He has been a real trial, jumping out of his pen, chewing up property and digging holes in the flower beds. There have been times when I have become very angry. It has even spilled over into my attitude towards my family. I was very short-tempered, tended to raise my voice, and generally very hard to live with! Last week, Bodil and I sat down and talked about my behavior. I sensed that something was wrong. She wondered if it stemmed back to my childhood. As we shared together, I realized that I cannot place the blame on Yugo. I must be responsible for my own behavior. I sensed again my own spiritual poverty and my desperate need for grace and healing. On Sabbath, I preached on the parable of the barren fig tree in Lk 13:6-9. I sensed the Lord's invitation to open my life each day and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Only then will

the fruits of the Spirit flourish in my life. Here I can find healing for my impoverished condition. I praise the Lord for His gracious invitation and I humbly respond in faith.

8/28/86 6:40am

The past two days have brought into sharper focus the ministry of intercession. A good friend of mine has been gaining the victory over a smoking habit, by the grace of God. I called him yesterday morning at 6:00am and went over to his work several times during the day to pray with him. On many occasions, I bowed in prayer to intercede for him. This morning, as soon as I woke up, I sensed the Lord's invitation to pray for Tom. I will call him as soon as my prayer time is over. I notice several things during this time of intense intercession. First, I see the contrast with the usual lack of intensity in my intercessory prayer. Second, I sense how deeply committed I have been in time and energy as a result of my intercession. I sense, in this whole experience, the Lord's invitation for me to continue a ministry of intercessory prayer with a new intensity.

My visit with my spiritual friend last week was very helpful. I was able to discern how the angel of darkness had used the situation with my dog Yugo to bring me into a time of desolation. The hostility that I had accepted was a real barrier in my relationship with God. Simply discerning that fact seems to have led me to a new freedom. The hostility is no longer out of control. I sense a real shift away from desolation to consolation.

My schedule is very hectic right now. I know in the past that this would be a time of praying on the run, with little or no real time of fellowship with the Lord. So I come in my broken condition, sensing my own spiritual poverty, to find healing and freedom in the presence of the Lord. Out of this time of communion and renewal, I can go out to minister as the wounded healer.

9/5/86 6:00am

I spent the whole day yesterday on a committee dealing with time and expectations. I shared with my colleagues that personal spirituality is a top priority. That is so often taken for granted or assumed. We need to encourage one another to be men and women who walk with God and whose hearts are open to His leading. If that was the only contribution I made to the committee, I feel that my time was well spent.

Barry and I enjoyed a good meeting on Wednesday morning. My wife and I got up early to bake him some fresh bread. That is just a small way of affirming his ministry. We reflected on my experience with Tom and how that led to a sense of personal freedom. Barry asked what it was about that experience that led to personal freedom. I thought for a moment, and then said, "Just

being where God wanted me to be." I didn't have to worry about other things that weren't getting done. It was enough to be where God wanted me to be.

The gift of discernment leads one to a sense of personal freedom. Otherwise, I feel guilty that other things are left undone. I have experienced this in many areas of my life. For example, if the Lord invited me to spend more time with my family, or to take some personal time, I can do it without feeling guilty. This is such an important lesson. It means that if I take on more and more work, if it leads to bondage, and not to personal freedom, it is not of the Lord. The gift of discernment can liberate me from a compulsive attitude toward my work. It is enough that each day I can be where God wants me to be.

9/18/86 4:25pm

I sense a real personal peace and freedom today. I am in Maryland for a mini-vacation. This morning I got up early and read the book of Job. I found myself easily distracted but I came back to the Scripture, and after 90 minutes or so I finished the book. I sensed the Lord's invitation to a deeper trust in Him. As I went through the day, I sensed an inner peace which is quite a contrast to the rush of the last few days. This afternoon I listened to a tape by Emilio Knecktle from the 1986 Pennsylvania Campmeeting. He spoke on God's encouraging words to Laodicea. I was especially impressed to never doubt the goodness of God and that God knows no haste. I am constantly aware of my own spiritual poverty. I am so prone to wander and to leave the God I love. My greatest danger is not that I will deny God but that I will ignore Him or be oblivious to His presence.

I am looking forward to reading the Psalms as I continue my contemplative reading of Scripture. I have found much encouragement there in the past. O that I might daily pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, but restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."

9/19/86 6:15am

I just enjoyed a very fruitful time of meditation and prayer for the past 75 minutes. The Knecktle tape is having an ongoing impact upon me. I spent much time in specific intercession during my prayer time. I sensed the needs of the people open before me like a flood gate. Now I can see that it is not difficult to spend several hours in prayer. Following this time of intercession, I sat quietly with a pen and paper and listened to any specific counsel or direction from the Lord. I ended up with a list of impressions, perhaps 20 in all. As I wrote, I got in touch with my own anxiety. How am I

possibly going to accomplish all this? But I gave my anxiety to the Lord. I must live my life by faith and not by sight. The Lord who leads me will surely enable me.

None of the impression came as a big surprise, but now they have taken definite shape instead of being vague ideas. I can see how outside material, like a tape or book, can really be used by God to have an impact on my own spiritual journey. It is so easy to get in a rut. I will not be afraid of that list of impressions, but only view it as a list of opportunities for the Lord to demonstrate His power and glory.

9/23/86 6:15am

Several new developments have taken place in my spiritual journey in the past few days. I mentioned that I was impressed by Knecktle's tape and have taken a pencil and paper to write things down while I pray. God has been blessing with wonderful answers to prayer. I have faith to believe that God wants me to continue to intercede for people.

Another very exciting development is that Bodil and I have started to pray together on a regular basis. In the past, most of our prayer together was at family worship. I notice also a deeper quality to our prayer time together, and I sense a real freedom as a result of it. Bodil tells me that she has been longing for this intimate prayer time for the past ten years. It has taken almost a year on my spiritual journey to bring us to this point.

The pressures of my ministry are intense right now as we prepare for a major crusade. I pray that the joy of the Lord would be my strength and that I would walk in freedom as I walk in Christ.

9/28/86 6:20am

This has been a very significant week in my spiritual journey. I met with Barry on Wednesday morning and I shared with him that Bodil is reaching out for spiritual direction. I shared that we are praying more together and on a deeper level. I have failed to provide that strong spiritual leadership for her in the past. I talked to Barry and he counselled me that this process was of the Lord as long as it led Bodil to freedom. He cautioned me that this process would also be a painful one and may even cause her to be more separate from me in seeking her own freedom in Christ. How true these words proved to be. Bodil has really been heart-searching in the past two days, coming to grips with who she is and where she is coming from. And that's painful for her and for me. We spent quality time this morning sharing. Tears were shed as we grappled with the basic issues of her life and our life together. And yet, I sensed that this process is a vital part of her own spiritual

journey. In fact, I see her in the place that I stood 12 months ago--coming to grips with my inner-self and coming face to face with my own spiritual poverty. I pray that God will give me the courage to stick with the process as it leads Bodil to freedom.

Yesterday was a high and holy day for our church. We had a day of fasting and prayer, and it proved to be a profound spiritual experience for me and for the whole church. In fact, it seems as if my past 3 years of ministry are all leading up to this point. We have a major evangelistic meeting starting next Saturday night which I believe can bring spiritual revival and renewal to our church and to our community. And this day of prayer and fasting really helped us to focus upon our spiritual poverty and our great need of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I rejoice to see the Lord leading our church to a deep level of spirituality. As we prayed together, pled with the Lord together, shed tears together, I sensed, deep in my heart, that this was of the Lord. Our church family was drawn together in love and unity. I know that the next 5 weeks are going to be extremely hectic. We need to spend more time in meditation and prayer than ever before.

9/29/86 6:20am

I rose early this morning to spend time in contemplative reading of Scripture, meditation, and prayer. I am reading through the Psalms and I really appreciated Psalm 16 today. In Ps 16:7 David declares: "I will praise the Lord who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me." I really sensed the Lord's invitation in those words. I do praise the Lord for His gracious leading in my life, and in the life of my family. I mentioned how Bodil has really been searching for a more intimate experience with the Lord. On Saturday evening, I asked her what floor she wanted to work on at the hospital the next day. She said, "Anywhere but 4-C!" She had a very difficult experience on 4-C a few weeks ago where a patient died. So I said, "Where would you most like to work?" She replied, "Oh, I think 5-A." So we prayed together that the Lord would be gracious in her work assignment for the next day. Early the next morning, she called me from the hospital to tell me her work assignment: "5-A!" I just said, "Praise the Lord!" Then last night we enjoyed a wonderful visit with a young couple in the church. Bodil had been feeling somewhat estranged from the woman and had mentioned it in her prayers. As we were driving home, I reflected that she seemed to have really enjoyed the visit and that God had been gracious both in the work assignment on 5-A and the visit. Her reply really encouraged me. She said, "Yes, He'll make a believer out of me yet!" I really praise God for the tender way in which He is leading my wife to

a deeper fellowship with Him. I just pray that the Lord would lead me as a spiritual leader in my home.

As I was praying earlier this morning, Christopher called out, "I want my daddy. I want my daddy." I think he was having a bad dream. I went upstairs and stooped down by his bed. "I'm here son," I said. I took him to the bathroom, hand in hand, and then laid down by his side on his bed. He was so peaceful and so secure. "I love you, son," I said. "I love you too daddy," he replied. Within a few minutes he was asleep again. I sensed in that experience the Lord's invitation for me to enjoy His Fatherhood. His presence is so comforting and assuring. May my heart be open to His healing presence today.

10/2/86 8:00am

This is the last entry of my one year case study with my spiritual friend, Barry Young. I had my first session with Barry and made my first entry into my journal on October 3, 1985. Yesterday morning, Barry and I met for our last session as part of this case study. I shared with him the ongoing challenges that I face and how I am learning that there is no freedom without pain. It has been a tremendous blessing to have a spiritual friend for this past year. And even though my case study is over, we have renegotiated to continue to meet on a monthly basis. I am also planning to attend another 3-day silent retreat in December. It is also my intention to continue my journal. There is real value in attempting to express my spiritual pilgrimage in words. This process causes me to take an honest look at the current state of my relationship with God. I have scheduled a November 4, 1986, meeting with Barry to debrief the direction process during the past year. I will also ask Bodil and two lay leaders within my congregation to reflect upon any movements in my life and ministry in the past year.

It is my deep desire that this journal would be a testimony to all who seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. I am painfully aware of my own spiritual poverty. It is only God's love and graciousness that draws me. But when I am weak, then I am strong. Each day I long to sing with the Psalmist David, "Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence in fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore" Ps 16:11.

APPENDIX B

DEBRIEFING INTERVIEW WITH SPIRITUAL FRIEND

The following entry is the record of a post-case study session with my spiritual friend on November 4, 1986. The focus of this session was to debrief the process of spiritual direction during the past year. The interview is recorded in a question and answer format.

Morris. What to you is the essence of spiritual direction, and how has that taken shape in our relationship?

Young. My image of spiritual direction is simply cooperating with God--cooperating with God and enabling the person to come into that relationship. A person is already in that relationship; the Lord is always calling us. Particularly people that I meet with here are intentionally seeking out that relationship. So the role of the director is to cooperate with the process that is already there. It becomes a process of listening to where that person is and where it appears as though the Lord is inviting him in the growth process in that relationship. Then enabling the directee to move through that. It is something that touches on the mystery of the universe, the mystery of God moving in us and experiencing the grace that comes from God. The Lord wants us to get in touch with ourselves so that we may then be more in touch with him. That's all part of the process.

Morris. I was impressed by the way in which you respected my personal freedom in the direction process. I never heard you say "You shouldn't be there" or "You should be here." Is that respect of personal freedom important in terms of the process of spiritual direction?

Young. Yes. People are where they are, and it's not the role of the director to tell them where else they need to be. The role of the director is to listen to where the Lord is inviting them and then encourage that process and growth in that direction. It isn't that we're wrong wherever we are. We are there for a reason and there are blocks or "unfreedoms" that prevent us from being somewhere else. I don't really know, I don't presume to know, where a person should be. I don't always know where I should be. But I know that the Lord is inviting

me in certain areas of growth. And to presume that I should be somewhere else is just another block, another "unfreedom."

As a director, sometimes I can have some images of where the Lord is inviting us. All I can do is lay it out there without presuming that I know what it is, lay out the possibilities and allow the person to move into the Scripture and see what the Lord says to them. It's the Lord who really leads them and it's my goal to cooperate with that the best I know how, based on experience and training, on concrete things, but also based on what the Lord has done for me and in me, and also what the Lord is doing in me right at that moment.

Morris. Why is it, in your opinion, that so many of those who come to you for spiritual direction are involved in ministry? Is that a focus that you have chosen?

Young. No. For me, what happens is exactly what happened with you. Someone may call and ask for spiritual direction, or enquire about it and want to know more about it. This is especially true in the Protestant tradition where we don't have a lot of experience in direction. I usually ask if we might meet together, just to talk about it and find out what's going on. In that process, I can usually tell whether that person has a life of prayer or not. I'm usually fairly direct, and I think I was with you too, in asking what it is that the directee is seeking. You can begin to tell after a while whether a person has the inner nudgings of the Lord, inviting him or her to a deeper relationship. You listen to where the person is and how long they've been on their journey. In some cases, they may be going through mid-life, beginning to question how intense they are about their spiritual journey. Some people really need therapy, and if that's really what they need, I try to encourage them to go in that direction. I'm not trained to do therapy. I may encourage them to be in therapy at the same time as they are in direction, maybe just start off with therapy. People may need to do some things before they get into spiritual direction.

Perhaps the reason why I see so many pastors is because pastors don't really have anywhere to go. The church has a system they can go to, district superintendents, or whoever the next person up that line would be. But realistically that person has been promoted and is pretty much in the same position that you are. At least, that has been what I hear and what I experience. It's hard to get to see that person. Sometimes there's not the level of trust; sometimes they are struggling with their own spirituality to the point that they don't feel comfortable discussing that issue with another person. I guess that's one thing, I'm safe.

I believe that people get into the ministry, the formal ministry, by experiencing a call. Something has happened to that person, more of a direct kind of call for them. They begin to move into that, and the same thing happens to them that happens to the lay-person--administrative jobs and duties come moving in on the pastor and it's easy to get pulled off center. Other forces and principalities pull us off and want our attention, too. Pastors ask themselves, "Is this all that I'm called to? Something's missing?" They begin asking more questions, and searching out what the Lord has for them. You can tell. I don't know that I could always tell when I started doing spiritual direction, but now I can tell. I can sense their heart's desire and what they really want.

Morris. I knew that the Lord was leading me to get involved in a spiritual direction process. But what was it that motivated you to accept my request?

Young. It can all be summed up in one word: intensity. You came with an intensity to that first meeting, an intensity and urgency on your part, a real serious attitude about your desiring a fuller relationship with the Lord. I experienced that deeply with you. I can't remember much else, except that intensity and sincerity. I knew you meant what you said. Where you were in your process was not nearly as important as where I sensed your heart desired to be. It wasn't simply your intensity to find out something but also it felt like an intensity of your being invited to something. The Lord was calling you to something, and you didn't know what it was, and I didn't know what it was; something was going on in you that was much larger than you.

Part of the intensity that you brought to our first meeting was due to the fact that you were in conflict. What you knew in your head was theologically right on target; but what you were experiencing internally, or on your affective level, was not matching up with that. Where was the joy and grace? You really believed it in your head, and that was true, but your experience of it was not where you thought it should be and it was not where the Lord was inviting you.

The intensity came from conflict. It's true, we all are in conflict. We have God; we have the centrality of Christ in time and the universe; we have this power that is inviting us to him; and we have this power that is seeking to draw us away. So we live in conflict. That conflict was reaching an intensity in you which was telling me that you really did want to know experientially. Theologically you did know, and I don't think theologically you've changed much. How you go about that may have changed in terms of seeking out some of your poverty, but it is in our poverty that we learn

how much the Lord loves us. If we don't know that, and if we don't know that deeply, at our affective level, our life level, then our knowledge in our head doesn't help much.

Morris. I experienced a high level of resistance, both in initiating the direction process and also in my spiritual journey. Why is it that we resist something that we want so much?

Young. It's all part of the process. The very thing we want is the thing we don't want. Especially if we sense that there is going to be some pain, we resist it. Coming to know the Lord is also coming to know ourselves, and so we resist. It happens all the time. It happens to me. I'm a good frame of reference. I've used them all: the denial, the projection--all of them. I do that to protect who I'd like to believe I am. In a way, we need that. In a way, that's healthy, so we don't want to rip that away from someone. But you'd like to give someone that freedom to let go of that in the framework of the love of God. If we know that we are loved deeply, then we can let go of some things. We don't have to be so protective about our images of ourselves. We're not going to do that unless we know that we are loved. This letting go of our resistance just continues to take place on a deeper and deeper level.

Morris. How would you describe my spiritual journey during the 12-month case study in spiritual direction?

Young. There was a process that was going on in you. It was not always clear, and it was not always a straight line. We like to think in linear thoughts, that we go from point A to point B, but for me that kind of thinking gets in the way. I don't think that people move in a straight line. First of all, I wanted to test out with you and to help you discover how much the Lord loves you already. I wanted to make sure that you were really grounded in the love of God. Sometimes we make those assumptions--because a person is a pastor, or because a person prays regularly, he or she has experienced the love of God. That is not necessarily so. It is not necessarily true for me in my own experience. There are times when I have prayed regularly and found that what I really was doing was sending this parental kind of message that "Thou shalt pray regularly." And I went about it very dutifully. I think there's some value to that. I don't think it's ideal, but there's some value. There are times that we pray because it's a way of making ourselves feel good. It helps us get quiet and get still inside, but you could also stare at your navel and get the same experience. I suppose there's some value to that too, so we shouldn't throw that out of the

window. But there is praying that we do to try to grapple with our relationship with God, that we might understand and know the love of God. What I usually do, and what I did with you, is check out that relationship. I wanted to make sure that you were firmly standing on the love of God because the next part of our journey is to check out our poverty. If we don't know that we are loved, to move a person into his poverty is pretty cruel. The next part of the process was moving into your poverty and finding out those areas where you thought you were strong you actually were weak. What were the defenses you were using to hold away the truth of who you are?

That took a long time. I think it was appropriate to take a long time. It's all done on God's timing. The Lord will tell you what you need to know. When you came back and shared some experiences that were happening to you, that was all part of God working. It was just so beautiful to watch you go through the process of becoming more grounded in the love of God. I can remember particularly the time that you talked about the sunrise--the times that you would go outside by yourself and just experience God in nature through your senses. You would use very affective language to describe your experience of being with God. It was exciting to hear you say that.

Then you began to say, "Well, that's the Lord and I experience that, and it's really good, but there's something else." Pretty soon you began asking questions about that something else. You began to conclude that you had to know more about yourself. So you began to bring to me, as a result of your prayer time, those dark areas of your life. You brought those to me. I didn't fish for them. I didn't have to. You just brought them. Sometimes you brought them wrapped up, and I would ask questions around them, as a way of bringing them up. After a while you began to know that you could talk about those things without being condemned, that it was alright to have some of those feelings; in fact, even normal. Then you were more free to be with the Lord, and you began to realize that even though there were dark areas of your life, God still loved you and that gave you even more freedom.

It was at that point that you began to know in your heart that God loved you and not just in your head. That is understanding and experiencing the grace of God and knowing that it is more than words. That is such an invaluable experience. We don't go anywhere in our spiritual life until we know that.

That's the process as I see it--understanding that God loves you very deeply and then moving into understanding something about yourself and who you really are, and not just the image of who you would like to believe you are; getting in touch with that and knowing the love of God; and experiencing the love of God so that

you want to respond to Him more fully. Then the Lord says, "Yes, come on. I want to call you to something more, not because you have to, but because you're looking for it; you want to experience the gracious presence of God in your life.

Morris. Is our experience of spiritual direction going to be any different in the future than it has been in the past 12 months?

Young. Sure. It will be different and it will be the same. That's what life is about. There are going to be some new things that will come to you, and some of the old things also. I think where I hear you being invited is to begin to discern for yourself, and probably for Bodil also, what God is calling you to at the present time. Is there a different call for you from what you've been experiencing? We don't know that. That's the wide open window, but that's the window. It is for us to stay open and receptive to what God is inviting us to, in whatever shape or form that may take. We need to realize that God may call us to carry a cross. It is in responding to that call that we experience our oneness with other people, our solidarity with the world, and our solidarity with the Lord.

APPENDIX C

REFLECTIONS OF ASSOCIATES

Reflections of Bodil Morris, Wife¹

In the past, I considered Derek to be a spiritual person. I didn't know anyone more spiritual among my family or church members. I never could figure out how God was more real to him than to me; but, then again, he was always ministering and preparing sermons and talks, so I'm sure this is what rubbed off on him. I think growing up in a minister's family was an advantage, too, because he knew how to act like a minister and pray like a minister. But I didn't grow up in a minister's family, so I trusted Derek to lead the way. I don't remember times of personal devotion for Derek in the past; they were all mixed together with study. His spirituality and his profession were all mixed up together.

When I reflect upon the past 12 months, I can see a definite difference in Derek. He prayed in the past, but now it's deeper and regular. Now he is a man of prayer, and a man of God. During the past 12 months, I've seen him experiment with various types of spiritual discipline and grow in His awareness of and love for God.

Derek's spiritual friend, Barry, has helped him in this process of spiritual direction. They met together every other week--not to socialize or discuss problems--but to follow through with spiritual nurture. It has been the most important endeavor in his life. I really mean that. Because it has not only led him closer to God, but ultimately it is leading me and our children to an awareness of God's presence in our lives.

My attitude toward spiritual direction is very positive. I feel it has done more to enrich our lives than any class, seminar, or other pursuit. It has led Derek and me to a closer and more meaningful walk with the Lord.

I must confess that during most of the past 12 months I was very depressed spiritually. I was ready to leave the ministry. I felt so trapped because I had no one to be a spiritual friend to me. I was expected to be spiritual--"the minister's wife"--but there was no life

¹Received March 2, 1987.

in me. Maybe this time was particularly difficult because Derek was growing closer to Christ and I was alone, trying to live my life as it had always been--still dealing with life in the same old, non-fulfilling way, and Derek was trusting God, communicating with Him, and enjoying peace and joy in His presence.

I cannot pin-point the turning point in my personal spiritual renewal. There were many factors involved. First, Derek invited me to pray with him each evening. He began to show greater concern and interest in my spiritual condition--never criticizing, condemning, or forcing--just asking, "What do you feel the Lord inviting you to through this?"

During this time, I coordinated a 3-day retreat for the Pennsylvania Conference ministers' wives. It was conducted by Elder Bill Liverssage. This was an October retreat, and I had felt so spiritually thirsty since the Spring that I was really looking forward to it as an answer to my depression and pain. Derek was a great support. I think he hoped this would be a turning point for me too. It was a blessing, and I did gain some valuable tools for studying the Bible.

I was not yet at the place of implementing these things. I could feel resistance within. I knew that I loved Jesus, accepted Him as my Savior, had faith in His Word. But I was still walking on common ground. I did not understand the difference between common ground and Holy ground. My faith was merely head knowledge.

In January, while Derek and I were driving in the car, I began to share with him my concern for my own ailing spiritual soul. I was afraid to talk to him about it because during our marriage I had brought this issue up and he would always have the same reassuring answer: "This feeling is the first step in coming to God--sensing your need." But that is as far as I'd ever gone with that--sensing my need. What then? This time, Derek said, "After sensing your need, accept Jesus and ask Him to become real to you--not just a cognitive response, but an affective response as well. In this way, I began to become aware of Christ's love for me.

Shortly after this experience, our family settled in a student apartment at Andrews University. I was hoping for a time of spiritual renewal while away from the church expectations, calls, interruptions and frustrations. Our first Friday evening, we invited a family to our apartment for worship. The wife was the most spiritual woman I had ever met. I felt resistance to her at first, but a yearning within me forced me to be honest, and she became a spiritual friend to me. She spoke to me about God, knowing Him experientially. Her life was proof of what a converted life was all about. I'm so thankful I met Sharon. She was truly a blessing to my life in encouraging me in my spiritual journey.

A few weeks later, we were visiting another couple. During a season of prayer, this couple and my husband laid hands on me and prayed for healing in my life. At that moment, the Holy Spirit came into my life in a fuller way. I felt nothing different, but I believed. Shortly after this experience, I attended a Tuesday evening meeting with Dr. C. Raymond Holmes. This service, together with the spiritual friendship of Sharon, motivated me to seek the presence of Jesus daily in a new and meaningful way.

I know that the most important part of my spiritual renewal is learning to commune with the Lord. It began one morning when the children were out playing. I asked the Lord to watch them, so I could have some quiet time with Him. I sat on the couch; the sun was shining in on me. I tried to visualize God, but my mind was blank, void. I was afraid. Soon these thoughts came to my mind:

Sitting in the sunshine is like sitting in the light of God's presence. He, who is the Source of life, is shining on me. Without Him, there is darkness. The light penetrates the depths of my empty mind and fills my thoughts with light. The light of God's presence is warm and comforting. I feel peace and joy in my life today.

This was the point in my life where I realized that first I must ask the Holy Spirit to come to be present with me and then I would meet with Jesus through His Word. The Holy Spirit illumines my mind and the Word comes alive. When the Holy Spirit is present, I ask Jesus to come into my life. I imagine Him knocking on the door, I open the door, and He comes in and sits next to me. I imagine Him speaking to me and I with Him. It is real. He reassures me with promises in the Bible. He comforts me with His presence.

Derek has encouraged me in this journey. He has been very supportive of every new discovery and thus has helped to nurture my spiritual growing. As I enter into a deeper and closer walk with the Lord, I can see it is because of Derek's role model this past year. He has been rising early every morning and reading the Bible for personal devotions. He has shared various disciplines with me, and I, in my depressed, non-spiritual state, was taking these ideas and storing them away in my mind. Now, I am more aware of how to proceed into a spiritually focused life. I thank God for my husband, Derek, because without his leading the way, I would have had no-one to follow in search of a deeper Christian experience. I would still be floating on the surface as a shallow Christian. I have seen my husband plunge beneath the surface and I've gained courage to take the plunge myself.

Reflections of Ray E. Crissey, Church Elder¹

I am writing this analysis at the request of Pastor Derek Morris. It is based on my personal observations over a period of three to four years during his ministry at the Allentown Seventh-day Adventist Church, and during the 12 months of the case study in particular.

I joined the Allentown Church in 1967, having moved to the area from Massachusetts. During the intervening time, I have had the opportunity and privilege to work with five different ministers, and, for a number of years, have had the privilege of serving as First Elder. Approximately four years ago, Derek assumed the position of minister of the Allentown Church. It has been my privilege to work closely with him during this period of time.

I have noted a gradual uplifting of the spiritual environment of our Church membership during this time. It was obvious that Derek, from the beginning, had a unique and refreshing approach to evangelism and church growth. His emphasis on prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit was evident at a very early date. I have personally observed him closely with his family life and his love and devotion to his children. It is evident that when his family participates in Church activity, the right spirit is being conveyed. As a result of his witness, my own life has been directed toward a reliance on prayer.

In more recent times, it has become evident that the influence of his personal life and his ministry to the Church has been reflected in a significant growth within the Allentown Church. There is a new spirit and a oneness that has not been present for a number of years. An excitement prevails which I feel is directly related to Derek's close walk with God and is reflected in our membership by their enthusiasm and their oneness of purpose in accepting the challenges that face each of us as Seventh-day Adventists.

I have noticed a maturing aspect in Derek's ministry during the past year and the positive effect upon the Allentown Church is observable.

I have been strengthened by my close working relationship with Pastor Morris.

¹Received 2/12/87.

Reflections of Christopher A. Daley, Church Elder¹

Observing a Pastor's Spiritual Journey

The idea of discovering one's spiritual self in a explicit manner is an idea whose time has been long overdue. After accepting Jesus Christ as savior, one's life is then spent in discovering each day God's plans and purposes. For a pastor, a shepherd of a part of God's flock, to make this priority has to be commended. Far too often, the models of productive, successful people that we admire are running on self-images, shells that ring hollow inside. Allowing the Holy Spirit to tend to our inner gardens is the only way to get heaven's vision for our lives and the lives of those we care for.

For the past year, I have observed Pastor Derek Morris undertake this journey. In this paper, I share my insights. This presentation is divided into four areas. These are:

A Biblical model, a sound standard.
My observation of the pastor as a person.
His public ministry, a congregational snap shot.
Final thoughts.

As Adventist Christians, we identify closely with John the Baptist. Here are a few of the ways that we are like him:

We have a keen sense of mission, we are a prophetic church.

We have a serious message, heralding the imminent coming of our Lord Jesus and calling people to repentance.

We are particular in diet, abstaining from the "king's meat."

We insulate ourselves from the world, to receive strength and conviction.

We challenge the evils in society, in "high and low places."

One of the great attributes of the Adventist church is its leaning and priority on the Bible. We in no way flinch from the ideals and visions of the characters in God's word. We know that "Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). In light of this, I proceed in examining our pastor using the points listed above as a yardstick.

In presenting my personal observation and its impact on me, I concentrate on three areas. These are his family, his study of the Word, and his prayer life.

Setting a high priority on a good family life has been an attribute of our pastor's ministry which I admire

¹Received February 26, 1987.

and appreciate. In the life of a young pastor, there is always the competing elements of family life and service. I have observed a heightened awareness of setting aside, not just quality, but quantity of time for his family. Mini vacations with his wife, going on nature study with his kids, creative family worships, and organizing and conducting effective board meetings so we can get home at a respectable hour to our families are just some of the items that contribute to this viewpoint. Some admonition is given to others in this area. More frequent sharing on the importance of good family life would enhance many lives.

A more concerted effort was noted in our pastor's approach to Bible study. Although it was more structured, I sensed that he was honing his spiritual ears to hear God speak through His Word. For example, the story of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice became more real to him. He discovered in reality his own level of faith. His reluctance in "offering" his son made him more ready to lean on the cross for mercy and strength.

Derek has always had a strong belief in prayer. Our pastor gave more emphasis to listening than to giving petitions. He changed residence to a more conducive environment for hearing God speak. I observed a deepened intimacy and boldness in prayer. The areas of faith and submission are areas where I cannot comment with much certainty. These two areas are inseparable entities of prayer. Faith is trusting in God's power, while submission is the action that follows that faith. In the evangelistic thrusts of the church, I saw positive evidence of reaching faith and submission, however, in matters that were of a personal nature, like most of us, he showed reservation. Sometimes it is hard to remember that even though our growth is sometimes painful, we do not serve a capricious God.

There has been an unannounced mission of our church in Allentown. It is public evangelism, public evangelism, and more public evangelism. This has been manifested in several ways, specifically:

Organizing a Lehigh Valley-wide evangelistic campaign.

Encouraging lay persons to be fully involved in holding meetings.

Preaching the Word from an evangelical viewpoint.

I placed emphasis on the word public. There has been success using this method. However, there is a danger to this. It is far easier to promote this method at the expense of developing relational skills in all members to witness for Christ in their everyday sphere. Developing members in this fashion provides the underpinning for public evangelism. There is then an under utilization of the gifts of the church, which is to the disadvantage of the church's mission. Our model John had disciples who

were effective to the cause without having the gift of public speaking.

We now turn our attention to the area of church shepherding. In looking at the impact of his journey and the congregation, three areas come to mind. These are the Sabbath morning worship service, prayer meeting, and pastoral visits.

In the past year, there has been an overhaul in our worship service. One major basis for the changes was to bring a keener sense of God's presence to each member's life by increased participation. The selection of praise-oriented music and convicting congregational prayer received much attention. The overall acceptance has been positive even in our conservative congregation.

The sermon is the other major component of the worship service. The pastor relishes preaching; however, only bits and pieces of his spiritual trek are presented on Sabbath mornings. I took a poll of a good cross-section of our membership and was surprised that only four of the sixteen persons polled were aware of his topic of study. They were all aware of his pursuit of a degree but were not sure of the area of study and thus the potential impact on the church life.

Inquiries were made as the appreciation of the sermon's content. A mixed review was received. There are those who treasure the strong biblical approach that is taken, and the recent teaching style that has been adopted. There is also a strong under-current that thinks that the sermons are "theologically neutral." Adventism has a keen sense of the apocalyptic. The book Great Controversy sets the mood of the clash of powers. The Ancient of Days, our everlasting Redeemer, overcoming the devil in our personal lives and in society is very important to Adventists. The grandeur of the second coming set aflame a revival attitude within us. Speaking out against sin, in all its forms--not in the abstract, but to the reality of it in our lives--and the need for repentance and forgiveness is a hallmark of Adventism. Taking a personal position of empathy and solidarity with the poor and down-trodden are key elements of our community service. Couching sermons in the spiritual roots of the people engenders oneness and appreciation. A distinctive, "good-old Adventist" message to our congregation and to the community at large can be the message of the hour. John the Baptist's messages "breathe fire" because these elements were very evident.

Prayer meeting was reinstated, and the first series was on prayer. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend, but from speaking to several attendees, I formed the following opinion. A major focus of this series was developing the meditation dimension of prayer. This is sensing and seeing with one's spiritual eyes God's reality in any circumstances. This offered new freedom to those who perceived their prayers as only ceiling

tall. They now smelled the sweet fragrance of the Spirit's presentation before the throne. There were others who viewed this additional dimension with caution. This was too closely related to mind control for their comfort.

Tending to the care of the flock on a more personal basis was given much consideration over the past year. Our pastor rightly observed that the burdens were too great for him to undertake, solely. The elders were brought in to share this responsibility. The process of getting the elders on board has been slow. The reasons for this vary. Given the constraints of resources, this probably will continue to be something we will just grow to love. Continued leadership from our pastor will be needed to make this happen. This is just one area of ministry that the elders can participate in. The sharing by the pastor of his experience from a personal basis will provide a good model for elders to look very closely at themselves and start on similar journeys. They could start putting into sharper focus God's intention for their gifts. This could become infectious!

In closing, let us take another peek at the life of John, the model we have chosen. John lived in the desert. Why the desert? Several items come to mind: The desert is a harsh environment. One is more likely to rely on God in such an environment. All our pride and self-reliance are stripped away.

Pain and suffering are words one associates with the desert. A sensitivity for those who are wounded and in bondage is certainly developed in the desert. God had to take Moses to the desert for 40 years.

Dryness is another attribute of the desert. One will gladly appreciate God's wells of eternal living water.

It was in the desert that John met the Essenes. His planning and preparation for his ministry took place here.

Our pastor's spiritual journey is still in the crucible of development. He has experienced some of the components John experienced in the desert. His personal life has been affected; however, I detect a hesitancy of sharing the details of his journey. Maybe it has been very personal, but when the leaders share their deep convictions, there is a human bond that is formed within their constituency. They find encouragement and support. If he continues to let God lead in a convicting fashion, out of the molding process will emerge a man who will lead us to live faithfully in the shadow of our Lord's

imminent return. Let us not fear the desert, for out of it came men of God who were most instrumental in God's grand scheme.

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